



Hello St. Luke Lutheran!

I am excited to invite you to gather for worship, outdoors, at St. Luke **this coming Sunday, August 16th and Sunday, August 23rd!** While we couldn't have imagined our having to have been apart for as long as we have been, this is a joyful invitation to share with you now!

Our gathering time for this and future Sundays will be determined by each Saturday evening prior and the Sunday worship time will be shared with you through the church's phone tree - and we will post it on the church website at www.stluketaylorsville.org - both by 7:30pm on Saturday nights.

As this is quite new for our church and we are traversing times when conditions continue to change rapidly, we're going to initially commit to holding worship outdoors, weather permitting, for the next two Sundays: Sunday, August 16th and Sunday, August 23rd. The hope is to also continue holding worship outdoors on future Sundays following these first two dates. That said, rather than making any long term commitments at this time, in the face of ongoing uncertainty, this will allow us to consider where conditions are in a few weeks time and then make the best determination for that time going forward. Know that you'll be kept in the know throughout.

I would like to ask you to please take a few minutes to read through (again) and familiarize yourself with the details of the following plan (found on the page following) for outdoor worship. There's a lot of very important information and this plan will help us safely and joyfully experience worship together. This is a long awaited and very exciting step for our church in these very different times and I'm grateful to share this invitation and information with you!

In Christ,
Pastor Andrew

+ + + + + + + + + + + + + +



The Plan for Outdoor Worship at St. Luke Lutheran

First, with great care for the well-being of one another across the body of Christ, a lot of thought has been put into the safety of all participants. This is important work. While there isn't a way to 100% guarantee that Covid-19 cannot be transmitted while in worship (or for that matter in any other reality of life), this plan builds on the latest health and safety guidance of our time and current legal requirements, with great effort undertaken to ensure the best and safest way we can worship together outdoors.

Our location for outdoor worship at St. Luke will be in the natural grass amphitheater surrounding the church's columbarium.



This area is located between the main parking lot and the back of the cemetery. The columbarium will be our chancel altar area. You will be invited to sit in the wide area around and facing the columbarium. We would ask, for everyone's safety, that while family members living together may sit together, a 6 foot minimum spacing in every direction should be utilized among all others throughout the duration of your time on church grounds. This includes seating for worship but also extends to our time in the parking lot and all other areas of the church campus. Please feel encouraged to bring your own comfortable folding chair or blanket. Ellen has also carefully cleaned and sanitized the older fellowship hall chairs and they will be available for any who'd like to use them. Please plan to dress focused on your comfort. Our outdoor services will be very casual in nature and there will be no expectation regarding "dressing up" for church. As a helpful example, I plan to dress according to the weather - even wearing shorts if it'll be warm. I invite you to please dress similarly for your comfort.

The service will be a shorter and simpler version of our typical worship service, with changes being made based on proper Covid-19 adjustments. Our worship focus will be in the biblical word, preaching and prayer. As a joy and to help with this, the NC Synod has kindly purchased for us a very nice outdoor sound system which we look forward to utilizing for worship. Because of the way Covid is spread through the air, there will be no singing at this time. Singing greatly increases the volume of air we breathe in and out and the prevailing guidance is for churches to refrain from singing at this time. There may be performed music in which you will be invited to spiritually share within. We will also not share in communion at this time, though this will eventually be added in when safe to do so (and then with appropriate sanitary care).

We've missed being together for so long now and how wonderful it will be to get to see everyone again. We must, however, be committed to caring for one another as a top priority. This will mean that we cannot shake hands or share in hugs or gather closer than 6 feet apart with anyone not in our immediate household. This will be quite a challenge for adults, but perhaps an even greater challenge for our children. Adults, know that by your attending worship you have committed in advance to purposefully caring for all present by adhering to proper 6 foot social distancing throughout your time on the church grounds. Parents, please go a step further to help oversee your children's presence at church so that they too can maintain the safe and proper boundaries.

Regarding the use of personal protective equipment: As our worship services will be outdoors with careful utilization of proper 6-foot social distancing by all in attendance, current state guidelines do not require the wearing of a mask, but anyone wishing to wear a mask will be welcomed and encouraged to do so. If you should enter the main church building to check your church mailbox or to visit the restroom please wear your mask, as this is required under current state guidelines. To assist with maintaining proper facility care and sanitization, please limit your indoor movement at the church to -only- the church mailboxes and restroom area of the main hallway. Per state guidance, please no more than 10 people inside the building at any time. Should PPE policies be adjusted by state or local authorities, we will make likewise adjustments going forward to maintain proper compliance.

With worship being outdoors, we're going to work diligently to set the time for worship to the best weather opportunity for each Sunday and to get the word out through the church's phone service and website. During the hotter times of this summer, we'll likely plan for worship to be rather early on Sundays to get ahead of the heat. This may be as early as 8am or perhaps later through the morning or day, as the best weather conditions warrant. If the anticipated weather is not conducive to our gathering for worship on a particular Sunday we will share in virtual worship (as we have been doing) on that Sunday - both online and through our sermon phone line. A call will be sent out to the whole congregation each Saturday evening (prior to each Sunday) that will share the time we will gather for outdoor worship on that Sunday or if we will utilize worship virtually should inclement weather be anticipated. This information will be shared on the phone tree and placed on the church website by 7:30pm on Saturday nights.

Additional Important Notes:

Even when we are able to gather for in-person worship outdoors, it is our intention to continue sharing in worship online and through our sermon phone service. There will be a delay as to when worship will be posted online as we will take the live recording of the sermon on Sundays and then go through the processes to make it available online and on the phone sermon line. For the moment it is not anticipated we will be able to broadcast the service live, in real time, but our hope is to have the recorded sermon posted online and on the phone sermon line by each Sunday evening (if not sooner). The sermon phone line number is (828) 392-7246. The sermon online link can be found on the church website at www.stluketaylorsville.org (via the "Worship Online" link) and on the church's Facebook group page.

Second (and this is so unusual but important to say), in-person worship at church may not be for everyone right now. While we so relish the opportunity to be together at church, and it's been so difficult to have been apart for so long, there are some who may not feel comfortable participating in in-person worship at this time and in our current environment. I would like to encourage you, if you have reason for reservation, to be comfortable in not participating in in-person worship at church until the time you believe you can comfortably do so. This includes those with health concerns, pre-existing health complications and those who just don't feel ready or safe to gather among an assembled group. I want everyone to know that caring for your health and safety is our great priority and please make the proper decision for you - with the full blessing and understanding of all across our church community. If you should decide to refrain from in-person worship at this time, please continue regularly participating with the church in worship virtually every Sunday.

A final word:

We've awaited the opportunity to worship together for quite longer than any of us would have imagined just a few months ago. Thank you for taking time to familiarize yourself with this plan and you are certainly welcome to reach out to me with any questions you may have. There will likely be additional adjustments we may undertake as time goes by, but this plan gives us a good starting place and how wonderful it will be to be together as church once more!