



"MESSIAH'S CALL"

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September 2020

Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church
1013 E. Lawn Ave.
Urbana, OH 43078
937-653-4110

A congregation of the ELCA
and the Southern Ohio Synod
Vision Theme:
Loving God, Loving Neighbor

A New Reality

September is normally the time for new beginnings. Spiritual Formation classes should be starting up, Confirmation, vocal and bell choir rehearsals should be starting up on Wednesday night. But, not this year, we are living in a new reality that has shifted the way we are doing worship in a way that none of us could have ever dreamed.

Instead we are preparing to begin live, in church, worship for the first time since Holy Week. September 13 we will open the church and we have a long list of guidelines that need to be followed. This information is provided in this newsletter and has been on our webpage for several days. There is no "one size fits all" for everyone in our community. As I read many guidelines from local and churches in our synod the one thing that I focused on was "what is best for Messiah." I am sure some of you will say, "Well they are allowing (fill in the blank) at (such and such a church)." That may be true, but I need to worry about Messiah's members and what is best for us. It seems strange to me that they were so quick to ask us to close back in the spring when the numbers were low, but growing, and now the numbers are high, and still growing and we are opening our doors. But, it is time to give it a shot and just see what happens. Like I stated in the letter accompanying the guidelines, if you feel unsafe, stay home, we will continue to stream our service every Sunday. The nightly devotions at 8:00pm will also continue.

I am looking at expanding our streaming to other platforms. Soon we will also be broadcasting live on YouTube. Our page name is MLCUrbana. We had started with YouTube in the spring but had trouble with being dropped. Word is they have improved and drops have become rare. The advantage to YouTube is you do not have to have an account. I am hoping for a test runoff streaming on both Facebook and YouTube on Sunday, September 6th. Please watch for announcements on our webpage (<https://www.messiahurbana.info>) and our Facebook page.

It is important for the dissemination of information that we have your email address on record in the office. Email is the fastest way for use to notify you of important congregational information. Please check the web page regularly for updated information.

Blessings,

Pastor Ray

HOW TO WATCH OUR SUNDAY WORSHIP ONLINE!

There are a couple of ways to watch our Sunday morning services online. We stream live every Sunday morning at 10:00 on our Facebook page. The link for our FaceBook page is: <https://www.facebook.com/MessiahUrbana> You will need a free Facebook account. The stream starts about 5 till 10 with some music. Make sure your volume is turned up. If you don't want a Facebook account the service will be posted on our webpage later in the day. Our webpage address is: <https://www.messiahurbana.info/> If you have problems call the church office and we will get you some help.

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The Call Team has continued to be engaged in the process of calling a pastor, and we have met several times with Pastor Abrams from the Synod office regarding our particular situation. At this time, and for a lengthy time looking back, there is only one candidate interested in a part-time position, and that is Pastor Ray. We feel that we've collected information that equips the congregation, with the help of God, to issue a call.

But because there are not multiple candidates to sort thru, we do not feel that our services are still needed. Therefore, we will be requesting at the next Council meeting that Council conclude our service and take over the responsibility of calling a pastor.

We have been proud and humbled to serve in this capacity, and we know that God has a plan for us and for our church. Please join us in asking the Holy Spirit to guide the next step in the process.

In Christ,

Nancy Meyer

Dear Sisters & Brothers of Messiah Lutheran

Now may our God and Father and our Lord Jesus direct our way in You.

*And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another
and for all, just as we abound in love for you.*

1 Thessalonians 3:11-14

In the event that Champaign County is designated a RED county we will not worship in the sanctuary.

It has been some twenty weeks since our congregation has gathered in one place for worship. This time has been challenging and yet new doors have opened during this time. Because of modern technology, and a lot of help, we have learned how to worship together online. Our Sunday morning service's viewership has been steady. On a few Sundays we have had more than 200 views. I have heard from people in California, Florida and Arizona who regularly watch our service. We have been united in prayer and fellowship during our 8pm evening devotions broadcast live on Facebook.

It is time, with God's blessings, to resume live worship in our sanctuary, however we will continue to stream our service live every Sunday morning. The council has set a date of September 13 for our first live worship service. The council has approved a list of guidelines that must be observed for the safety of all who attend worship in our sanctuary. Our primary goal is to protect the most-at-risk among us, and to offer flexibility and options in how we return to worship. Until we have confidence in some sort of measures that can kill or weaken the virus that causes COVID-19, we need to follow the advice of the CDC in terms of physical distancing and facial coverings, traffic flow inside the building, and other practices we have outlined below.

We will also continue to monitor information for the Southern Ohio Synod, State of Ohio and Champaign County Department of Health.

As stated, the first service will be at 10:00am on September 13, 2020. There will be no Faith Formation classes for the near future. The following precautions will be taken and we ask everyone to do your best to support these efforts. We realize this list may present some unhappy images for you, but we believe these are the best plans we can make in the midst of great uncertainty. We ask for your love, patience, and prayer as we learn to live with new realities, and until such time as we can relax a bit more.

Before we get into the actual list, we are asking you to each week before attending worship to review your own health. If you have been ill in the previous 14 days please stay home, take care, and recover. This means, anytime in the past 14 days if you have had a temperature of over 100 degrees, or other symptoms, please stay home. We will be taking your temperature upon entry into the Narthex.

Plan for Resuming Worship at Messiah:

1. We will have limited seating available in the sanctuary in order to comply with the standard practice of 6 feet between individuals or family units. Our revised capacity amounts to less than half our normal seating space. The fellowship hall, and the educational wing will be closed off in order to minimize what we will need to keep clean.
2. We will broadcast the service from inside the sanctuary so that others who wish to come and remain in their cars can tune in via the short range FM signal. Instructions for how this will happen will follow in a few days.
3. Those choosing to come inside must wear some facial covering (mask). If you are unable to do this, we ask that you remain in your car. Disposable face masks will be available on a limited basis for anyone who does not have one. If we reach capacity, we will ask everyone else to remain in their cars. If you are in your car we ask that you not watch the streamed service on our churches wifi. This will degrade the upload signal and interfere with those watching at home. We also ask that all mobil devices be turned off upon entering the sanctuary.
4. The main entry will be the only doors used for entering and leaving the building. When the service is over, please leave when directed by the usher and leave the building directly through the main doors. As tempting as it is, please no socializing in the narthex. There will be no Passing of the Peace, we will simply wave. Even conversations across the room are a source of concern; we know that the virus is likely spread through “aerosol” vapors. We also ask that trips to the restroom be kept to a bare minimum and please use the provided hand sanitizer on entry and exiting the restroom.
5. Once seated, everyone must remain in place. As difficult as it may be to imagine, we cannot mill around to visit.
6. Offerings can be placed in the plate upon entering the sanctuary. If you forget to do this, you may leave them on the pew to be collected once everyone leaves. You may also mail them to the church.
7. All hymnals, paper, and pencils have been removed from the pews to minimize surfaces that need to be cleaned. The service outline will be viewable on the monitors in the church. We will also post the service outline on the webpage for downloading on Saturday.
8. Children under 2 should not attend, and people over 65 should also consider not attending especially if you have pre-existing health issues, for instance respiratory illness, immune deficiencies. The Nursery will be closed.
9. A written record of who has been in the building will be maintained. The greeter will record your name as you enter the building. This is for tracking purposes in the event of someone testing positive, the Health Dept. will know who to contact for testing. We cannot reliably do this for those outside in the parking area. We ask that you do your best to recall your own contacts so that, if needed, they can be reported by you. Outside contacts may proceed at your own risk.
10. The service will be simplified: no singing, spoken only liturgy, no live music, recorded hymns will be played, words will be on the monitors for meditation purposes. There will no children’s sermons or scripture readers.

11. If we have communion we will commune by family units. Walk to the communion rails, please stand, the Pastor will give you a wafer, take a plastic cup from tray, prefilled with wine/grape juice. Once communed return to your seats via side aisle, place communion cup in container with plastic bag. NO ONE IS TO GO BEYOND THE COMMUNION RAILS AT ANYTIME. There will be no communion in the parking lot. If you desire communion contact the church office and home communion will be arranged with Pastor Ray.
12. The streaming of our Sunday worship, 8pm evening devotion is here to stay. As of right now we are only live streaming on Facebook. We are looking into streaming on other platforms in the future. Sunday service will be posted on our webpage every Sunday following the live service. We have looked into programs that would allow us to broadcast on multiple sites at the same time however the reviews of such programs are not all that positive for the cost of these sites. We will continue to work on our streaming set up to insure we present a quality program. One thing we have learned, the majority of problems in reception are normally on the receiving end of the project. Please take the time to learn all you can about how to view live programs on your computer. If you have any questions, ask your grandkids or call the church office and Pastor Ray will try to help you. The main thing you need is a good internet signal. If you still have the same setup you started with 15 years ago, you probably don't have enough bandwidth for live programming. We learned this the hard way here at the church when we started streaming. Please feel free to repost or share any of Messiah's streaming programs.
13. The occupied areas of the building will be cleaned and sanitized after each Sunday gathering.
14. As long as proper distancing and face covering measures are observed fellowship is permitted in the parking lot, at your own risk.

This is a long list and we will be learning and modifying as we go along from what we do here on site and from what we learn from those agencies we monitor. Once again, our main goal is to provide everyone with a safe and secure worship space. If you have any fears or doubts, stay home. Worshiping at home is just as holy as worshiping at church.

We look forward to coming together as we are able. Blessings upon all of you.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Ray Branstiter

Bob Combs

Congregational President

When church resumes

Worship times will change,

Worship 10:00 am

Service will also be livestreamed

We can worship together on Facebook every
Sunday at 10AM & evening prayer at 8PM

SEPTEMBER

- 5 Eli Wilson
Donna Schaefer
- 8 Bill Instine
- 12 Liz Hitt
- 13 Mary Melvin
Kelly Evans-Wilson
Marsha Geboy
- 16 Charles Wingfield
- 17 Jeff Morgan
- 18 Katie Midgley
Linda Nichols
- 22 Susan Mason
- 23 Sandy Branstiter
- 24 Libby Atly
Nancy Boyd
Carolyn Rogers
- 29 Kayden Loy





LONG PRAYER TERM NEEDS:

The protection of those men and women engaged in conflict and war around the globe. The innocent victims of injustice and terrorism.

Weekly Prayer Needs (read aloud by congregation)

Rodger Lawrence, David Livingston, Connie Cohn, Jon Schnurpel, Mary Melvin, Wendy Borg, Kay Beery, Brenda Dilts

Continuing Needs

Declan Crabtree, Barb Brooks, Hannah Lewis, Brian Nicol, Jacqui Thompson, Kaleb Boyd, Marna Levin, James Briggs, Wendy Borg, Meg Kocher Magnan, Linnae Wilson, Pat Bechtel, Baby Eli, Greg Ward, Barb Daniels, Pam Huffman, Tim Murphy, Rebecca Eleyet, Mike Henson, Sally Davis Engle, Mike Buchhalter, Ruth Herford, Colleen Anne Borchers, Tracie Hendrix, Barb Cederlund McCarthy, Thad Sapp, Judy Stillings, Henry Springer, Pat Nichols, Amy Davisson-Perry, Harry Osborne, Louise Martin, Tim Detwiler, Debbie Ruchty

Family and Friends of the Faithful Departed:

Nursing/Assisted Living Centers & Shut-Ins:

Herb & Jane Carey, Marlene Lockerby, Louise Martin, Joan Gingrey, Barbara Karg, Edith Kohn

In the Military: Major Matt Williamson

COUNCIL OFFICERS: **President:** Bob Combs

Vice President: Jan Murphy

Secretary: Nancy Meyer

Treasurer: Mike Melvin **Financial Secretary:** Karen Adams **Financial Chairman:** Mike Melvin

ADMINISTRATION: Council Connector, Nancy Meyer

WORSHIP: Council Connector, Donna Schaefer

ENCOURAGEMENT & PRAYER: Council Connector, Jacqui Thompson

FELLOWSHIP: Council Connector, Jan Murphy

PROPERTY: Council connector, Lisa Simpson

SOCIAL MINISTRY: Council Connector,

FINANCE & STEWARDSHIP: Council Connector, Mike Melvin

WELCOME/EVANGELISM: Council Connector,

MEMORIAL TRUST FUND: Tom Mackey, Chairman; Allan Branstiter, Secretary; Brian Nicol, Treasurer

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

1013 East Lawn Avenue

Urbana, Ohio 43078

FORWARDING ADDRESS REQUESTED

GOD'S PEACE TO YOU!