

HOPE LUTHERAN

ELCA

Hope Journeys Forward

3337 Kingsbarn Ave. River Falls, WI 54022

Phone 715-425-9750

August 3, 2020

*Praise the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty firmament!
Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his surpassing greatness!
Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp!
Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe!
Praise him with clanging cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
Let everything that breathes praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
~ Psalm 150*

For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." -Matthew 18:20

Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? -Psalm 139

Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. - Galatians 6:2

Greetings in the name of Jesus!

Thank you for being faithful ministry partners as God has led us into new ways of worship and mission these last months. Through challenging times you have brought your gifts to the table, allowing HOPE to remain a beacon of Christ's light and love in our community. As we head into August **we are excited to offer our first in-person worship services since mid-March this coming Sunday, August 9 at 9:30am!**

As the above scripture verses reveal, worshipping God together is an essential dimension of our discipleship. Technology has enabled us to gather faithfully, united by the Holy Spirit, no matter the physical barriers. There is truly nowhere we can go, where God, in Christ Jesus is not already present. We are grateful for these tools and, in concert with our in-person services **HOPE is committed to providing online worship now and even after the virus subsides.**

There are many members who are longing for in-person worship for a variety of reasons. These reasons run the gamut, from personal theological convictions, to social isolation and mental health concerns, to the practical limitations of weak internet connection. Our plan is to initially resume in-person worship outside, using HOPE's recently finished Outdoor Worship Space. What another terrific blessing during this time, allowing us a way to gather comfortably and safely!

Members and guests now can have their spiritual needs met in a variety of ways, while holding the words from Galatians and Christ's commandment to love one another in our hearts. Please know, **no one is required or expected to attend in-person gatherings and no one will be judged for either choice of worship participation.** Everyone's safety and personal comfort level are highly valued. No matter the choice please respect the prayerful decisions your siblings in Christ are making during this season.

The attached plan, effective as of today, was assembled by the HOPE Resuming Worship Task Force, Worship Ministry, and Executive Ministry teams in consultation with our local county health departments and the ELCA, following CDC guidelines. Due to expected changing circumstances, we will be reviewing our procedures regularly and will remove or replace restrictions as appropriate. We recognize that some of these protocols are quite restrictive. The reality is there are differences of opinion on these protocols among us. In the spirit of our faith we hope that, by beginning with an abundance of caution we will be able to safely move forward in coming months. We appreciate your grace, flexibility, and prayers as we continue to navigate being the Church in this season.

Please review this plan as you prepare to participate in the in-person ministries of HOPE.

With God's Grace, on-line or in-person, HOPE Journeys Forward!

HOPE Executive Council