

# Midweek Meditations w/ Holy Communion

*- Health and Safety Procedures and Protocols -*

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*During COVID19, God has richly blessed our congregation with both the means and ability to continue worshipping via on-line resources so that two of the primary goals for worship have been achieved.*

- 1) time together to strengthen our faith through God's Word and*
- 2) time to bring the honor, respect and reverence God deserves from us, his saved people.*

*If those were the only blessings or goals of worship, we would have no need for "in-person" services at St. John's.*

*But, God DOES want his people to gather together "in-person." Perhaps the most significant blessing we lost through our online worship is personal encouragement and fellowship that takes place in a corporate setting worship service. "Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together...but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Heb. 10:24-25).*

*Therefore, your St. John's leadership has carefully planned in-person midweek meditation opportunities w/ Holy Communion in line with the intent and guidelines of our state and federal authorities. What follows are the safety protocols and procedural expectations of these midweek gatherings:*

**Schedule:** We will offer weekly meditations every Tuesday and Wednesday beginning on June 16<sup>th</sup>. Tuesdays at 4:00pm and Wednesdays at 6:30pm. These will be by sign-up only. Please do not show up without having signed up. You can view the available dates along with signing up on our website.

**Service Length:** The services will be about 20 minutes including the Lord's Supper.

**Online Services:** The current Sunday online worship resources will continue to be offered as the primary weekly worship opportunity as they have been. If you are not quite ready to join in the weekly meditations, please plan on make use of our on-line sources until you feel comfortable.

**Service Capacity:** In line with the governor's current directive, we are able to have 25% space capacity. With current social distancing guidelines and in order to maintain a relaxed and controlled setting, each of the weekly devotions will offer up to 16 families or 40 individuals per service.

**Seating:** We plan to utilize every other row in the sanctuary. This allows for comfortable and suitable social distance between each family/individual.

**Greeting:** Please refrain from any physical contact greeting at this time. A friendly hello will serve as our verbal handshake

**Face Coverings:** Wearing a mask or face covering has been recommended by the Minnesota Health Department and therefore we suggest the same, in line with your comfort.

**Minimizing Contamination/Cleaning:** Following each service all surfaces will be wiped down and a cleaning/sanitizing checklist will be completed. Also:

- Disinfecting hand sanitizer spray will be available in the entrance and fellowship area for people entering or exiting the building.
- The drinking fountain in the lobby will be taped off with a sign to prevent people from using it.
- No food or coffee service will be provided.
- Restroom doors will be propped open to minimize surface touching.
- The mother's room will be closed and signposted; if your baby needs changing, you may use the stations in the restrooms.
- The coat hanging area will be closed to prevent bottle necking.

**Singing:** Initially we will not sing as a body. We will utilize music with time to reflect on the words of a hymn verse.

**Fellowship Time:** We are encouraging those gathering to not spend extra time inside the facility visiting. But please feel free to stick around outside in the parking lot, on the lawn and enjoy as much fellowship time there as you would like.

**Communion:** We will celebrate the Lord's Supper by use of pre-packaged, individual servings of bread (gluten free available) and wine. Each participant will receive their elements upon entry of the facility to keep with them during devotion. At the appropriate time of the service, worshipers will remain seated as pastor consecrates the elements from a distance and we commune together from the pews. Waste baskets will be strategically placed to discard packaging.

**Children's Activity Bags:** At this time the activity bags will not be available. Please feel welcomed to bring appropriate items for our young worshippers.

**Bulletins:** Bulletins will not be made available at this time as we are able to make use of the hands-free worship screens

**Offering:** Worshipers are welcome to bring offerings of thanks to their Lord. We will not pass the offering plate in these services. Instead they will be located in the back of the sanctuary and you can place your offering there or continue to give them electronically or send them by mail.

And as always, if you are feeling ill, please stay home, rest, and care for the body and life your Savior has given you. If you are someone who has a compromised immune system or other health concerns, be wise. We can't wait to see you in person, but we also want those gatherings to be a time of rest and focus on the Gospel and not eclipsed by worry or concerns. Please feel welcome to contact your pastors for private communion if you do not feel comfortable attending these midweek meditations.

Our leaders will continue to monitor any changes from our governing leaders. There will be a great deal of fluidity as week by week we evaluate how this is working. Our goal is to make sure we keep gathering in a responsible and safe way as we enjoy the Means of Grace together on line and in person during the week. If you have questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to share them with me or another leader in our congregation.