

April 7th, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings to you in the name of our crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ!

I pray this letter finds you safe and healthy. You are constantly in my prayers and I am longing for the day when we will be back together in worship. I know I can speak for Pastor Matt, Jim, and Jeff when I say that we are aching to be in worship together. I have heard from many of you that you long for this, too. The day will come, dear friends! But, with the Psalmist, we wonder, “How long, O Lord!”

In this longing to be together, I am aware that many of you are wondering about the Lord’s Supper. Many questions have been raised about how we should take it during this time. I am aware that many churches have considered various options for distributing the sacrament. Pastor Matt and I have discussed these options at great length.

Earlier this week, Pastor Matt and I had a video meeting with the elders to discuss how we ought to practice the Lord’s Supper at this time. It was agreed upon by all that it would be best for our church to refrain from celebrating the Lord’s Supper until we are allowed to meet again. There are too many variables, risks, and questions surrounding the practice at this time. So, we will view this time of quarantine as a time of fasting from the sacrament, even as we prayerfully long to return to the altar.

I know this is hard, especially at a time when we need the reassurance of God’s love for us in Christ. Believe me, I have wrestled over this decision. But, this is not the first time our church body has had to face such decisions. During a similar pandemic in 1918, Lutheran churches refrained from receiving the sacrament until their quarantine ended as well. Unfortunately, we find ourselves in the same situation now.

The Lord’s Supper is a gift that Christ has given to his church that is to be received when the body of believers is gathered together (1 Corinthians 11:17-33). Since we cannot be together, we should not be taking it. However, we are also reminded that the Sacrament is not the only way in which Jesus comes to us. He comes to us by means of baptism and His Word. His Word, as one friend of mine recently reminded me, is the God’s means of getting at us from a distance. By that, he meant that when God’s people are separated, we are still able to get His Word to each other from a ways away. Think of St. Paul sitting in prison, writing to his beloved Philippians.

Now, we are able to get that same Word to you through our online devotions and sermons. You still have the scriptures in your homes. And, while quarantined, you have the chance to read the Bible as a family and to encourage each other with God’s Word. If you live alone, you now have the opportunity to call your brothers and sisters to pray and encourage one another. Though we do not have the Lord’s Supper, we yet have each other, His Word, and the gift of prayer. He has not left us, nor has He forsaken us. We are just in a time of waiting.

Dear saints, I long to have the sacrament with you soon. When we get back together, it will be a day of joy and tears and of the most blessed meal prepared for us by Jesus! Until then, hear the promises: Jesus, who died for you, is risen and He forgives you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.

If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Pastor Matt, myself, or one of your elders. God grant you His peace!

In Christ,

Pastor Bob Hiller

Pastor Matthew Knauss

Lance Andersen, Head Elder