



Hebrews 4:12

SAINT PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod | Rev. Jeffrey Proctor

Sunday, July 5, 2020

Brothers and sisters,

Concern was raised recently over the close contact among congregants in the sanctuary following the Divine Service. As you know, at the end of the service everyone gets up nearly at the same time to make their way out. As people wait to shake my hand or give me a hug, there's bottleneck in the center aisle. A suggestion was made to the Board of Elders that Saint Paul Lutheran Church consider having ushers dismiss congregants, pew by pew, after the Divine Service in order to limit physical contact.

The elders deliberated about this yesterday morning and decided against it. By now everyone is aware of social distancing protocol. Everyone is aware of the face mask policies of the city and county. At Saint Paul Lutheran Church, we have encouraged people to stay home if they are ill or anxious about the coronavirus. We have encouraged people to spread out in the sanctuary. We try to maintain greater distance between communicants at the rail. But we stop at enforcement. We will not rope off every other pew or make you move if you happen to be sitting within 6 feet of someone who is not a member of your family. We will neither require you to wear a face mask nor prohibit you from wearing one. We refuse to be enforcers of these policies. Pew dismissal following the service is a form of enforcement.

If you are concerned with being too close to other people in the center aisle after the service, and wish to maintain greater physical distance, we encourage you to do one of the following:

- 1) You may exit the sanctuary by either the north or south door. Both doors are open before and after the service. You may enter and exit through them in order to prevent close contact with other people.
- 2) You may remain seated in your pew until most congregants have exited the sanctuary. Doing this provides the opportunity to enjoy the organ postlude and continue meditating upon the wondrous gifts you have just received from your Lord.

If you have any questions regarding this decision, you may speak with our Head Elder, Darrell Ahrens, or Pastor Proctor.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Jeff Proctor, Pastor
Darrell Ahrens, Head Elder