



## Calvary Lutheran Church

3 Eayrestown Road  
Medford, NJ 08055  
609-654-2489  
office@calvary-medford.org

Pastor David Small  
609-654-2489  
dsmall@calvarymedford.org  
www.calvary-medford.org

## Little Christians at Calvary Preschool

Director Jan Stehlik  
609-417-2489  
info@littlechristians.org

June 04, 2020

### *From the Desk of Pastor David Small to the visitors and members of Calvary Lutheran Church :*

It is my prayer that you, your families, your friends, and everyone you care about are weathering the storms of these last weeks and months with the faith and hope that we have in Jesus Christ and have received through the Holy Spirit. Each week brings seemingly new challenges and is enough to make one cry out with St. John in the book of Revelation:

“Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.” We continue to pray for peace, love, hope, grace, mercy, faithfulness, gentleness, kindness, and so much more to take root in our land and that the work of the Gospel to transform lives would continue. In the midst of news regarding the Coronavirus pandemic as well as protests and riots around the nation, we have cause to celebrate in the salvation and forgiveness of sins we share in Jesus Christ and in the same Holy Spirit we all share. Jesus is our hope; and the work of the Holy Spirit sanctifies us, and in our redeemed lives gives us the courage to share that hope through our words and actions in our community.

Our Calvary community has worshipped apart for some time now, as we have experienced the worst worldwide pandemic in over one hundred years. And yet, the tide has begun to shift. In last month's letter I mentioned I had been in conversation with our congregational lay leadership in the congregation regarding the criteria for Calvary to once again begin public Sunday worship and how we could work towards that goal. I am joyful to announce that after discussing this with Doug Davidson, our Congregational President, and David Potts, our Head Elder, we are planning to worship together and in-person on June 14<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.

Over these last several months I have been filming Sunday worship services, children's messages, and mid-week devotionals to post onto Facebook and YouTube. I have also been mailing the weekly sermon to our members who are unable to view it online. I will continue filming for our digital services through the month of July and will continue to mail that week's sermon to members who wish to receive it. If you do not feel comfortable attending open worship, please contact me and know that you will still be cared for.

Although the conditions seem to be coming together to allow us to worship as one congregation again, we are still in this time of pandemic and will be taking action to help prevent a spread of the Coronavirus in our congregation. As a result of the congregational leadership meeting, we will be instituting the following practices:

- Attendance will be capped at 20 people. Governor Murphy has indicated he is planning to ease restrictions on indoor meetings next week, though he has not said what that means; as such we will remain flexible. For June 14<sup>th</sup>, however, we are planning for attendance to be capped at 20 people.
- **Physical distancing will be enforced while in the Sanctuary. As attendance will be capped, please let the Church Office know you will be attending with how many to expect in your group. You may call (609-654-2489) or email the Church Office (office@calvary-medford.org) or go to this website: <https://reopen.church/r/jBGiYJY4> to register.**
- If there is a greater demand than anticipated a second service may be added for the following weeks with adjusted times.
- Seating will be assigned by family group and you will receive a confirmation email or note stating that you have been logged for Sunday's worship and what seat you will be in. A bulletin will be waiting for you and each person in your party in the pew seat.
- As you arrive to Calvary Lutheran Church on Sunday, enter through the east door, the door at the ramp side. The door will be kept open until the start of worship. This will help to control the flow of people and ensure that we are touching the least number of common surfaces, such as doorknobs. Please exit through the same door, which will again be kept open at the end of service.
- Please enter and exit the sanctuary through the middle door, which will remain open during the worship service.
- Windows will be opened in the Sanctuary and the air conditioning will be on to help create an environment that is not conducive to spreading the Coronavirus. If you are easily chilled, please consider bringing a light jacket.
- I do know we will all be excited to see each other, and although we are excited we will also remember that physical distancing practices are still in effect.
- In addition, masks will be required, with exemption for medical reasons. If you do not have a mask please let me know and we will provide you with one to wear. I will also be wearing a mask for the church service.
- We will be singing hymns of invocation and departure. There will be no sermon hymn or hymns during communion.
- Offering will be received after the service into a basket or a box on the table. The offering plate will not be passed.
- Likewise, we are temporarily suspending the "Passing of the Peace."
- Communion will be in a "continuous" fashion. The pews on one side of the Sanctuary will be released first, and in a manner that complies with six-foot physical distancing. I will stand at the front of the chancel steps for you to receive the bread, and then you will move to the side to receive the wine from the individual cup. You will then return to your seat. Common cup will not be offered at this time. There will be a group dismissal at the end of the Communion service.

- Communion will be offered on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month.
- I will not be standing in the narthex to receive people at the end of the worship service, and it is requested that physical distancing is kept after the service. The pews will be released from the back to the front.
- For the current time, the coffee hour that would regularly follow the worship service is also being suspended.
- All Sunday and mid-week Bible studies will also remain suspended.

It has been my honor and my joy to serve you in this time of physical and spiritual distress. I pray for each of you and I thank God for each of you. In this time of unrest and uncertainty we continue to thank God for our congregation, for His gifts of life, and for all that he has given us. We continue to pray that his will be done, and that his kingdom come to earth through the work and ministry of our congregation and each individual Christian. God has sustained us in this time through his love and your faith. I cannot wait to see you and speak with you again.

As we rejoin together in the faith and hope and love of Christ, especially having been apart through the last part of Lent, the entirety of the Easter season, and the celebrations of Pentecost and the giving of the Holy Spirit's gifts to the Church, we should ponder what it means to be God's Church on earth. In today's time of restlessness we should ask God how we can bring others to the rest that is found in Jesus, and how we can best reach into our communities to further the Gospel message of life and salvation.

May God continue to bless you and keep you in his care and grace.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Small". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

David Small, Pastor