



PERSPECTIVES

WRITINGS FROM OUR DISTRICT APOSTLE

Thoughts on Reopening of our Congregations

WE BELIEVE....

- A. The Almighty God has established the Church of Christ so that souls can come to His salvation through acceptance of:
 1. Jesus Christ's gospel as proclaimed by His Apostolate
 2. The sacraments
 3. And communion with the community of believers

- B. He has promised to be with us:
 1. Through the teachings of Jesus Christ, the early apostles, apostles of today
 2. The words pronounced and actions done at time of sacraments
 3. Ongoing Divine word
 4. Ongoing Absolution
 5. Ongoing Benediction

- C. Our belief is that through the baptism of water and Spirit, a soul has entered into the nearness of God
 1. *...and lo, I am with you always....*
 2. *No power, principality, etc. can separate from the love of God*
 3. *The love of God has been poured into you through the Holy Spirit*

- D. Our church has established a doctrinal, theological, and liturgical understanding as a framework in which to experience these holy acts.
 1. It is incumbent on us to stay true to this framework as much as possible and practicable to create the appropriate atmosphere of holiness
 2. Over the last years, we have taught and encouraged the *experience* of divine service with a journey from congregational worship, improved preaching, leading to a higher, holier celebration of Holy Communion, etc.
 3. We recall the Chief Apostle's words in the Easter service – "I would have major hesitations and concerns to just change this now (H.C.), because it doesn't fit the current circumstances".

- E. We strive to walk in this newness of life and prepare ourselves for Christ's coming
 1. For each, it is a personal striving/ struggle
 2. God gives aid – bread (word), forgiveness, and communion

- F. The triune God knows (Matthew 6:8):
 1. We want to worship Him *together*
 2. We want to pray and listen to the divine word *together*
 3. We want to celebrate true fellowship with Christ in His communion *together*
 4. We want to greet and share life *together* with each other



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- G. Jesus said tempting/ testing God is sinful (2nd temptation in wilderness)
1. Satan wanted God to “reconfirm” Jesus was His Son
 - a. He did this already at the baptism
 - b. Christ was satisfied with this confirmation
 2. We are true believing Christians, we shall not allow Satan to convince us to test God; He already has promised to be with us – Are we satisfied?
- H. Finally, we must consider the universality and omni-power of God:
1. His omnipotence – if He wishes, He, alone, can solve this pandemic, in His unique ways, *in His time*.
 - a. *Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*
 2. His omniscience – He knows our longing to be in divine service and to celebrate fellowship with Christ in Holy Communion
 - a. And as in everything with His people, our willingness and desire is of higher regard to Him than our actions
 - b. *The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him. Nahum 1:6-8*
 3. His omnipresence – *we know* He is with us, even though we are not in a divine service and not celebrating Holy Communion, because we have developed a personal relationship with Him both in the divine service and outside of it.
 - a. *For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7*
 4. CA Schneider: “As long as it is in God’s will that we cannot celebrate Holy Communion, He will provide us with whatever we need.”
 5. Can we believe that God has the desire and power to care for and nourish us and is not bound by the sacraments; that He can work directly in such times? We truly need them, but God can work beyond them *Our God is in heaven and can do whatsoever He pleases...*
- I. We deserve and are entitled to nothing.... all is grace.

We Understand...

- A. The pandemic is not a human force that we can fight, but a natural force allowed by God
1. Showing our resistance and resilience to it will not defeat it
 2. It is quite unknown to us, even the most learned
 3. It takes at least 2 weeks to show results of changes, i.e. reopenings
 4. Because of this, we should seek to protect our members
 5. By God’s grace, biological solutions can be found
 6. We cannot apply neither OT or NT struggles or persecutions of enemies as examples to conquer this. In our hymn – “not to the strong...but to the true and faithful, victory is promised”



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- B. Jesus taught us to love our neighbor; this implores us to care for and protect each other
 - 1. Even if this means we have to wait longer to congregate.

- C. Time is not a factor for our faith
 - 1. It is for economy, political world, etc.
 - 2. Yes, we have to consider our material resources, but not at a health cost to our members
 - 3. Our faith should not diminish with less services, communion, gatherings, et
 - a. Consider numerous Biblical and recent time period examples
 - 4. Coming to church for us is not obligation, but a joy, a privilege, a gratuitous gift...

WE CONCLUDE

- We are secure with the Lord!
- We have the aid and strength of God in the divine word, absolution, and benediction
- Not being entitled, we will wait for right time for Holy Communion
- We want to experience a divine service in the best way possible during this time – safest, yet with the least amount of distraction from or disruption to our liturgical elements