

**A report from Loran Sell and Pastor Patricia** - we attended a Zoom meeting 4/29/2020 with Marion County Commissioner C. Willis along with local church, synagogue and mosque leaders in Marion County. The topic was stated to be – reopening churches.

It became clear early in the conversation that Commissioner Willis and later Jody Christensen, Mid Valley Regional Solutions coordinator for the Oregon Governor's office were seeking our input regarding the relaxing of stay at home restrictions in the state of Oregon, their affect on churches and their activities, consideration as other venues, i.e., bars and restaurants.

Conversation began with Commissioner Willis speaking of Phase 1 restrictions with items for discussion being: 1. Size of gathering 2. Time spent in proximity 3. Singing as an additional issue for protection. The state is considering a 3 phase reopening with Phase 1 groups 10 or less, Phase 2 groups of 50 or less, and larger groups in Phase 3. Churches were originally in Phase 3 but are proposed to be moved to Phase 1. In addition to the 3 above, requirements for reopening may include but not be limited to: cleaning and sanitizing, tracking, time between services, social distancing and masks.

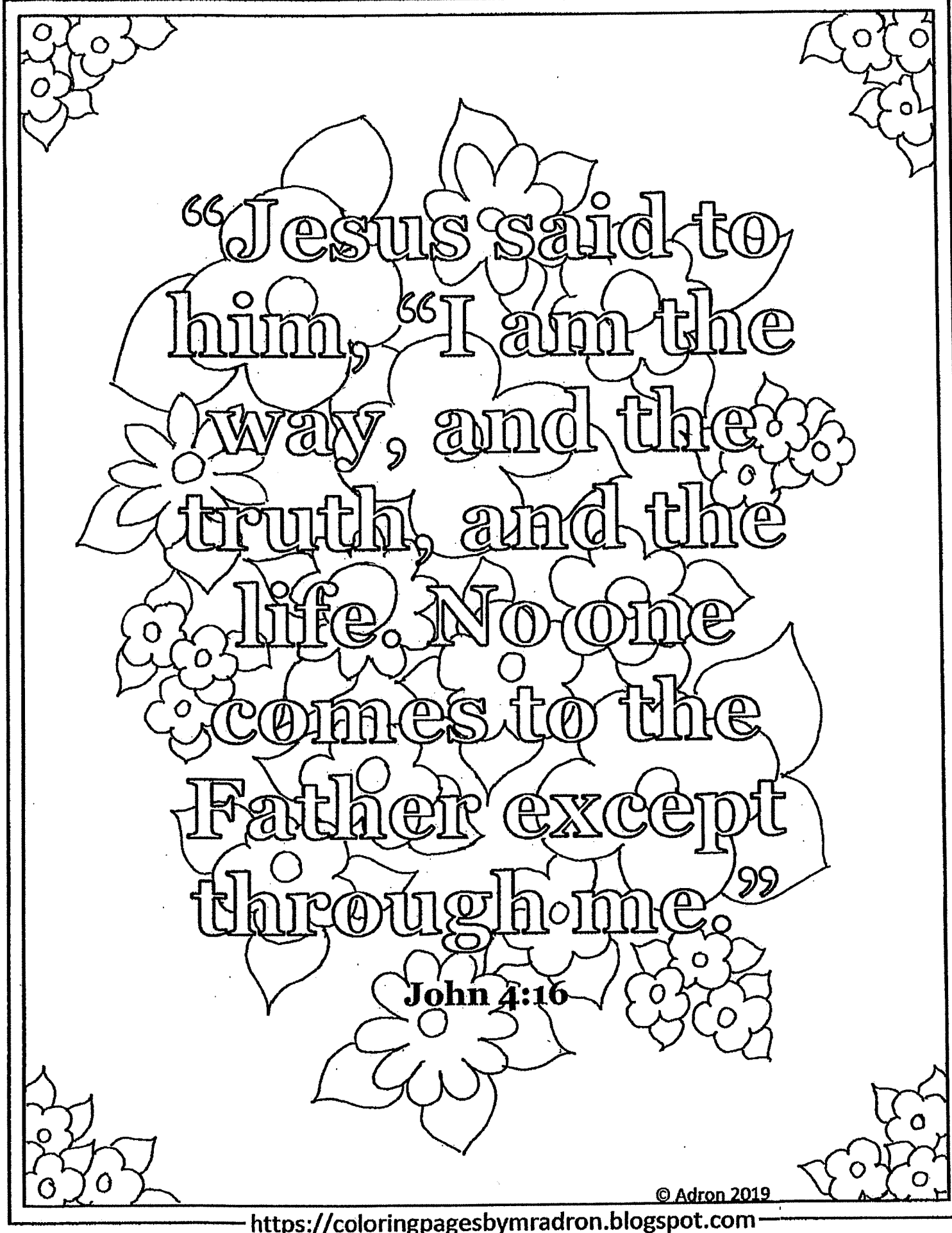
There was discussion about using fire capacity in our buildings as a criteria for determining allowable group sizes and allowing church group sizes of 50 in the early phases. There were also discussions on holding simultaneous meetings in adjoining spaces and cleaning guidelines between services.

Katrina Rothenberger, public health contact, was also on the call and explained that children were a big factor in our decisions going forward. Guidelines coming out for child care facilities will be helpful in making decisions about child participation in churches.

When the issue of Holy Communion was brought up Commissioner Willis specifically stated that he felt the government should make no guidelines about Holy Communion because it is solely a church matter. He did emphasize that distancing and food preparation guidelines were to be followed.

Pastor requested the governor review the policies of not allowing pastors into hospitals and care facilities as it effectively denies these people the pastoral care they need at critical times. She also suggested that funerals in a church building are easier to control social distancing than at a graveside service.

Ms. Christensen from the governor's office commented on testing kits, temperature checks upon entering buildings, and the uncertainty of the length of each phase. They are asking vulnerable populations (over 60 and immunocompromised) to remain in place at least through phase 1, thus limiting church services to healthy and younger populations. – *Folks, we offer you this information so you can stay on top of the developments - blessings+*



“Jesus said to  
him, “I am the  
way, and the  
truth, and the  
life. No one  
comes to the  
Father except  
through me.”

**John 4:16**

**WORSHIPPING AT HOME WITH HOLY CROSS - FIFTH SUNDAY IN  
EASTER - MAY 10, 2020.**

**THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM**

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism,  
we are raised with him to new life.

Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We give you thanks, O God,  
for in the beginning you created us in your image  
and planted us in a well-watered garden.

In the desert you promised pools of water for the parched,  
and you gave us water from the rock.

When we did not know the way,  
you sent the Good Shepherd to lead us to still waters.

At the cross, you watered us from Jesus' wounded side,  
and on this day, you shower us again with the water of life.

We praise you for your salvation through water,  
for the water in this font,  
and for all water everywhere.

Bathe us in your forgiveness, grace, and love.

Satisfy the thirsty, and give us the life only you can give.

To you be given honor and praise  
through Jesus Christ our Lord

in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

**GATHERING HYMN ELW 619**

*"I Know That My Redeemer Lives!"*

1 I know that my Redeemer lives!  
What comfort this sweet sentence gives!  
He lives, he lives, who once was dead;  
he lives, my ever-living head!

7 He lives and grants me daily breath;  
he lives, and I shall conquer death;  
he lives my mansion to prepare;  
he lives to bring me safely there.

8 He lives, all glory to his name!  
He lives, my Savior, still the same;  
what joy this blest assurance gives:  
I know that my Redeemer lives!

**\*\*PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life.  
Give us grace to love one another, to follow in the way of his  
commandments, and to share his risen life with all the world, for he lives  
and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**WORD**

*Please open your Bible to the following readings;*

**\*\*FIRST READING: Acts 7:55-60**

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**\*\*PSALM: Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16**

**\*\*SECOND READING: 1 Peter 2:2-10**

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:**

Lord, to whom shall we go?

**You have the words of eternal life.**

**Glory and praise to you, O lord Jesus Christ?**

**\*\*GOSPEL: John 14:1-14 (A recorded version can be found on  
[www.holycrosslutheran-salem.org](http://www.holycrosslutheran-salem.org))**

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**NICENE CREED**

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

**We believe in one God,**

**the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,**

**of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,**

**the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation**

**he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary  
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven**

**and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,\*  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.**

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

*Please see attached prayers.*

### **OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray.

God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

When our congregation gathered for the celebration of Holy

Communion, we heard again the story of God's mighty acts and of the love shown us in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. With thanksgiving we remembered that "in the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

The people of our congregation were given assurance of our Lord's presence through the gift of his Holy Spirit. As you worship in your homes, we remember the gift of communion that we share.

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me shall never hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

***At this time, you may remember the gift of holy communion with your own bread and cup.***

**Communion Blessing** The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in His grace. **Amen**

**LORD'S PRAYER** Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

**BLESSING**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and † give you peace. **Amen.**

**Praying together at Holy Cross – May 10, 2020**

**We pray for those in leadership in our country, our state and our cities. May God sustain them and continue to point them to compassionate, quick and well-informed response.**



**Lord, in your mercy      Hear Our Prayer**

**We pray for those who have health worries at this time – especially those whose surgeries and procedures have been postponed due to the pandemic. *(specific people are mentioned here)***

**Lord, in your mercy      Hear Our Prayer**

**We pray for work that sustains us – both spiritually, and financially, and for small business struggling in this time. *(specific people are mentioned here)***

**Lord, in your mercy      Hear Our Prayer**

**We pray for families, teachers, parents and students. Give us all a hunger for learning and a desire for new things. *(specific people are mentioned here)***

**Lord, in your mercy      Hear Our Prayer**

**We pray for those feeling isolated and alone, that you would comfort them and offer them peace. *(specific people are mentioned here)***

**Lord, in your mercy      Hear Our Prayer**

**We pray for the growth and bounty of the earth. Help farmers and ranchers to find markets for their goods, and continue to provide food for the world. *(specific people are mentioned here)***

**Lord, in your mercy      Hear Our Prayer**

**For this and all those matters, circumstances and individuals whose needs are brought to mind at this time. *(specific people are mentioned here)***

**Lord, in your mercy      Hear Our Prayer**

**We pray for all who mother, in whatever circumstances. Give us each a gracious thankfulness for their gift of care and regard. Thank you, Lord, for loving us. It is what makes all the difference. Amen.**

Sermon for May 3, 2020 The Fourth Sunday of Easter.

The light is in the people, and in the moments where we show each other we care. I've said these words to you before. Actually, in a sermon, my sermon for the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent, and here we are in the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Easter. The rhythm of life is something I notice a lot, and here it is the rhythm of worship – Lent has come and gone, as well as Holy Week, and Easter Sunday and now we are at the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter and we're back to the gospel of John. March 22<sup>nd</sup> I talked to you about John chapter 9 and now, we finally finish that story in John chapter 10. Our theme here at Holy Cross for Lent was "Conversations Matter". Jesus does his best teaching, his best relating to be people, heart to heart in the conversations in the gospel of John. John 9, which we read on March 22, is all about the man born blind who Jesus miraculously heals, and then, it's all about the bickering that the bossy people in authority do as they try to wittle down the miracle of the man who regained his sight. This reading from John 10 is what follows the bickering. Jesus sits the difficult people down and tells them a story.

I love the story he tells them, all about the Sheep who are loved and cared for by the shepherd. You've heard this story before, "The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice." You know in your heart, and from the stories you've heard, that Jesus is the good shepherd, benevolently caring for the sheep, with love and care. But he is also the fierce protector of the sheep. As Jesus tells those bossy and unpleasant listeners here in John 10, He is the gate. When the sheep are in the sheepfold, drowsy with sleep in the night, the shepherd lays down in the opening of the sheepfold. He is the gate, The one that lets them in to rest, and the one who will fend off evildoers and those who would harm the sheep. He will protect them all night. It's his purpose, his calling. As Jesus tells this story to those bossy and unpleasant folks who refused to embrace and care for the man born blind who received his sight from Jesus, I don't think there's much doubt what Jesus is doing. He's warning the evildoers. I protect my own, with all the fierceness that is needed. Don't try to hurt the ones I love. I will defend them. But, even more than that, Jesus is being pastoral to these Pharisees. He knows they are flawed, weak people, worthy of his love as much as the man born blind was worthy.

I started this sermon today with these words – the light is in the people and in the moments where we show each other we care. Have you ever had a backyard dinner, where you had one of those candles in a jar to protect it from the wind? The wind still blows the flame around, so that it flickers and dances with gusto. For me, this time as I read these words in John 10, Jesus' protective nature comes out loud and clear for me – like a sturdy glass jar protecting a candle, God is surrounding us all, you and me, and all the peoples of the world. We have lived through one of the most frightening times in our world. Thousands of people have died. Thousands more have been taken seriously ill. Thousands are out of work, and so many have been locked down, quarantined, in their homes, or nursing homes. We have not been able to gather in worship in our church.

And so I am drawn to this conversation Jesus has with those who would hurt his people. Don't try it I hear him saying. I protect I defend. I keep people safe. And that includes you. Jesus and his light are all around us, and our own light is within a protected space. Jesus' purpose is to protect us. I believe that. The light is in the people and in the moments where we show each other we care. And, in this conversation Jesus has with the bossy people, people like us, he reminds us again, that protecting us, caring for us, and nurturing our light is Jesus' purpose on earth – to be the human gate protecting his flock from all danger. Amen.

-Pastor Patricia Hughes+