

Friends and Family of Bethlehem Lutheran Church,

Advent Greetings to you all, I hope you are enjoying a meaningful Advent season steeped in the promise that God comes to the world at Christmas in the birth of Jesus. The world continues to experience the challenges of life together during a pandemic and by now, you are probably aware that the California Department of Public Health has issued a mask mandate while indoors, effective today. The leadership of this church has provided updates as changes and adjustments have occurred related to the pandemic. We are at another time of adjustment and we ask for your patience as we continue to navigate these days. The following is from the CDPH website, regarding the new mask mandate: **"...the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is requiring masks to be worn in all indoor public settings, irrespective of vaccine status, for the next four weeks (December 15, 2021 through January 15, 2022)."**

In response to this newly issued mandate, I strongly encourage you to observe this while out in public; which includes attending worship, meetings, and events at Bethlehem Lutheran. I also strongly encourage you to observe physical distancing guidelines while at the church, the sanctuary pews are marked with strips of blue painters tape, these strips of tape indicate areas where you should distance yourself from other households. I know that this is not the situation we want to be in, especially at this time of year but out of an abundance of caution, care, and concern for one another and to prevent any further regression, I ask that we all observe this updated mandate. If you are not comfortable in attending worship in-person, we continue to provide recordings of all of our worship services, including Christmas Eve.

You can find our recorded services at:

Homepage of our church website: www.blcla.org

Church Facebook Page: Search for: Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Los Alamitos, CA on Facebook

YouTube: Search for: Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Los Alamitos, CA Click on "Videos" and you'll have access to all of our recorded worship services

A couple of procedural updates during worship:

Offering: Beginning this Sunday, as you come forward for communion, you may place your offering in an offering plate that will be in the front of the church, close to where you'll receive communion and an offering plate will continue to be available in the narthex.

Holy Communion: At this time we are planning to continue distributing communion as we have been for the past few months; people are invited to come forward to receive the elements, communion servers will be gloved and masked. You may also receive communion in the pew from the servers or you may pick up one of the prepackaged communion kits in the narthex and consume them from your seat during communion.

On behalf of the leadership of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, we continue to be grateful for the grace and patience you have shown as we have had to make changes and adjustments for worship and other activities held at the church. We are hopeful (a resounding theme in this Advent season), that by observing this latest mask mandate, we are doing our part to ensure the health and safety of all who participate in the life of this congregation and to all those we gather with and come in contact with beyond our buildings.

Peace, Love, and Joy,

Pastor Jennifer Schultz