



Dear Vinje Family,

Vinje's leadership has been hard at work in the last weeks creating a plan for our continued response to the Covid-19 crisis. Our council approved guidelines for how Vinje will move forward at their July 20 meeting. For many months, our church has learned how to be the church amid a pandemic, and we are now prepared to adjust some of the ways that we share worship, fellowship, and study together. While we are in no way back to "normal," we are excited to be moving in a positive direction that we believe we can maintain with everyone doing their part to keep our community safe.

WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH WORSHIP?

Vinje is excited to offer an in-person worship service starting on August 2. We will gather outside at Green Lake Lutheran Bible Camp (9916 Lake Avenue South in Spicer). Worship will take place at 10:00 AM on the lakeshore and consist of liturgy, songs, prayers, scripture, and a sermon. Masks or facial coverings will be required and individuals and family units will sit in prearranged chairs that are socially distant from others. We will continue to worship at camp through Labor Day weekend with our last Sunday at camp being September 6. If you are planning to attend worship, we ask that you submit a reservation for worship either online or by calling the church office Monday through Wednesday. You will need to make a reservation each week in order to allow us to properly prepare for worship seating.

Our virtual worship services will continue to be broadcast on the radio and shared online. The format of these services will be unchanged and the sermon and other worship elements from the online service will be the same shared at camp. The radio and online service will contain weekly communion opportunities. We encourage those with pre-existing health concerns or who have an elevated risk to choose this option. Similarly, if you are experiencing any symptoms related to Covid-19 (fever, shortness of breath, sore throat, coughing, loss of taste/smell), you are asked to refrain from attending in-person worship.

Right now, our plan is to return to the sanctuary for in-person worship services starting on September 13. Please know that this will come with many restrictions from what we are used to. Masks and social distancing will be required and due to these factors, worship attendance will be limited to 75. Elements of worship such as congregational singing, communion, and group recitation of the liturgy will all be restricted due to increased risk such activities have of spreading the virus.

WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH FAITH FORMATION?

While there has been much conversation with committees, council leaders, and the Covid task force, decisions on our children and youth ministries will come after we have had more time to study the plans from the Minnesota Department of Education and Willmar Public Schools. Stay tuned for more information.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I MISS THE WAY THINGS USED TO BE?

DO YOU MISS YOUR VINJE FRIENDS? Consider attending or hosting a small group gathering of Vinje members in your backyard. In the last few weeks, we have had over 20 gatherings and we certainly hope these meetings continue. Our relationships with one another are an important part of being church, and we have no idea when we will be sharing coffee in the Fellowship Hall again.

DO YOU MISS THE SANCTUARY? We are happy to schedule a time for you to come to the sanctuary for personal prayer and reflection. We will be setting aside time each Tuesday for this purpose. Karen is willing to share a few minutes of organ music if you would like this to be included in your personal devotions. If you would like to set up a visit, please contact the Vinje office. Masks are required while you are in the building.

DO YOU MISS STUDY GROUPS? We continue to offer a weekly study of the Sunday scripture every Wednesday morning on Zoom. Look for details in our weekly emails or contact the church office.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW?

- Our Loving Arms ministry continues to operate as they have throughout the crisis. Our teachers and staff have been excellent as they provide childcare to our community, including many essential workers.
- The Vinje building will remain locked at this time. While we encourage you to contact the staff by phone and email, we ask that you refrain from visiting the building without setting up an appointment to do so. Minimizing the amount of people in the building is currently important. Our pastors are happy to meet with people at outdoor locations or share conversations over the phone.
- You can view the complete version of the guidelines approved by Vinje's Council on our website.
- Please know that Vinje's plans are always subject to change as our community's response to the virus changes. Decisions to limit in-person gatherings will be based on the state and local infection rate. If that rises, you can expect to see in-person gatherings restricted or postponed.

We are confident that we will get through this time together. We are grateful to all of Vinje's members for the way that we have stayed a strong community of faith through this trial. Clearly God has remained faithful and the Holy Spirit continues to work through us. Thank you for all you do at Vinje and throughout God's world to share the love and light of Christ.

-Pastor Justin