



Lower Susquehanna Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

September 11, 2020

"I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ."

- Philippians 1:3-6

Dear Lower Susquehanna Synod Lutherans:

I begin today by echoing the gratitude prayer we hear in the first chapter of Philippians, "**I thank my God every time I remember you.**" These words embody my heartfelt appreciation for the many ways your faithful responses in this prolonged COVID-19 season continue to save lives. Based on the [attached results of our recent synod-wide congregational worship survey](#), you continue to make faithful decisions that keep people safe within your context. Your diligence in honoring the safety recommendations and protocols remains critical to the health and well-being of our churches and communities.

As you may be aware, this week [Governor Wolf loosened capacity restrictions for restaurants and some businesses beginning September 21](#). Although this announcement does not provide direct instruction to churches, with the continued use of masks and spoken liturgies, we believe it is safe to begin worshiping in our buildings at 50% capacity as of September 21.

Caution exhibited to this point effectively prevented outbreaks in our congregations. **Please continue to reduce the risk of spread through physical distancing, proper sanitation protocols, and use of face coverings.** We also ask that you continue to discern what is best for your congregation and community based on local concerns. As we continue to receive guidance from the CDC and Pennsylvania Department of Health, we will remain in communication with you.

Additionally, today marks the 19th anniversary of 9/11. **May we dedicate ourselves to Christ's common mission of reconciliation and restoration around peace, justice and interfaith dialogue and engagement.** Through our baptismal call, we are freed in Christ to do God's work with our hands. With the Good News of Jesus Christ as our sure and certain hope for mission and ministry, I continue to hold each one of you in prayer.

With you in Christ,

†James S. Dunlop, bishop
Lower Susquehanna Synod, ELCA
www.lss-elca.org

717-652-1852

900 S. Arlington Ave. Suite 220B
Harrisburg, PA 17109