



Indiana-Kentucky Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

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Rev. Dr. William O. Gafkjen, Bishop

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Dear People of God,

Since my pastoral letter of a couple of weeks ago, the rise in numbers of positive Covid cases has accelerated, as have positivity percentages and the number of hospitalizations and deaths. Not one county in either Kentucky or Indiana is in the safest Covid category as I write this note. Vaccines are on the way but it's clear that they won't be widely available and effective for another few months.

As exhausted and impatient as we might be, it is crucial that we do whatever we can to stem the tide of this plague for our own sakes and for the sake of our neighbors, even if it means following Jesus in the way of the cross by sacrificing for a time some things that are important and meaningful to us.

In that vein, I strongly recommend that all worshipping communities of this synod suspend in-person in-door worship as soon as possible and continue the suspension at least through the end of the year. Please return to outdoor, digital, recorded, and live-streamed worship until the numbers and percentages of new positive covid cases drop significantly and consistently in your county and across the territory.

Synod staff are busy preparing and curating a wide variety of worship and other resources for Advent and Christmas to assist congregations and their leaders to move together through this challenging time faithfully and well. These resources can be accessed through the synod web site: www.iksynod.org.

Thank you for your partnership in caring for one another and for our neighbors with the love and grace we see and know in Jesus crucified and risen for the life of the world.

Peace be with you,

The Rev. Dr. William O. Gafkjen, Bishop