Fellow Redeemed,

Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

First off, my prayers continue to be with each individual member of the congregation. Each week I take the church roster and take five family units and place them in my prayer journal and I remember them in my prayers each week. Over the last two years since you first called about inquiring if I was open to considering a call until now, you have been special and supportive throughout this time. You have walked with me through the darkest of days with our miscarriage, you celebrated with us even during a Pandemic at my 10th Ordination anniversary and the birth of Naomi. You are all incredibly special to me and thank you very much.

We all are aware that the last 6 months have not been easy for any of us, no matter what our thoughts and opinions are on the Covid-19 Pandemic. There are disagreements in politics, health care, and even the church at how to best respond with various aspects of the Public Health crisis. Some do not even call it a crisis. I have struggled with how to respond. We have increased physical distancing during the worship service, we have sanitized the pews, among other things. The hot-button topic right now is the use of face masks in Worship as well as in the general public. At our regular Elders meeting this past Monday, September 7, 2020 it was decided out of love and care for all in the congregation that we will add a second service again. **This service will be held at 7:45 AM beginning on September 20 and will be a mask mandatory service.** Please wear your mask the entire service, unless you are receiving the Lord’s Supper on Communion Sundays. This will hopefully help some of our members return to church to receive the Word in person and the Sacrament with their fellow members, who have not returned since we have not required masks at Salem. We hope that this will be a happy medium amongst all our members. With this being stated we will then move our **9:00 AM service to 9:15 AM** to allow for a bit of time to reset the sanctuary.

The other issue at hand is how do we conduct Voter’s Meetings when we do not require masks and we want our members to cast their ballots. We have a meeting scheduled for **September 27 at 10:30 AM** to discuss and vote on the Childcare facility updates. **We will be doing this in the parking lot and utilizing our call-in so that you can listen.** We will ask you to remain in your cars. We will be figuring out how to take questions and details will be released soon.

Our annual meeting for election of officers and the passing of the 2021 budget is scheduled for November 15. Please stay tuned for how that meeting will be carried out.

We will have three offices up for election at our 2020 annual meeting: Vice-President, Secretary, and Chairmen of the Board of Elders. Chris Severt, Kelly Cornelius, and Tim Dennis are not eligible for reelection. Please consider serving on the Church Council.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Pastor Michael Nielsen