

March 18, 2020

Dear Members of St. John's Lutheran Church,

These past few days have been full of concerning news for all of us and we find ourselves in very trying times. These past few days have been unparalleled in history as we have seen the closing of schools, restaurants and many small businesses. Many restrictions have been put in place to help curb the advancement of COVID-19 along with the recommendation of not having functions of more than 10 people. Actually we are being asked to stay home as much as possible and take care of one another as best we can.

As American citizens we know that our government has a responsibility to protect its citizenry. As Lutherans, we have a robust theology, rooted in the truth of scripture, that compels us toward love of God and love for our neighbor while honoring those in authority over us. In an effort to honor the requests made by our civil authorities to aid in preventing the spread of the COVID-19, St. John's is taking the following steps:

All on-site worship services, including Wednesday night Lenten Services and suppers, Sunday Worship, Bible Classes, Sunday School and Confirmation class and any other activities for the next two weeks, including the weekends of March 22 and 29 are canceled.

Pastor Ruckman is available by phone as usual at all times for anyone who would like or has need of contacting him. If you have prayer requests please let him know, he prays for you all daily. We don't have a plan for alternate worship at this time but many LCMS churches have online options that you are welcome to access. Jesus says he is present where two or three are gathered together in his name (Matthew 18:20). Join in worship, prayer, Bible study and singing in your homes with your family.

During this time, your tithes and offerings can be dropped off or mailed to the church, which ever works the best for you at this time. We are asking that you remember the importance of continued stewardship, even in these moments, to keep our congregation ready to move forward when life gets back to normal!

This plan will remain in effect until early April at which time the Church Council will re-evaluate the situation moving forward. It is our hope that we will be able to share the services of Holy Week together in God's House but we must wait and see what remains in the best interest of everyone.

At this time of fear and uncertainty in our world, these verses from God's Word turn us to our sure and certain hope in Christ Jesus. Psalm 46 verses 1-3, 10-11: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling.....Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth! The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

We can work our way through this together, with patience and love, and with the confidence of our Lord Jesus Christ and the encouragement of His Holy Spirit, going forward in the love of Jesus and lifting one another up in prayer.

In Christ,

Pastor Gary Ruckman

Pastor and Council Members