

March 18, 2020

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ at Faith Lutheran,

You have heard from the Council President about the decision to cancel worship services for an indefinite period of time due to concerns of the spread of the Corona virus. This decision was made reluctantly. It is hard enough to miss regular Sunday worship, but especially hard for probably missing worship during Holy Week and Easter. Yet we must be concerned about the health of the good folks at Faith Lutheran. The infection by the Corona virus is a serious threat especially for our elderly members and those with chronic medical issues. Our national and state governments are calling for cancellations of gatherings even with only ten people. Our Synod Bishop, Rev. Katherine Finegan, has even suggested churches suspend services for the time being out of concern for the safety for members of all ages.

During this time please do not think the church is closed. I will still keep office hours on Tuesday mornings if you wish to come to the church for conversation or request a visit. I will respond to requests for hospital visits of your loved ones if at all possible. The secretary, MaryBeth, has office hours on Tuesday-Thursday and she can also relay your concerns to me or others in the congregation.

Because of Sunday service cancellation there is a concern about your weekly offering. Please do not forget about your weekly or monthly giving to the church. Please mail your offerings to Faith Lutheran Church, or drop by the church on Tuesday-Thursday mornings with your financial gift. As you can appreciate, expenses have not been cancelled. Speaking of finances, I would like to complement the good people of Faith Lutheran for their incredibly generous support of local ministries that help the needy. May we ever keep the poor in mind, pray for them, and perhaps come up with ways for outreach in this time of financial stress for many,

We are exploring ways to meet your spiritual needs during this time. You will find enclosed a weekly devotional guide, "Taking Faith Home". For weeks to come this will be emailed to you. For those without computer access, this helpful resource will be mailed. Another good resource is from our Synod's website, nglsynod.org. There you will find the daily devotional guide called PRAY FAITHFULLY. We are also exploring a weekly sermon through the live-streaming technology at Faith.

They call the Corona virus a pandemic meaning it is a world-wide health threat for millions. Since we know God so loved the world that he sent us Jesus, we are called to pray for those suffering with this illness worldwide. It is time to pray 'real hard' for our local community, the nation, the world, medical staff, and hospital staff putting their lives on the line to save our lives. We must not forget those living in nursing facilities.

It is natural to be afraid. We are facing a serious threat to our health. But as people of faith, let us not be overcome. The prophet Isaiah spoke to people who were fearful, "Do not fear, for I am with you. Do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. I will help you; I will uphold you with my victorious right hand." (Isaiah 41: 10) Let us be confident of God's help, Jesus' promise to be with us always for the duration of whatever we have to face, and the Holy Spirit's grace ever reminding us that we are precious children of God.

God's peace be with you,

Pastor John Kuziej