

First Lutheran Church

Friday, March 13, 2020

Brothers and Sisters in Christ and friends in the Ottumwa area,

Our Lord instructed His followers, "Do not let your hearts be troubled, and neither let them be afraid," (John 14:27).



I am uplifted by the reminder that, when God instructs us to "not be afraid," it also comes with a promise. This means that we can be confident in God's guidance and protection through any types of concerns, risks, and dangers -- including the coronavirus.

Fear is a natural human response. Faith is a gift from God. As people of faith, we pray, we trust, and we carefully weigh situations that call for the care of the community.

The coronavirus confronts us with unforeseen challenges and opportunities.

First, following public health guidelines, all activities have either been suspended or switched to an online format as follows:

Worship

(check this website for link to online service)

- | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Sunday Worship | Facebook Live stream | 9:30 am |
| 2. Wednesday Lent services | Cancelled | |
| 3. Thursday Chapel | TBA | watch for details |

Holy Week

(check this website for link to online service)

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|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Maundy Thursday, Apr 9 | Facebook Live stream | 7:00 pm |
| 2. Good Friday, Apr 10 | Facebook Live stream | 1:00 pm, for Kids'
7:00 pm, all ages |

WOW

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Families are encouraged to be diligent with "God-Time" | |
| 2. Pre-k thru Grade 5 | Watch for Announcements |
| 3. Confirmation | Watch for Announcements |
| 4. High School | Watch for Announcements |

Connexus

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Plan is to meet via Zoom | Watch for Announcements & details |
| 2. Group leaders will be contacting group members | |

NOTE also:

- Sunday Cafe is closed until further notice
- Lenten Services & Suppers are all cancelled

We will continue to assess the situation and announce any other changes as necessary.

(Continued on next page) ➔

Pastor Mark L. Johnson

Youth Coordinator: Geri Kearney

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Christ's promise to us is that he "...has already overcome the world," (John 16:33). His love for the world was proven on the cross. His victory over any intruder is in place. Our decision is based on this faith and this confidence.

This brings me to the opportunity this situation opens to us. The coronavirus will keep us from gathering as we normally do. However, we can reconnect with the tradition of personal devotions in God-Time. We can also use tools like social media to keep us connected if health concerns keep us from gathering together. Social media can also open doors for us beyond our usual ways of reaching out.

Here's what we are asking YOU to DO:

1. Feel free to share any information we share with you
2. Invest in your spiritual nourishment through God-Time in your home
Engage, Connect, Share, Pray (see *Church's Facebook page for explanation*)
3. Pray that God's presence would be made known through our church and our people in a way that others will come to know the compassion of Jesus
4. Pray for our government leaders, our neighbors, and those directly affected by this illness
5. Consider creative ways to reach out to those isolated in quarantine
(such as phone, Skype, or FaceTime)
6. Keep checking the church's website & Facebook page for updates & God-Time resources
7. Continue to support the church financially so that, together, we can continue to renew hope in the community. Consider donating online through this website if it is available

May God strengthen us so that we can be a blessing to others.

My goal is to serve you. If you need to connect with me, please call or text me at 641-954-2753.

May God's peace and love be experienced by all!



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