

Our Savior Lutheran Ministries



Dear Friends in Christ,

I think it is safe to say that we live in interesting times. Things happen all around us that at times can be unsettling and quite frankly scary. In times like these, I am reminded of the words of David from Psalm 23:

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ² He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. ³ He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. ⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

No matter what the threat or the object of our fear might be, we know that every step of the way God is with us. We know that even though things might be scary, God still has the whole world in His hands. And so in times like these, we continue to put our hope and trust in God alone.

With that said, it is wise and prudent for us to be attentive to the situation of what is going on around us and take appropriate precautions. This is increasingly necessary in the Bay Area today with the continued threat of the Coronavirus. As a staff, we have been carefully monitoring this situation and listening to the experts within our region, especially our county, in terms of suggested and recommended responses. On the one hand, we do not want to overreact, while on the other hand we want to be sensitive to the health concerns of all within our community and show good judgment. We feel it best at this time to have a plan in place to minimize the risk of everyone getting the Coronavirus. At this point there are no confirmed cases of the Coronavirus at OSLM and so school and worship will continue as scheduled with precautions taking place.

Here are the following precautions we are taking at this time to avoid contamination or the spread of the virus:

- We strongly encourage everyone to wash their hands thoroughly and often. Please do your best to avoid touching your face with your hands (yes, I know that's hard!).
- If you are sick and running a fever, or have been within the last 24 hours, we urge you to stay home until at least 24 hours after you are feeling better. If you have a cough, please cough into your sleeve or elbow, not your hand.
- Staff, ushers and volunteers will clean key touchpoints before worship gatherings. Instead of greeters shaking your hands, they will greet you by opening the door for you on Sunday morning to limit the number of touches on the door handles.
- We are requesting that you please refrain from handshakes and hugs. The head nod or elbow bump will have to do for now.
- The facilities continue to receive disinfectant treatments as recommended by CDC guidelines.

- No paper bulletins or handouts will be used, as paper has been identified as a carrier after being touched by someone who is infected. Everything that you need for worship will be up on the screen. On Fridays, we will send out a large print copy of the bulletin and announcements for you to have electronically or to print at home for those who cannot read the screen.
- Offerings will be collected before or after church at the doors rather than passing offering plates.
- Paper and pencils have been removed from the pews. Prayer requests can be submitted online to oslm@oslm.net or to yow@comcast.net.
- Fellowship Hour coffee and food will be suspended at this time.
- We will alert you if we are required to cancel worship services.
- We will have sermons available online for streaming for those who are unable to attend worship.
- Please be aware of the CDC and Alameda County Department of Health suggestion that people in higher risk groups avoid larger public events. This includes
 1. People over the age of 60.
 2. People with health problems or compromised immune systems

If you have been exposed to the Coronavirus please contact the church office and county health officials.

As always, in situations like these, please remember:

- God is still God and still upon His throne.
- God is with us each and every step of the way.
- God's got this, but it is also smart for us to use our best common sense.
- Neither death nor life nor even the Coronavirus can separate us from God's love for us.
- God opens doors for us in moments like these to show His love to each other, our community and our world. How can we in the midst of this moment be the light of Christ to the people that God has placed around us? This is a great opportunity for ministry.

In the coming weeks we want to be especially mindful to those who are the most susceptible, and provide help to those who may need to stay home for extended periods of time. If this is you or someone you know, please let us know so that we can be of help. Please continue to join us in prayer for all those who are being impacted by the Coronavirus as well as for wisdom for those who are responsible within our community for making decisions to keep all of us safe.

Thanks for all of your help and understanding in this matter. We truly appreciate it.



Pastor Kevin Austin