



Good Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church

28680 Cherry Hill Road
Garden City, MI 48135-2799
Church Office (734) 427-3660
Church Fax (734) 522-5613
Deacon Keith A. Miller

April 12, 2020

Good Hope Sisters and Brothers,

Alleluia, Christ is risen! He has risen indeed!

I am writing this letter to you on Easter morning, the day that in a normal year, we would be together in worship ... singing with one great voice that Christ has risen. But of course, our experiences this Easter are far from what anybody would have guessed. And while the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we are conducting our lives and worshipping right now, it cannot change or redefine us as children of the living God, who on that day so long ago, killed eternal death. Yes, things are certainly different for each of us today, and when we are able to return to worshipping together, we should not expect things to immediately return exactly to the way they were before this pandemic (for example, we'll still need to practice social distancing for some time after we return, and we'll forego shaking hands and hugging, and communion might be a little different), but know this ... there is nothing that can separate us from God's love ... not our fear and anxiety, or any pandemic, or our loneliness and isolation, or anything in heaven or earth ... nothing will separate us from God's love as shown to us through Christ Jesus (*paraphrased from Romans 8:38-39.*)

As I mentioned in my previous letter, as people of God, it is our moral, civic, and spiritual obligation to care for one another by taking the necessary steps to slow the spread of this virus, and at the same time to continue to serve our communities with generosity, hope, and joy. So, to help us stay connected as a faith family during this time, please note the following:

- Consistent with the Governor's executive order, your Council has voted to extend the suspension of all in-gathering activities through **April 30th**. As before, we will make any necessary adjustments as new information, data, and guidance becomes available.
- While the church office remains open to conduct the necessary basic minimum functions of the church, we are asking everybody **not to visit** (although there are a small number of exceptions, and those folks have already been notified.) We will continue to pay our bills and staff during this time.
- For those who are able to continue their worship offering, please do so via mail or electronic donation via our website. And for those who have the resources to donate more during this time, I ask that you prayerfully consider that. Your gifts are critically important during this time, and I can't even begin to tell you how grateful I am and how blessed Good Hope is for your continued gifts.

- If you, like so many in our community, have lost your job, or have had your hours cut, and are unable to continue your worship offering at this time, please do not send your worship offering. There will be time later, when things are back to 'normal' for you to resume and 'catch up' on your offering.
- Your Council has begun the process of applying for a Payroll Protection Plan grant that may be available to us from the Small Business Administration to cover the payroll of paid staff. While we are hopeful that we will be able to receive emergency payroll support, it is still essential that, if you are able, you continue to support God's ministry at Good Hope with your gifts.
- Although the twice-monthly food pantry distribution has been suspended until it is safe to gather again, we continue to provide food boxes to people who call the church office (and we are distributing them safely ... by placing the boxes on the porch to be picked up.)
- Your Council has approved selecting a firm to sanitize the building at the appropriate time (prior to our in-gathering return.) The work that our custodian, Karen Kreutzer, does is essential and her work ethic and skills are a blessing to keeping our building clean. Sanitizing our building is a prudent supplement to her work.
- Our Annual Meeting will be rescheduled as soon as we know when we will be able to return to in-gathering activities.

Our spiritual journey, our relationship with a loving and merciful God, and our trust and faith in Jesus the Christ has prepared us for times exactly like this. Please pray for those impacted by this global pandemic, the medical professionals caring for patients, and the scientists and clinicians who are working to identify the proper treatments and vaccine. And know that above all, **God is with us**, walking with us (and during our most trying times, carrying us) through our life's most difficult times.

Alleluia, Christ is risen! He has risen indeed!

Your brother in Christ,

DK