



St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Lutheran Church~Missouri Synod

98 Main
PO Box 117
Farley, MO 64028

Phone 816-330-3314

Rev. Gregg A. Reiser, Pastor

My Family in Christ,

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Php 4:4-7)

There does seem to be much these days that can cause anxiousness. Every day with more public gatherings being discouraged or cancelled, states of emergency being declared, reported cases of the coronavirus growing and general uncertainty and confusion, regardless of your views of the media reaction, reporting and public responses, it is understandable that some may be feeling a bit more concern and even fear.

It is especially in difficult times that we are to look to our Lord and the mutual support of our brothers and sisters in Christ, to desire to come into His Presence and receive the blessings, peace and strength He gives us in His Means of Grace. But then, understandably, some may be concerned about the risks of even gathering as a congregation, as the Body of Christ. And they would not be alone. Missouri District President Lee Hagan sent out a letter this week addressing such concerns and provided a list of suggestions for congregations to consider in order to help provide for the care and health of the worshippers. Though I continue to not be overly alarmed and feel that common practices of precaution whenever any illness is making the rounds should suffice, the elders and I have looked at these and will be implementing several of his ideas for the next few weeks or so for the assuring and care of our neighbor:

- We will be trying to make hand sanitizer available in the narthex and annex
- Bulletins will be available on a table in the narthex if you do not wish to be handed one
- We will be placing offering plates on a table in the narthex rather than pass them down the pews. These will then be brought forward at the time of the offering. Also know that offerings can be mailed in (important to keep in mind if you are unable to attend services for a while)
- I will not be initiating shaking of hands, indeed physical contact is to be avoided if possible

- The Lord's Supper will continue to be offered as usual for those who wish to receive it. Those who handle the elements and utensils wash their hands before such handling, and I will also use hand sanitizer prior to the Lord's Supper. Though we should not be nervous to partake of the common cup (as we are not just having a snack with friends, but are partaking of the very Blood and Body of Christ in the Supper and it is an article of faith that the Body and Blood of Christ will not make you sick), the individual cups are of course available for use.
- If you feel you are at higher risk for infection, please feel free to remain at home and away from crowds. The sermon is available on our website (usually with audio). And we can even arrange to have a service recording delivered to you. There are also sister congregations that livestream their service that we can connect you with.
- And it should go without saying that if you are ill, for the love of your neighbor stay home. This is not the time to "tough it out".

But most of all children of God, live like you are baptized! You have already been killed and raised up unto eternal life in Christ and nothing in this world can take you out of His strong hands. Comforted and strengthened by Christ Who lives in you, you will be able to be a source of comfort to those distressed around you. For you have been made also of a part of the Body of believers who protect the weak and vulnerable just as Jesus did and calls us to do.

"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. (John 14:1)

Pastor