March 13, 2020

Dear Members and Friends of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church,

Grace to you and peace from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As our state, our nation, and our world are adjusting the daily patterns of life in an attempt to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, so we at Holy Trinity are called to adjust our plans and ministry activities to accommodate the reality of the situation. These adjustments are being made because we love you and we love our neighbors, and we want to do our best to safeguard your health in these extraordinary times.

For that reason, a number of temporary changes are being made. These include:

**Worship Life**
- One Sunday worship service at 930am on March 15, 22, and 29. Service to be live-streamed via Facebook Live. There will be no nursery offered on these Sundays.
- Those who are ill, immune-compromised, or in an identified high-risk population are to stay home.
- Those who attend will be asked to sanitize/wash hands upon entry into the building.
- Our usual physical contact will be replaced by bows or other non-contact gestures as we greet one another and share the peace.
- Offering plates will not be passed, but placed by the doors to receive tithes and offerings.
- Pastors and communion ministers will sanitize/wash hands prior to distribution of the sacrament.
- Wine will be offered only via the chalice; there will be no small cups or intinction. Bread will be placed (essentially dropped) onto the communicant’s hand so that physical contact is limited.
  Reminder: Communion in one kind is considered complete.
- Wednesday Eucharist and Evening Prayer are cancelled through April 1.
- The Prism Percussion concert for March 29 is postponed to a date to be named later.

**Discipleship and Fellowship**
- Sunday morning LIFT gatherings are cancelled through March 29. There will be no fellowship time after worship.
- Men’s Bible Study is cancelled until April 11 at the earliest.
- The Women’s Lenten Retreat is tentatively rescheduled for Saturday, May 2.
- Wednesday “Lutheran Basics” studies will be moved to the Holy Trinity website (holytrinityakron.org) and/or Facebook page (@trinityakron).

**Dare to Love More Food and Resources**
- DLM will be closed on March 14 and March 19. If the public health situation allows, it will open again on Saturday, March 28, at 11:00am. Please watch our social media accounts for updates on potential alternative food distribution opportunities.

**Team and Committee Meetings**
- Face-to-face ministry team and committee meetings are cancelled through March 31, as are Thursday choirs and other musical groups rehearsals. Essential meetings are to be conducted by digital means (Zoom, Google Meetings, etc.) at the discretion of the chair.
Giving and Stewardship

- Members and friends are urged to continue needed financial support for our ministries by giving via mail (USPS) or on-line means (accessible through the website).
- Personal stewardship includes honest self-care, including seeing a doctor as necessary, practicing excellent personal hygiene, and observing to the greatest degree possible the physical distancing guidelines of the Ohio Department of Health.

Pastoral Care

- Hospital and nursing home visits are being either curtailed or severely limited. Home communion visits are temporarily suspended. We will follow up with folks via telephone and email. Please make sure we have current contact information on those who are hospitalized or in need of our prayerful attention.

Outside Groups

- No new meetings for outside groups will be scheduled at least until April 12. Current groups using the building are being asked to re-schedule or cancel their meetings. If that is not possible, they will be required to sanitize the spaces they are using.

Staff and Facilities

- We will continue to observe the common precautions we’ve already begun. The church building will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized on a regular basis by means of hard surface wipe-downs, attention to staff work areas, and careful personal hygiene. The entire building will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized.
- Office hours will temporarily be 10:00am – 2:00pm, Monday through Friday. The staff is being asked to work remotely whenever possible.

These changes are disruptive, and are not taken lightly. There is a lot of our “usual” pattern here that we cannot do. But there are things we can do:
- We can stay as physically active as possible. Get good sleep. Eat right. Drink water. Care for the body God has given you in order to reduce your susceptibility to illness.
- We can check in on our neighbors, especially those in high-risk populations.
- We can take a plate of cookies or a meal to our local ER, EMT, or Department of Health (a suggestion from the Ohio Director of Public Health). Our front-line public health workers are being slammed. They need our support and deserve our thanks.
- We can stay in touch with our fellow Holy Trinity members and friends. Let the phone and email, social media and text-messaging be a source of encouragement and connection while we wait this out.
- We can pray...for public health workers...for those who are ill...for those doing the research necessary to develop a vaccine...for those who lives and livelihood are put in jeopardy because of the economic disruption that this is causing.
- We can stay informed. The Ohio Department of Health website is probably the best place for up-to-date information.

Finally, we can remember. We remember that God is with us in the midst of any and every crisis. We take comfort in the good news that God’s got this and that God’s got us. St. Paul was right: “Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

God’s peace, God’s strength, God’s power, and our love are with you all.

Pr. David