



Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church – 1125 Mahoning Street, Milton, PA 17847 – 570-742-7473
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church – 100 Mahoning Street, Milton, PA 17847 – 570-742-4601

Milton Lutheran Parish

Deacon Gary Schaeffer, Interim Pastor

Dear Friends of the Milton Lutheran Parish,

As a community of faith, we have been challenged in finding new ways of staying connected with one another even though we are not able to meet in person. We hope you have enjoyed our weekly devotional, worship videos, and the videos on Spiritual Practices. Make sure to check our parish website where you can watch videos and find devotional resources.

(Website- <https://miltonlutheranparish.faith/>)

The videos and links are also being posted on each church's Facebook page. Feel free to share the videos with friends and families.

It feels bizarre to share with you that we are still not able to gather in person, especially as we enter Holy Week. With the Governor's orders to shelter in place this week, we will not be able to record worship services at the church like we hoped. However, we will still record videos from our home and make them available to you. This includes Sunday worship as well as Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. There is a devotional included with this letter that you can use at home.

Now, we come to Easter. It pains us to say that we will not be able to celebrate Easter, on Easter Sunday, in person. However, we will have an online Easter service on Easter Sunday. Also, when we can gather in person for worship, we will be celebrating Easter. With the Easter scripture passages, full liturgy, music and celebration. That day will indeed be a day of resurrection as we gather after being apart for so long. It will be a time of great thanksgiving and rejoicing. The order for Easter flowers was cancelled due to shipping and distribution issues. We have kept track of those of you who paid for flowers and will be making arrangements to refund your money soon.

Many of you have mentioned wanting to find ways to support people in need. Because of our limited ability to gather and the recommendations to stay home as much as possible. We want to encourage all of you to stay safe. Each day there are new opportunities to provide support to our community. Organizations are gathering food, people are sewing face masks for medical workers, and other organizations are doing what they can. If you find out about new opportunities to help, please don't hesitate to communicate those with us. Also, don't feel like you have to wait to help. It's okay to provide care without having to organize efforts. Just be sure to keep yourself and those around you safe.

And, a reminder about giving. As you know our parish relies on the giving of others in order to sustain its' ministry. We recognize that the Coronavirus has placed a financial strain on all of us. However, if you are able, please consider making your offering by mailing a check to either church office so we can continue to make payments toward the ongoing expenses.

Our office remains closed. With the shelter in place orders it is unlikely you will be able to reach anyone at the office in a timely manner. If there is a need please don't hesitate to contact me directly. E-mail- schaeffer0319@gmail.com or cell- (845) 636-0194.

Yours in Christ,

Deacon Gary



Sunday, April 5, 2020

Opening prayer:

Everlasting God, in your endless love for the human race you sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take on our nature and to suffer death on the cross. In your mercy enable us to share in his obedience to your will and in the glorious victory of his resurrection, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Blessing of the Palms: (This year I invite you to use any branches, or plants that you have in your home to represent the Palms. The disciples used what they had available to them – Palms. We will use what we have available to be a sign of God's presence.)

We praise you, O God, for redeeming the world through our Savior Jesus Christ.

Today he entered the holy city in triumph and was proclaimed messiah and king

by those who spread garments and branches along his way.

Bless these branches and those who carry them. Grant us grace to follow our Lord in the way of the cross, so that, joined to his death and resurrection, we enter into life with you; through the same Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Readings (if you don't have a bible handy, biblegateway.com is a great resource. We use NRSV - "new revised standard version" as our translation for worship)

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalms 31:9-16

Philippians 2:5-11

Matthew 26:14-27:66

Questions to talk about:

How would you explain the meaning of the cross as a symbol of your faith? (Matt 27:32-54)

What is the biggest challenge, difficulty or puzzle in your life of faith today? (Isaiah 50:4-9)

How has your understanding and vision of a triune God changed in your lifetime? (Phil 2:5-11)

Pray the Lord's Prayer together

Bless one another saying:

May God bless you this week and always. AMEN

Resources:

Opening prayer: Sundaysandseasons.com #32232

Questions for discussion: workingpreacher.com