



Saint Mark's
Evangelical Lutheran Church

Weekly Update

March 19, 2020

*"Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth."
The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. ~ Psalm 46:10-11*

Dear friends,

It was just a week ago that I sent you a message telling you about all the precautions we were taking for worship here at St. Mark's. The very next day I sent you a new message suspending in person worship through March. Now it has become apparent that we will probably not be able to gather together through April, and maybe well into May.

How quickly things change. Each day we get more information about COVID-19 and find more and more aspects of our shared life no longer available to us: communal worship, school, restaurants, theaters, dentist offices, hair salons, and on and on it goes. We are learning to hunker down, to do with less: less entertainment, less contact, less activity, less freedom. We are trying to learn to be still, to calm and quiet our souls as we rest in the arms of God, the Lord of Hosts, who is our refuge and strength.

While we are not able to gather together right now, we are still members of the Body of Christ, this Family of Faith that calls itself St. Mark's. In an effort to keep our connections to one another strong during this time, pastors, council leadership, staff, and volunteers are working on ways to have regular contact and stay in touch with one another. Worship will not be in person for a while, but we are keeping to our regular rhythms by **posting worship videos on Wednesday afternoons and Sunday mornings**, our usual gathering times for worship and socializing. Gather those who are around you and watch together. If you can't be together, arrange to watch at the same time. If you're watching on Facebook, share comments, engage in conversations, connect with your friends and family.

One of the implications of cancelling Sunday and Wednesday worship is that our regular offering will not be collected. We rely on you to support our shared ministry and ensure we keep current with our responsibilities. **Please mail your offering to the church or give electronically.** Knowing that our income could be impacted, we invite those with extra resources to consider making a special gift. Thanks for your generosity and faithfulness.

You will find much information included in this email. We are trying to anticipate your questions and provide you with answers. We will keep you informed as we learn more and as things change.

We are anticipating that we will not be able to celebrate Easter together this year – at least not on April 12. But for Christians, every single Sunday is a celebration of the resurrection (that's why we worship on Sunday, the day of the empty tomb!). When this is behind us and we are able to be in one another's presence to worship on a Sunday morning, we will have an Easter celebration! We will give thanks for the promise of the resurrection which has turned our sadness into joy!

I am looking forward to sharing that day with you!

God's Peace,
Pastor Mary

Continued →

For Pastoral Support, please contact:

Pastor Mary
Cell: 608-295-5401
Email: primaryf@stmarks-nsp.org

Pastor Ivy
Cell: 651-398-1596
Email: privyh@stmarks-nsp.org

A few things you may want to know

- **Office hours will be sporadic.** Most staff is able to work from home and we are encouraging that. If you need to reach either Pastor Mary or Pastor Ivy, please feel free to call or text us on our cell phones. Pastor Mary 608-295-5401. Pastor Ivy 651-398-1596. We can still receive and answer email.
- **All face-to-face meetings have been cancelled.** Council and other essential committees will meet virtually via Zoom.
- **Rehearsals for this Spring's Hot Buttered Popcorn Show have been suspended** and the show postponed until next Fall.
- **Plans for the pictorial directory are being put on hold.** We will try again after this is behind us. New appointments will need to be made.

How can I help? How can I receive help?

- **In need of help.** If you are confined because of this virus and need help with errands, fill out the form at <https://forms.gle/z2WdA1QLCzD7SYAt6>
We will respond within 48 hours and try to get you the help you need.
- **Able to help.** If you are able to volunteer to assist with running errands for someone who is confined at this time, particularly if you fall into the younger, less vulnerable category, please fill out this form at <https://forms.gle/bGM5XLbEPH94Tzn7>
We will be happy to match you up with someone who needs your assistance.
- If you aren't able to run errands but would still like to help out, we can put you in touch with someone who could use a phone call or a cheery card. Please contact one of the pastors to make arrangements.

The North St. Paul Food Shelf has an urgent need for volunteers

As is the case with many organizations that rely on a crew of volunteers, most of the NSP Food Shelf current volunteers fall into the population of those most vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus. These folks are staying home as they should, but that doesn't stop the demand for food for those who are hungry in our community. The Food Shelf has changed their regular procedures to limit person to person contact. Volunteers are needed to pre-bag groceries. Grocery bags are taken outside and left on a table where clients can pick them up. Social distancing is observed! Please call the Kathy, at the

North St. Paul Food Shelf 651-770-1309 and let her know when you are available to help out.

The Food Shelf also has need of paper grocery bags, so if you have extra, please drop them off at 2538 Seppala Blvd, North St. Paul. Thanks for your help. We are in this together and we need each other more than ever right now.

Additional resources that may be helpful

- Our former Intern, Valerie Teppo, along with a group of pastors has pulled together a **daily devotional of scripture passages and faith practices** to help us lean into our faith during this time of worry and wonder. It's meant for all ages and will be especially enjoyable for families. (*see attachment: Pandemic Hope*).
- Our partners at Illustrated Ministry will be providing **weekly coloring sheets** (like what we've been using in our Grace Space) for free. Just copy and paste this link and sign up for the weekly email: www.illustratedministry.com/flattenthecurve
- In the midst of this constant change and uncertainty, maintaining our mental health is vitally important. For those who are feeling unsteady, anxious or deeply worried, check out these helpful ways to center your mental well being. Copy and paste this link: tinyurl.com/wsbne1t

Staff Emails

Staff will continue to answer emails throughout the coming weeks, whether in the building or working from home.

Music

Dorothea Jirsa: dorotheaj@stmarks-nsp.org
Trevor Wolter Ternez: trevorw@stmarks-nsp.org

Office

Heidi McKenzie: heidimc@stmarks-nsp.org
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Youth Ministry

Susie Modrow: susiem@stmarks-nsp.org

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