

3/17/2020

Dear Members of Zion,

It has been one year since the great flood of 2019 which put life on hold for many of us here in our Pierce Community. This year we face a new challenge, that being fear of the virus infection that threatens the health and safety of many across our nation.

At this point the risk seems to be minimal, there are no new cases reported in our area. The teacher from Osmond who was thought to be infected has had three negative tests and was released from medical care. Also, the young man from Crofton who had contracted the virus and was at one point in critical condition has now recovered and has been released from the hospital.

For the average healthy individual, the virus presents no danger of serious, life-threatening complications. The overwhelming majority of those that get sick with the disease recover.

As I read the information available there are three good reasons for the precautions that are now being recommended by health officials, including shutting down schools and church services for the next two weeks.

- To protect those in our community who have health issues that could lead to serious complications, even death if they contracted the virus through casual contact.
- To avoid the possibility of our hospitals being overwhelmed with patients needing care. Our nation's hospitals have limited resources, including the number of hospital beds available, limited medical supplies and equipment, including masks, ventilators, and even hand sanitizer.
- To protect the health of everyone. Getting sick is no picnic, no matter how healthy you are. Given the contagious nature of the virus, it is best to try to limit your chances of being infected, by limited contact with others and washing your hands with soap and water or using hand sanitizer often.

For all of these reasons, with the approval of the Board of Elders, all church services at Zion, are suspended for the next two weeks beginning today, Tuesday, March 17. When our children and young people return to school, regularly scheduled church services will also resume.

In the meantime, we will be posting Lenten midweek sermons and regular weekend sermons on YouTube. To watch or listen, just go to the YouTube Website and do a search for **“Zion Lutheran Church, Pierce, NE”** and our channel will appear. Then just click on the message you wish to watch. It is best to use the Google Chrome Web Browser to watch

YouTube videos for the best quality. We will have the sermon for the next Midweek Lenten Service and for this coming Sunday uploaded in the next few days.

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We are reminded in Ecclesiastes 1:9, that there is **“nothing new under the sun.”** Our country has faced pandemics before. By taking prudent steps, we can limit its effect on our own lives and help to prevent the spread of this virus to others, especially the medically vulnerable.

Most of all, we must remember the promises of God.

We read in Psalm 46:1-2a,

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble therefore we will not fear. . .”

Our Savior Jesus Christ also reminds us in John 16:33,

“In this world, you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world.”

God bless and protect you and yours and I pray we will see you in church soon!

In His service and Yours,

Pastor Bruce and Vicar Maser