



Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church

4022 Park Lane
Elizabeth, Colorado 80107
303 646 1378

Divine Services:
Sundays, 10am
Wednesday in Lent and Advent, 7pm

Bible Studies:
Sundays, 9am
Wednesdays, 6:30pm
Fridays, 7pm

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." Revelation 1:8

March 20, 2020

Dear Members and Friends of Christ Our Savior Lutheran,

Life as we know it is grinding to a halt, but life itself does go on. God continues His care and providence for His creation, though steeped in sin and, as is the case in these days, pestilence.

Part of that creeping to a halt is the request that gatherings of more than 10 people be canceled for the time being in the interest of protecting the public health, slowing the spread of Covid-19, so that the health care system is not overwhelmed by the current crisis, what you may have heard of as "flattening the curve." This would include the public gathering to worship. Therefore, until further notice, all of our regularly scheduled gatherings are canceled. It saddens me to have to do this, but I believe our government has made an honorable request in the interest of public safety and health. So, we can in good conscience abide by the request according to the Fourth Commandment, seeing that this request is honoring the Fifth Commandment as it proclaims the sanctity of life.

All is not lost however, and God is still at work to provide you with His holy absolution and comfort even as our future seems more uncertain than ever. This much is certain, God in Christ has promised to be with you, Jesus has promised to be with you, until the end of the age (cf. Matthew 28:20). While we may not be able to gather normally, we still have opportunity to gather in innovative ways.

First, as I promised in my previous letter, I am providing worship opportunity via the church's Youtube channel. There is a link to the channel on the left side of our website (url is in the header above) and one in the scrolling news banner at the top of the website. I will be making another, harder-to-miss link on the main page in the coming moments (it may already be live by the time you read this letter) as well as some other changes in order to better facilitate these opportunities. So, my plan, as it currently stands, is to record a Matins service every week using the weekly propers that would have been used in our regular gatherings. I intend to do this with public domain resources that can be found online, and the links to those resources will be included in the video descriptions so that you may participate with the video.

Second, I would still love to offer the Sacrament of the Altar to our members. To that end, the elders, congregational president, and I have come up with this idea. On Sundays, I will be at the church by 9am, as normal. You are invited to make your way to the church and on a first-come-first-served

family basis enter the building. Please, the first thing you should do is wash your hands. Then, we will participate in a short Confession & Absolution and Distribution of the Lord's Supper. I would attempt to do this with as little personal contact as possible, relying totally on faith for the good that this medicine of immortality imparts, and little to no evils of the world. Following our service, you may leave any offering that you can in the plate at the usher's stand, wash your hands again, and exit the building. At that time, I would do some quick cleaning and sanitizing, then invite the next family in to repeat the short service. Please do not enter the building until I invite you! For the sake of completing this in a timely manner, I would like to be done by 11am. This is something new to all of us, so I would beg your indulgence as we figure out how best to make it work.

If you do come out for this, I would invite you to take a Lutheran Hymnal and Lutheran Service Book home with you if you don't have them, enough for your family. You can use these resources at home in your own devotional time and as we worship together via Youtube. Then, when the times comes when we can gather together again, please bring these hymnals back.

Third, as long as I can, I intend to maintain some irregular office hours. I still have my second job and that one does not look to be in danger of being temporarily halted as so many others have. My schedule there changes week to week, so I will be more intentional in publishing my weekly office hours. While I am in the office, the church will be open for those who wish to use it for prayer or to seek counsel. I would ask that as you are done, please do what you can to clean up and sanitize after your use; this would include the areas that you have used and anything that you have touched, including door handles.

Fourth, please call, text, or email me any concerns you may have. My contact information is available to you via the website or calling the church. I will respond as quickly as I can. You can even make appointments with me this way for counseling, Confession & Absolution, or private communion or as we are able, do these things over the phone. I will do what I can.

Again, we will do things this way as long as it is deemed safe to do so. At this point, I don't know how long normal life will be disrupted like this. I would love to be able to return to some sort of normalcy by Easter, such that our Easter celebration would be that much more joyous as we gather together once again, but as of the writing of this letter we are being asked to keep our meetings under 10 people for 30 days. Still, on that day, and every day, we will rejoice together unconventionally in the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who by way of baptism, has promised us a resurrection like His.

In the meantime, I am making these requests of you:

- Continue to practice good hygiene. Wash your hands, use sanitizer, and continue to clean up after yourselves. Oh, and carefully wash and sanitize your phones and computers. In doing so, you best protect yourself and others from this pestilence. Try not to touch your face often. If you have to cough or sneeze (hey, allergy season is upon us), do so into your elbow or a tissue; if you use a tissue, throw it away and wash your hands.
- Stay home if you are able. Go to work if you must and can. Work from home if you have the ability. Otherwise, leave only for essential reasons. Now, this doesn't mean don't go outside; weather permitting, get some fresh air, run around on your property, and open up. Practice social distancing if you go out; keep a safe distance, but be kind and cordial to anyone you encounter.
- If you are able, be of service to your neighbor. Help those who might need help with groceries, getting their mail, mowing their lawns, clearing their sidewalks of snow, etc. I know this

sounds like a contradiction to the above point, but I would say this is an essential reason to leave home. Do this in a no-contact method if at all possible.

- As you have the means, continue to be generous to the congregation. I don't think the budget will see too significant a decrease as the building will still be used during the week and on Sunday. Only our Wednesday and Friday night usage will cease at this time. And, I am still at work for you and would need my income (and I personally thank you for continuing to consider this point). I realize this is a big ask as your own sources of income may be taking a hit, but please continue to do what you can, above and beyond if you can. If you are unable or unwilling to come to church, then please mail your offering when you are able.
- Take care of yourselves and each other. If you are sick, stay home, unless you believe your illness to be critical, and then only make your way to a hospital for care and treatment. Normally, I would love to visit with you in your time of illness, but for the sake of everyone's health and safety, I don't think I could do that at this time. I will, however, make every effort to visit with you over the phone, pray with you and comfort you with the Word of God via a "voice visit", as it may be.
- Pray for me and for your congregation. Mindful of the promises made by the Father in Christ, call upon him in this trouble, pray, praise and give thanks. Mention your pastor and fellow members in prayer, ask for guidance and strength for all of us to see us through the days ahead. We plan to have a small handout with the prayer requests as well as some other information on them for when you come on Sundays. If you cannot come and would like this list, please ask me to email it to you.

This is a difficult time for all of us. I have personally been stressed over and struggled with how to be your pastor when all of our regular avenues of my service to you are being taken away for good and honorable reasons. I fear the stringent efforts to curtail this pestilence have not ended, but even more stringent requests will be made of us in the coming days and weeks. Through it all, I will do my best to be pastor to you. Expect telephone calls from me as I check in on you. Call each other, too!

We will get through this with the help of our Lord and God, either to a time when we will gather again here or gather with all the saints in eternity.

The peace of God which surpasses all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Pastor Wagner