

Dear Beloved People of God,

As we have continued to monitor the spread of the Coronavirus, and after continued discernment, **we have made the decision to close our building starting today (March 15) through the first week of April** at which time we will reassess the situation in our community. I want you to know that we did not make this decision out of fear. We made this decision out of great love for each of you and for our neighbors. It is our hope that choosing to practice physical/social distancing for a time will limit the spread of this infectious disease and protect the most vulnerable in our community.

This is a wilderness season both Lent and a time we travel uncharted territory. It feels to many of us like danger but there is opportunity to be God's faithful people together in new ways. A pastor friend put it this way, "hold tight to what is sacred and hold everything else loosely". We will in this time claim what is essential to our faith and find courageously innovative ways to continue to be the Body of Christ in the world.

Here are some important things for you to know:

- We will be producing a **modified worship experience** for both Sundays and Wednesdays that you will be able to access via our website and social media platforms. Again, this is an important way for us to stay connected to God during this time.
- **All activities and meetings**, regular and outside groups or events, have been cancelled or will not meet in person through April 1st when we will re-evaluate the situation and determine the schedule going forward.
- We will use this time to do **extra cleaning and disinfecting** all around the building.
- **Caring For Our Neighbors**: Please reach out to one another to touch base and to care for one another. Help us to be aware of needs in the community by calling or emailing Pastor Julie (952-994-1201 or Firstpastorkenyon@gmail.com)
- **Your continued generosity** toward the ministries of First Lutheran are more important than ever during this time. If you're not using electronic giving, you can still mail your offering to the church office. Soon you will be able to visit our website to learn how to give electronically as well. Thank you for continuing to support this community of faith!
- First Lutheran leadership will continue to tend to our life together. **Look for more communication** in the days ahead as well as ways we can pray for each other and serve our neighbors.

During this season of Lent we are called to return to the Lord our God. **We invite you to join us in leaning into the practices of this season every more deeply, beginning with prayer.** Please pray for all those affected by the Coronavirus in our community and around the world as well as for those who face illness, anxiety, surgery, grief, hunger, homelessness and other hardships. For scientists, doctors, nurses, caregivers,

community and school leaders, janitors and all who find new ways to walk in this wilderness time. I invite you to use this time to center and breathe and pray and rest. May God's peace be with you all as we move through uncharted times.

Blessings!

Pastor Julie Rogness

Amy Lee, Council President