

March 16, 2020

Dear Family in Christ at Bethany,

We all have been impacted in some way as the reality and concern of the COVID-19 virus unfolds around the world. Our compassion and prayers go out to those infected and those experiencing grief due to the death of loved ones.

With recent developments, there are recommendations by leaders in government and the CDC to “flatten the transmission curve” of the virus by utilizing preventative measures, including canceling public gatherings that may put certain individuals at risk. Obviously, we desire to protect our members and guests from any serious illness. We want to do our part to slow down the transmission of this virus.

In consultation with Bethany Elders and our Council **Bethany Lutheran Church will be suspending mid-week and Sunday services from March 18-April 5.** We will re-evaluate in three weeks. Perhaps things will settle down in order to observe Holy Week and Easter. But, as everyone is realizing, we just don't know what the status of the transmission of the COVID-19 virus will be in the US and our area at that time. We will keep everyone posted as that week approaches.

The leadership of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has communicated its support for congregations taking actions they feel are best for their members and communities, including temporary closures. For a helpful video message from LCMS President Matthew Harrison, you can visit [www.lcms.org](http://www.lcms.org).

**We do, however, live in an era whereby we have the ability to worship and communicate God's Word via the internet. This online option is doable at Bethany.** Beginning this week we will offer online our Sunday worship services. Yes, it will be different, but it gives us an option to join together in the weeks ahead. I thank Jim Witt for his assistance in making online services possible. He will be providing us with instructions as to online access this week. Plans are to add additional helpful and spiritually enriching material or links in this online venture.

We thank God for His providing us with the comfort of CPC---the Center of Peace Control---as I shared in my message Sunday. His Word is our CPC. One of the scriptures I shared was Philippians 4:6-7: **“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”**

In a practical way, if you are uneasy about venturing out and have need to procuring groceries, etc. please contact the office or Cathy Hesterman. Our caring Fellowship Team has offered to assistance in this regard.

Strength and Peace in Jesus,

Pastor Russ

