



FIRST ST. PAUL'S

LUTHERAN CHURCH

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First St. Paul's congregation,

Grace and peace to you, in a time that feels anything but graceful and peaceful. With school's closed indefinitely and some restaurants only serving drive-thru orders, seniors have been asked to stay inside, local and national leaders advising groups of no more than 10 people to gather, it is with great sadness that in conjunction with local churches and the Heartland District, our staff, pastors and church council have heard the warnings and advisements and have decided to adhere to the CDC recommendations.

First St. Paul's has decided for the next 15 days (and afterward as re-evaluated as new information comes to light), we will not be holding on-site, in person worship services, but instead will broadcast/livestream our worship by radio at 11:00 a.m. and Facebook Live at 8:25 a.m. on Sundays. We will also livestream the Wednesday, Lenten services at 7:00 p.m. through April 1st, 2020. The website will replay services so that you may watch at your convenience.

As for our activities and programming, they will be affected as follows: All youth including Soul Café (Sr. High), OREO's (Jr. High), Ichthus activities including the community meal, Bible studies, children's programs and choirs, Sunday school will all be suspended. All committee meetings, any groups that use the facilities including Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, GriefShare, Moms of Hastings, Compassionate Friends, etc. will also be suspended. Confirmation classes are asked to watch "Passion of the Christ" and follow the study guide that was sent in an email to parents and confirmands. We would like to see parent participation to ensure that the children understand what is being presented to them. Please continue Sermon Notes as needed.

Staff and church council through April 1st, 2020, will be re-evaluating and updating our response as more information becomes available. That does not mean that we have ceased to be a church. The old children's song reminds us "The church is not a building, the church is not a steeple, the church is not a resting place, the church is a people. I am the church. You are the church. We are the church together..."

The pastors, staff and a few volunteers are still working to provide worship opportunities online. We are still available as the Health Care institutions allow us to provide Pastoral Care. If you wish to communicate with us, the new phone system has been installed and is working and we can also be reached on our cell phones. The church as well as the Church Office is closed unless it is an emergency so that we can keep our staff healthy and safe as they want to continue to serve you, the congregation.

The church is defined by its faith and witnessed by its actions. Please continue to be the church. There are undoubtedly families near you that may stand in need of childcare. There are undoubtedly older individuals that may need help shopping for groceries and picking up medications. There are countless ways to be the hands and feet of Christ during this time. Volunteering is not just for church programs or serving on a committee, this is time to prove what a Church is.

Additionally, we know that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a major disruption not only to routines and schedules, but also to incomes and cash flows. If this has been the case for you, our thoughts and prayers go out to you. If there is any way that we might be of assistance, please do not hesitate to call. Gifts can be mailed and can also be made online if you are in a position financially to help the church continue during these times of no on-site, in person worship opportunities, please know that our Church Office and staff are still working. There are still expenses to be paid.

Lastly, no decisions have been made at this time regarding Holy Week schedules. As for the 5th Grade First Communion Retreat and Sedar Meal, they have been postponed until further notice. Confirmation Sunday is still scheduled for April 26th, 2020. We have made available a make up date of May 31st, 2020 if needed. Vacation Bible School, Christian Camps and the Mission Trip are still as scheduled.

Please watch for updates in the coming days and check in frequently by using the website and Facebook. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may have caused you or your families. We hope that this passes quickly.

In Christ,

Pastor Joel Remmers