



March 16, 2020

“When peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll, whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul.” ELW # 785

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I want to begin by letting you all know that you are in the thoughts and prayers of myself and the entire Grace Lutheran Church Staff. We all believe in the value of community and remain committed to walking with you all through these turbulent seas caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Executive Committee was in conversation over the weekend, the staff met this morning. From those meetings we offer the following updates.

1. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recommended that there be no gatherings of 50 people or more for the next 8 weeks. This means that unless something changes drastically, **there will be no on-site worship until further notice.**
2. We will continue to adapt and create ways to still build community through worship and dwelling in the Word.
  - a. **We will print materials and mail them** to those requesting printed materials. These materials will include a brief order of service, the texts, a written message, and prayers. If you would like these printed materials, please contact the church office at 515-276-6873, or email michelle@gracedm.org.
  - b. **We will either stream live or post worship videos at 9:00 a.m. on the Grace Lutheran Church Facebook page.** If not on Facebook, you can still access the videos at this link: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Religious-Organization/626637384050683/>
  - c. **We will stream the Holden Evening Prayer Service on Facebook at 6:30 on Wednesdays, March 18, 25, and April 1.** These videos will also be available at the link above. If we add other video formats, we will send out that information as it is known.
  - d. **We will stream a short Morning Prayer Service each weekday morning at 9:30 a.m. on Facebook, beginning Tuesday, March 17th.** This will be an opportunity to gather and connect as we navigate these waters together.
  - e. We are also looking at other options for streaming.
3. We are developing ways to continue to be community, together. As we move into this new time, I find hope in these words from Rabbi Yosef Kanefsky:

*Every hand that we don't shake must become a phone call we place. Every embrace that we avoid must become a verbal expression of warmth and concern. Every inch and foot that we physically place between ourselves and another, must become a thought as to how we might be of help to that other, should the need arise.*

4. As we live into this new way of living into community, we are asking the following:
  - a. **If you need help with getting groceries or supplies**, please either contact the church office at 515-276-6873, or email [ellen@gracedm.org](mailto:ellen@gracedm.org)
  - b. **If you are willing and able to assist** with gathering and bringing groceries or supplies to those in need, please contact the church office at 515-276-6873, or email [ellen@gracedm.org](mailto:ellen@gracedm.org)
  - c. **Take time to reach out to people from the community of faith**, especially those who may be isolated at this time. If you are unsure, it is best to err on the side of making contact and continuing to build relationships.
  - d. **If you would be willing to write letters or cards to those who are isolated, we will have information and supplies available later this week.**
  - e. There are many vendors who work with Grace Lutheran Church and through work are still out in public often. **We have "Thank You" cards in the Gathering Hall and are still collecting items** as a way giving thanks for the work that they do for Grace Lutheran Church. Consider either donating, signing the card, or send a note to the church office that can be included.
5. **Continue to hold one another in prayer.** Sometimes the act of prayer itself can be the conduit through which God gives both parties a sense of peace in the storm.
6. As **questions have come up regarding how to give electronically**, we offer the following information:
  - a. At the upper right, click on "GIVE"
  - b. Scroll down and click on the red bar "Donate Now"
  - c. Start by entering the dollar amount you want to give; (Can set up as "Give One Time" or "Set-up Recurring"; choose fund; add memo if using Other Fund or Memorials, etc.); Click NEXT
  - d. "Verify your mobile number"
    - i. Can either enter cell phone number and click SEND CODE; will receive a text with a verification code; enter code and click "Confirm"
    - ii. Or, if do not have cell phone or do not want to enter it, On the VERIFY YOUR MOBILE NUMBER page, click on "Need Help";
    - iii. Then in middle of screen to the right, Click on "GIVE AS GUEST"
  - e. Enter requested information (name, etc.) and click NEXT to continue.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we make necessary changes to the way we live together as the Body of Christ. I do not have words for the pain this reality brings. For millennia, the Church has had face to face interaction at its core. However, in times of distress, the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, has found new and creative ways to continue to witness to the Living Water found in Christ Jesus. We are in such times, and we will continue to navigate these waters together.

In Christ,  
Pastor Mike