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Member: Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, FVL Schools

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OUR CONGREGATION'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

March 15, 2020

What We Know

God is our Help in trouble. In Psalm 46, we are reminded that it is God who is our refuge and strength, and our ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, let us not fear, but with confidence use this opportunity to be the hands and feet of Jesus through our prayers and our care for others. We offer this update to you to help convey our pastoral concern and common-sense plans.

Public health should be taken seriously: COVID-19 is an aggressive virus, and it affects different people in different ways. People at highest risk include those who are 60+ years old, women who are pregnant, or those who have underlying health issues. Due to the rapid way that this virus spreads, the Wisconsin Department of Public Health has recommended organizations like ours to exercise a great deal of caution, especially in large-group gatherings.

What We're Doing

Limiting contact: As we gather in worship, we have identified a few simple ways that we can limit contact. For the next few weeks, we are planning:

- To avoid passing offering plates (use offering plates or boxes placed in the narthex or online giving)
- To avoid hand-shaking and physical contact by ushers, greeters, and pastors
- To print extra service folders and ask worshippers to keep service folders rather than return them after worship
- To suspend the use of the children's worship bags
- To commune only by individual communion cups

Keeping clean: Throughout the weeks ahead, we want to assure you that we are doing as much as possible to maintain a clean and safe campus. We are increasing our efforts, including:

- Cleaning door handles and other surfaces before and after all services
- Frequent hand-washing by pastors and ushers
- Providing hand sanitizer in our worship and gathering areas

Gathering and sharing information: As information continues to be shared by our state and local officials, we will be working hard to keep you updated as quickly as possible.

We will use our website (riverviewlutheran.org), social media (facebook.com/AppletonWI54915), e-mail, and local broadcast services to communicate any necessary cancelations or postponements.

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What You Can Do

Pray: God invites his people to call on him in every trouble. Join with us in praying continually, particularly for the health of our community, the safety of all the afflicted, the efforts of local, national, and international leaders, and the well-being of all those who are engaged in combating this disease. *“Our Father in heaven...your will be done!”*

Make worship choices that are best for you: While we are still committed to gathering as a Christian congregation, it is important that you carefully evaluate your personal risk factors for the virus. If you are feeling sick or are uncomfortable with the risk involved in coming to worship, we encourage you to make use of a variety of worship options:

- Attend a Monday (6:30pm) evening service to avoid larger crowds.
- View worship at home on our YouTube channel (search for “Riverview Lutheran” on YouTube, or click on “Resources,” then “Worship Video” on our website). Services are not live, but are posted a few hours after each service. (Contact the pastors, if you need assistance accessing these services.)
- Contact our pastors to arrange to receive private communion in your home or at church.
- View Time of Grace worship broadcast on Saturday night at midnight or Sunday morning at 6:30 a.m. on NBC26, or Sunday afternoons at 3:30 p.m. on the Daystar Television Network (49.1).

Follow guidelines offered by national and state agencies (cdc.gov)

- Stay home if you feel sick and avoid close contact with those who are ill
- Wash hands frequently, for at least 20 seconds, especially after being in public spaces
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth

Assist your congregation and community: As you care for your own health, you can help us care for one another: please contact the church office if you are able...

- Assist with additional thorough cleaning and disinfecting each week.
- Continue to support our ministry through your prayers and offerings (use the link on our website, or access the giving site using the QR code on the right):
- Look for opportunities to assist those around you in your community and to share the peace and hope you have in Christ
- Keep the pastoral staff informed of those who are sick or in need of pastoral care



Serving you in Christ,

Pastor Dennis Belter

Pastor Timothy Wagner