

March 23, 2019

The age of COVID-19 is forcing us to rethink how we do things and what is most important. We are all expecting more details to follow from Governor Evers' "stay at home" order tomorrow, **Tuesday the 24th**, and what that means for the Church and community. What I write below is directed first and foremost to those who hold an office here at Elm Grove Lutheran Church, which includes every board and appointed position, but this email has application for all of us.

Each year when elected officers of the church are installed they hear the following admonitions among other things: "You are to assist in caring for the poor and sick, in cultivating harmony among the members, in promoting the general welfare of the congregation, and in furthering the kingdom of Christ here and throughout the world. While holiness of life and obedience to Christ are expected of all members of the congregation, it is especially important that you, as office-bearers in His Church, show yourselves, by word and example, to be faithful to Him in service and Christian devotion."

So, what does that mean for you in the days ahead? Once you have secured your own home and your family's needs, seize this opportunity to do a couple of things: 1) Renew your devotional life by yourself and with your family. This has been a frequent theme of mine in recent lead pastor articles in the monthly Seasons newsletter, which can be accessed online at EGL.org. But God is giving (or pressing upon us!) a new opportunity. Below I will provide a number of resources I find to be helpful, which can be accessed online, but the most obvious resource is your Bible! It's time to get reacquainted. 2) While we are urged to stay home as much as possible, use this time to check up on fellow members of the congregation. There may be ways we can be of service to one another that we hadn't considered before. Technology allows us to stay in touch through so many different channels, e.g. texting, Snapchat, Facebook, video conferencing, emails, and good ol' fashioned phone calls or letters. Let's use the gift of technology that God has given us to intentionally check up on one another, to care for the household of faith!

In no particular order here are a number of websites we can use for our study and devotion:

Lutheran Hour Ministries, especially the Men's Network, <https://www.lhm.org/men/>

Issues Etc online radio talk show, archived <https://issuesetc.org/archive/>

See attached a very recent statement on Communion from the Synod's CTCR.

Concordia Publishing House, www.cph.org, has many resources that can be downloaded or shipped to you.

Both of our seminaries have resource pages on their websites on which you may find something

interesting. www.ctsfw.edu/resources and www.csl.edu/resources.

Finally a resource I am certain will be new to all of you: www.1517.org. Lots of good articles and sermons there, plus a least a dozen different podcasts at www.1517.org/podcasts from which to choose.

And of course you will continue to hear from me in various ways. God bless your weeks ahead!

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March 18, 2020

Elm Grove Lutheran Church in the Age of COVID-19

Brothers and sisters in Christ, I know you have been following the news about the COVID-19 pandemic. Isn't everyone? You have no doubt heard and/or read the guidance from the Trump Administration, Governor Evers, the CDC, and The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. With regard to worship, the official guidance at this moment from our elected government is that everyone avoid gatherings of more than 10 people for the next number of weeks. Clearly, this will deeply impact our weekly activities and worship practice. While all non

and meetings have been canceled in our church and school facilities until April 6, your Church Council on Monday night, recognizing the essential nature of Christian worship, voted to continue offering worship services in some format during this outbreak. What does this mean? Your Church leadership believes that especially in this age of COVID

19 people need to continue receiving God's gifts in Word and Sacrament, and returning their thanks in song and prayer. Yes, the regular weekend worship services on Saturday nights at 5:30 and Sunday mornings at 8:00 and 10:45 have been canceled for the immediate future. The midweek Lenten services on Wednesdays have also been canceled along with the meals.

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However, a regular Matins prayer service will be live streamed on Youtube on Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m. Simply type in "Elm Grove Lutheran Church" into the Youtube search

field and you will find it. In an attempt to maintain a sense of community, that weekend worship service folder will be printed out, containing the whole service, including the hymns that are sung and some announcements, and will be available for pick-up outside the Church/School Office at your convenience on Fridays during regular business hours so that individuals and families can

follow along at home from their cell phones, TVs, or computers. In addition, plans are being prepared for several abbreviated Communion Services on Sunday afternoons at 12:00, 1:00, 2:00, and 3:00 p.m. You will need to register, however, so that we do not go over the limit of 10 individuals. Call the Church Office (262-797-2970) to register your intent to be there. To reiterate the guidance from our nation's leaders, if you are sick or elderly or have other, underlying health conditions, we urge you to stay home and get plenty of rest. Do not needlessly endanger yourself. Wash your hands frequently and avoid anyone who might be sick. Please call the Church Office if there is something we can do to help you. As we rightly hunker down observing appropriate social distance, we urge you to remember your church in offerings, because all of the normal bills will still need to be paid. Those offerings, which are an act of worship, may be mailed in or made online through the link provided at the bottom of our Church and School webpage, www.egl.org. "Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

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