



## Emanuel's Lutheran Church & Day School

*Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

Tuesday, March 16, 2020

Grace and peace to you all from God the Creator, Jesus the Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit the Sanctifier. Amen.

I want to remind each of us, in our own way and in our own time to pause, to reflect, and to breath. To use Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton's words, we are in a time of extremely heightened anxiety and worry, but we are also at time to reimagine what it means to be the Body of Christ. We have made unprecedented changes to ways in which we are interacting with each other in worship and now we are facing the realities of not even being together on Sundays. We are and will grieve the precious time we set aside each week to be together in this sanctuary, yet we are reminded that we are not alone. Jesus said, "I am with you always; to the very end of the age." (Matthew 20:28) It is this hope and promise that we must hold to as we continue to live in the time of COVID-19.

Below is a recap of the many announcements made on Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup>. Executive Council, in coordination with our local health district, the Texas DSHS, the CDC, and the WHO, will reassess all the pertinent and provided information and decide as to how we move forward in the coming week.

1. All worship services, including midweek services and meals, are cancelled from Monday, March 16, 2020 through Friday, April 3, 2020. This includes cancelling all midweek meals. There are no Sunday morning activities.
2. All nursing home and rehabilitation services are cancelled for the foreseeable future. We will await notification from each facility as to when we are able to join for worship again with the residents. Tom Engler and Pastor John Van Deusen will communicate with their teams as things change.
3. Hospital visitation is extremely limited. As of Sunday, March 15, 2020, each patient is allowed only two (2) visitors at a time. Our pastors may not be able to visit and provide care for our members. Please make sure to call Pastor Marcus, Pastor Kelsie, Pastor John, Donna, or the church office should you or a loved one be admitted to the hospital. We will provide all the care we can without putting ourselves and others at risk.
4. Our Church Council has been assigned members of our congregation to call as information needs to be shared. This might include further cancellations, changes of presently set schedules, or a celebration call as we join back together as a community. These eleven (11) teams embrace the entirety of our members who have worshipped with us over the past two years or given a gift of record in the last year. Please make sure to share with your Council member any additional needs or questions that you have.
5. Remember you "Pew Pals." Over the next two weeks, or until we come back together as a community, call, text, email, or send a note to each of those people you listed on your card. From my understanding of church, this is the purest and greatest expression of our baptismal life together, caring for each other simply, personally, and faithfully. Do you need a Pew Pal? Call the office and we will get you paired up.

6. While we are away from each other, there multiple places where you can access worship services, whether online or over the radio, over the next few weeks. All are linked on our website, [www.Emanuelslutheranchurch.com](http://www.Emanuelslutheranchurch.com).
- a. For Sunday worship:
    - i. Our Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/emanuelslutheranchurch](https://www.facebook.com/emanuelslutheranchurch), will have a live stream of our Sunday morning at 10:30am.
    - ii. KWED Radio, AM 1580, will also carry our 10:30am service at its normal time.
    - iii. Our podcast sight, [www.soundcloud.com](http://www.soundcloud.com), will feature an audio version of the worship service, which will be posted by 5:00pm. You will need to click on the link, search for “Emanuel’s Lutheran Church,” and click on our logo to find our “tracks.”
    - iv. Our church website will have an archive of these services.
  - b. For Wednesday worship:
    - i. Midday Lenten worship will be posted to our podcast sight, [www.soundcloud.com](http://www.soundcloud.com), and will feature a generative discussion on the week’s lesson/text with local pastors by 10am each Wednesday. A link to this devotion will also be placed on our Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/emanuelslutheranchurch](https://www.facebook.com/emanuelslutheranchurch).
    - ii. Holden Evening Prayer will also be posted to our Facebook page and our podcast site by 7pm each Wednesday. This will include a small reflection on the appointed “Wilderness” devotional and featured art piece by one of our pastors.
  - c. Daily:
    - i. You are invited to join us, from wherever you might be, at 12:05pm each day we are away from our body here and take a pause to pray, reflect, and breath.

Considering the recent changes to gathering group sizes, many of our small groups and ministries will also be changing their meeting frequency. As of March 16, 2020:

- 1. Ladies Aid **will not** be meeting on April 1<sup>st</sup>. The leadership will reassess as to whether they will be meeting in May and will distribute that information in a timely manner.
- 2. The Tuesday morning Bible Study group **will not** be meeting and will reconvene, pending any potential future changes, on Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>.
- 3. The Property Stewards, along with any willing hands, **will gather** on Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup> for cleaning and preparing the building. They will reassess then as to when and if they will continue to meet.
- 4. Our Day School **will remain open** until mandated by local and state authorities. This education ministry and safe and supportive childcare is vital to our families that do not have the ability to take off from work.

Nothing can or ever will be able separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, the Apostle Paul writes, because “...we are the Lord’s” (Romans 14). That is our light to hold onto, siblings in Christ. That is our hope when all else seems lost. That is our drive to care for one another and the world God made, making good decisions about personal care, and to remember to pray.

In God’s grip,  
Pastor Marcus Bigott

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