

March 14, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ at Peace,

*In God, my faithful God, I trust when dark my road;
Great woes may overtake me, Yet He will not forsake me.
My troubles He can alter; His hand lets nothing falter.*

Those are the words from the hymn "In God, My Faithful God." I wanted to share them with you since we are surrounded by many concerns and worries. I want you to know that I, and all the leadership here at Peace, are holding you and these worldwide concerns in our hearts and prayers. We will continue to pray the Lord strengthen you and give you peace.

I want to make you aware of a few updates and changes that we are implementing, beginning with Saturday evening worship tonight. Please know these are made in keeping with our understanding of the fifth commandment that we are to "help and support [our neighbor] in every physical need."

1. We will continue to display prominently hand sanitizer in both entryways and in the Fellowship hall. Anyone who serves communion will sanitize in front of the congregation so that people are assured that hands are clean.
2. We will not be sharing the peace through contact. We will simply verbally extend peace to those closest to us. We will not be walking around during the time of peace because of recommendations for social distancing.
3. We will be collecting offerings at the doors, rather than passing an offering plate.
4. We will be removing the Fellowship Pads and not using them for the next few weeks.
5. We will not be collecting bulletins following the service for re-use.
6. We will practice continuous service for communion, rather than kneeling at the rail for the next weeks. This decision is based on guidelines to decrease the amount of cross-contamination and hand-contact opportunities in the building.
7. We will not be offering the Common Cup during communion. After a lot of conversation this week with other pastors, and a lot of recommendations coming from our Synod and English District, I made this decision reluctantly, but with the best intention. I don't want people to feel compelled to partake using the chalice, nor do I want to give offense to other worshippers.
8. After this weekend, we are going to forego Fellowship food. Coffee and tea will be available

but not food. We will also put Soup Suppers on hold. I recognize this is disappointing to some, but putting them on hold will be in the spirit of the recommendations from the government and other authorities.

9. We are reminding people to stay at home if they are sick, or if they are in fear. We want to highlight our website as an opportunity to see the bulletins and announcements, as well as listen to the message. We also want to highlight Worship Anew (formerly called "Worship for Shut-Ins"), both on television and on the internet as they have worship services and devotionals. Their address is worshipanew.org .
10. Please sign up for text/email messages in case changes are needed to worship services and other activities. To do so, send a text message to 81010 with the word @peacefrem . You will receive a text asking for your name. Respond with your first and last name. You will then receive a text alerting you that you are signed up.

We continue to pray for all those who are affected, or whose loved ones are affected, by this illness. We continue to thank God for those who are studying this illness and attempting to guide us through this difficult time. And we pray that this pestilence passes quickly.

In these days and weeks, please remember the words of the familiar hymn:

*O God, our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast, And our eternal home.*

And the words of Christ himself:

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in me." (John 14:1)

And finally the words of Paul:

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13)

May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard and keep your heart and mind in Christ Jesus.

Pastor Jeffrey Teeple