

March 10, 2020

Dear friends and family of Resurrection Lutheran Church,

Greetings to you in the peace of our reconciling and loving Savior, Jesus Christ!

On Monday, March 9, it was my privilege to meet together with several members of your leadership team here at Resurrection to discuss a matter that I suspect is on the hearts and minds of many: What are we doing/will we be doing at Resurrection to create a safe and welcoming space for all the people we see throughout the week, but especially for worship during Saturday evening and Sunday morning services? As I've said before, we are tasked not only with the spiritual care of our people, but with the solemn responsibility of doing everything in our power to insure the care of the whole person...not only here within our walls but wherever and however God gives us an opportunity to do that.

Before I answer the question about what we're doing/will be doing, permit me first to encourage you and those you love in the Spirit of our gracious God who knows what we need even before we ask it from Him (Matthew 6:8)!

- Please know that if you have a serious underlying health condition, a compromised immune system, or anxiety about gathering in places where you may be especially susceptible to infection, you should stay home. If we don't see you for a while we might call just to "check in," but this is out of care for your welfare and not because we want you to feel "guilty" about not being in church!
- If you are presenting with cold symptoms of any kind, we encourage you to stay home.
- When coming to church, please avail yourself of the hand sanitizer stations at every entrance. The best thing you can do for your own health (wherever you might be) is to wash your hands frequently and touch your face as little as possible.
- If you have any concerns regarding how we are worshiping or about your own well-being while at church, please reach out to me (jonathan.blanke@rlcary.org) or an usher.

- Please always refer to reliable information obtained by the CDC from their website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>) rather than rumor or hearsay.
- Join us in praying for those whose lives have been directly impacted by the virus (see below). Find opportunities in the midst of these events to care for yourself even as God may lead you to help or serve others.
- Check the church web site and/or Facebook page for updates regarding scheduling of specific events.

Here is what we are doing or will be doing to promote health and wholeness in our church building:

1) We are praying...praying for those whose lives have already been impacted by the new coronavirus (COVID-19) worldwide, for those serving and attending to the needs of those impacted by the virus (including medical professionals, researchers, political leaders and others), and for ourselves, that we might live according to a humble spirit of wisdom that seeks to serve and maintain our own health in the midst of these events.

2) We have already implemented alternative greetings to the passing of the peace ("holy wave," etc.) that do not require hand-to-hand contact and have instructed our greeters to implement similar greetings at the door.

3) We have already discontinued passing of the offering plate in favor of receiving offerings/donations at the door, as worshipers leave.

4) We have already placed and begun using hand sanitizer dispensers in both worship spaces for those distributing the host during Holy Communion.

5) We have already increased our cleaning regimen for door knobs, tops of pews, and other frequently touched locations throughout the church.

6) We will (beginning Sunday, March 15) publish the entire liturgy in the bulletin so that hymnals need not be held.

7) We will (beginning Sunday, March 15) distribute the Lord's Supper by continuous rotation (as is currently done in the Family Life Center) to obviate the need for kneeling at the communion rail.

8) We will (beginning Sunday, March 15) set aside use of the fellowship pads in favor of a card to be submitted by guests and anyone else who chooses to do so.

9) We are constantly monitoring the situation and will make announcements as these become necessary.

I know I don't even have to ask you to give thanks with me that our heavenly Father has given us all that we have...including "body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members...and still takes care of them" (*Small Catechism*, First Article). Though we can never know what tomorrow may bring, we live each day in the quiet confidence that we are in God's hands. There is no other place we'd rather be!

In the abiding peace of our God,
Pastor Jonathan Blanke