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20 March 2020

Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

Trinity continues to seek a balance between being faithful to God's Word that invites us into worship and commands us to submit to our governing authorities, while affording our members the option to gather for worship should they desire. As we hear the changing realities in the attempt to slow the spread of this coronavirus, Trinity also seeks to offer the healing salve of Christ through Word and Sacrament in worship. Much like the spectrum of our congregational members, our elders have varied perspectives and concerns about how we respond in a godly manner. Each of these perspectives is valuable and within our Christian freedom, which is what we appeal to in offering the dignity of choosing between worshipping at home through technology or at church in person. To that end, this letter seeks to clarify what will continue at Trinity as we reiterate this call to personal responsibility in making choices that are best for your family as you live your Christian faith daily.

Worship

The weekend of March 22nd, Trinity will have our regular schedule of worship services (Saturday 6:30pm; Sunday 8:00am contemporary & traditional, 10:30am contemporary & traditional; and Monday 6:30pm). Lenten midweek worship services will continue on Wednesdays at 2:00pm and 7:00pm. The fellowship meal before the evening service will not take place at this time.

For weekends going forward (beginning weekend of March 29th), Trinity will offer worship in the sanctuary at 8:00am (traditional), 9:15am (contemporary) and 10:30am (traditional) in order to accommodate our needs and distribute our members across these services in an effort to limit exposure to those who gather for worship.

These worship services will see the following changes in how the services are conducted:

- We will not do sharing of the peace and physical contact (such as handshakes) should be limited
- Our offering will be collected at a table in the back and front of the sanctuary for members to place in throughout the service (plates will not be passed); members may also choose to give their regular gift online
- Members should be encouraged to leave space between other members (for example, leave a pew to separate each family group)
- We will refrain from our normal children's message routine
- Communion will be offered in a continuous fashion as we encourage each person to leave space between those around them, communion crosses for blessings will not be available, one section will be offered continuous communion at a time to limit members standing next to one another (a further explanation will be offered at the worship service you attend)
- Worship will be posted online for those to worship at home (efforts to stream the service are being made, which may be available Sunday, March 29th)

Please bear in mind that choosing to worship is a personal choice, there may also be consequences that we will bear for doing so. As you determine what is best for your family, do so with all your heart as you seek to set apart Christ as Lord in this and every situation!

Bible Education

Trinity will suspend Sunday School, Bible Study, and Confirmation classes beginning Sunday, March 22nd while encouraging families to engage in confirmation and Sunday school activities at home. Below you will find a summary of what encouragements are being made for each of these classes:

- Sunday School will email the at home talk sheet for the week to parents of students we have contact information
- Confirmation parents are encouraged to go through the lesson that your child is focused on that week as a family and reach out to pastors for any clarifications that might be needed
- Bible Study members are encouraged to engage in online resources set for on our website and offered in this letter
- Regular devotions and prayer are the habit of the Christian home, which should not change at this time

Personal Responsibilities

When considering *if* you should come to worship, Trinity would like to encourage you in your Christian freedom to stay at home and participate in the faith through means other than worship at Trinity. The Child of God should not feel guilt in refraining from worship for a time amid this serious public health crisis. Trinity also seeks to offer the option to worship for those who desire. Trinity members are personally responsible for making wise and godly choices amid the many options that are before them with confidence in a God who loves them. As you practice this personal responsibility please consider the following factors:

- Members should stay home if they are not feeling well (coughing, sneezing, runny nose)
- Members in high risk categories should avoid unnecessary risk and stay home
- Members should diligently wash their hands and practice good hygiene
- Members may provide their own sanitizing wipes or hand sanitizer
- Practice appropriate distancing from other members for mutual protection and safety

Trinity will be cleaning hard surfaces after worship services and daily cleaning those frequently touched surfaces (door hands, handrails, and the like). While these precautions are being taken, they will not be perfect and should not be completely relied upon. Our communion assistants and ushers will be encouraged to wash their hands and practice appropriate precautions throughout the worship service. Ultimately, should a Trinity member be worried about the risks surrounding the Coronavirus, may they be encouraged to stay home and use the many online resources that Trinity offers! Let us not allow arrogance to put God to the test and make foolish choices; rather, let us be sober minded about the realities around this health crisis and make choices filtered through our faith in God pleasing ways.

Online Resources

Through all of this, Trinity offers many online resources. Our sermons are placed online weekly already; however, in addition to this we are also posting a full service for those who would like to view our worship service. Below you will find a summary of some of the additional resources for the ongoing nurture and growth of our Christian faith:

- Worship services will be posted (Sunday and Wednesday services) at TrinityCP.org. Click on the "Latest" tab and the services or sermons will be located in the right column.
- Weekly Materials are posted at TrinityCP.org. Click on the "Latest" tab and the services or sermons will be located in the left column.
- Latest COVID-19 Information from Trinity can be found at TrinityCP.org by click on the "COVID-19" tab at the top right

- Lutheran Hour Ministry (LHM.org) offers several online resources such as Bible studies that you can take online, video Bible studies for free download, daily devotions, and Gospel adventures. Just click on the “Resources” tab for more information
- Worship Anew (worshipanew.org) allows members access to Lutheran Worship and messages for those who are not able to attend worship services. You can watch online by going to their website and clicking on “Our Programs”.
- YouVersion Bible App offers devotions and encouragement through God’s Word right in your hand. Download the app and begin a devotional plan with your family or friends.

Further Considerations

As things continue to come in and change around coronavirus, Trinity will seek to keep you informed to the best of our ability. This would be a great time for you to contact the church and update your contact information (many phone numbers and emails are out of date). Please consider making sure your contact information is correct and up today by calling the church office. Looking at the schedule beyond the regular weekend worship services below you will find a summary of current perspectives on upcoming events in April:

- A Night of Abundant Blessings (ANOAB) has been postponed, watch for more information to come out next week
- Holy Week & Easter worship services will continue in the new format with the many precautions in place to help limit the spread of coronavirus
Triumphal Entry (Saturday 6:30pm; Sunday 8:00am, 9:15am, 10:30am; Monday 6:30pm)
Maundy Thursday (2:00pm & 7:00pm)
Good Friday (2:00pm & 7:00pm)
Easter Vigil (6:30pm)
Easter (Sunrise 6:30am; Resurrection Celebration 8:00am, 9:15am, 10:30am; Monday 6:30pm)
~ Please note that we will not have our normal Easter Breakfast
- Confirmation Retreat has been canceled at this time
- First Communion for our 6th grade students has been postponed until the pastors are able to further instruct our catechumens for this blessed sacrament.
- Giving may still be done by dropping off your gift at the church or giving online (TrinityCP.org and click the “Give” tab)

Trinity will continue to consider further developments and considerations and seek to communicate updates to the church family to the best of our ability (contact the church office to update your contact information and assure you are up to date). Through all of these changing currents in our world, may you be guarded and comforted by a God who is always the same! If you have concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact the pastors or elders as we seek to honor Him in all that we do! May our Lord Jesus Christ, whom we worship and follow, be your shelter amid this storm, your comfort and peace to calm your fears, and may He be the Rock in which His people take refuge.

Blessings in Christ

Trinity’s Pastors and Elders

Serving others through Christ, together!

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