



Woodlawn Ev. Lutheran Church

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Pastor Thomas W. Kneser * Pastor Benjamin B. Wessel

March 17, 2020

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

We are living in an extraordinary and trying time. Because of the health crisis in our country our governor has mandated that public gatherings can be no larger than 10 people. This virtually eliminates all our activities as a congregation. Some may be asking the question, "Is this a time when we should obey God rather than men?" Our synod president, Pastor Mark Schroeder, writes that there are a couple of things to remember:

1. The Fourth and Fifth Commandments apply in a situation like this. We are to obey and respect the governing authorities as they carry out their God-given responsibilities (4th Commandment), and we are to do all we can to protect our neighbors and keep them from harm (5th Commandment).
2. At the same time God certainly desires that Christian gather together regularly for worship (3rd Commandment).
3. In limiting the size of worship gatherings, the government is not attempting to deny our freedom of religion. Rather, government authorities have issued mandates that they believe will protect citizens from harm.
4. Since all of these biblical principles are valid, it is legitimate for our congregations to strive to comply with governmental regulations on the one hand and, on the other, to find alternate means to enable God's people to be fed with Word and sacrament.
5. Recognize that this is an extraordinary opportunity to let our light shine as congregations and their members look for ways to serve the people in their communities in Christian love.

Consequently, for the present time we are **immediately cancelling all worship services, Bible classes and most other activities**. Some leadership and committee meetings will likely need to be held to deal with these issues.

What do we do in the meantime in order to keep feeding our souls with the gospel of Jesus? A complete plan will be worked out in the days ahead, but here are several things to consider:

For our midweek Lent service you can view the service from St. John's, Wauwatosa, led by Pastor Kyle Bitter. This is the message that would have been delivered here. To

access it go to www.sjtosa.org Go to the tab "Worship" and click on "Sermons." Scroll down to the one titled "Hidden Warrior." This is the complete service.

For an excellent message about how we can deal with the current crisis I highly recommend watching Pastor Josh Zarling's sermon from this past Sunday at Good Shepherd's, based on Ps 50:15: "Call on me in the day of trouble, I will deliver you and you will honor me." To access it go to www.goodshepherds.net On the right side click on the tab "Sermons," then the March 15, 2020 sermon.

For our worship this weekend, we are making arrangements to have our Favorite Hymn service recorded and posted on our Facebook page by Sunday morning. That can be accessed at www.woodlawnlutheran.org and clicking on the "Facebook" tab at the top of the page. You are not required to subscribe to Facebook (unless you want to) in order to view any of our previous services or musical selections. Watch for more details later in the week.

While we don't know of anyone from Woodlawn suffering the effects of COVID-19 at this time, your prayers are obviously requested that God would ease the burden it is causing to so many. Also, include in your prayers Evelyn Bauer (just moved to the Lutheran Home for rehab), Harold Arrowood (at Aurora – St. Luke's Hospital), Denyce Baker (just released from hospital in Naples, Florida, but not yet cleared to return to Milwaukee), Leola Baker at the death of her brother in Texas, and Jay Sierszyn and family at the death of his father, Jim.

May God bless and keep all of us safe,
Pastor Kneser and Pastor Wessel