



May 21, 2020

Friends and Family of St. Mark Lutheran Church,

St. Mark Council met on Wednesday May 20th, 2020 to discuss our current status and next steps during the pandemic. Under the recommendation of the CDC and the Saint Paul Area Synod of the ELCA, we will be forming a team of individuals to create and implement a COVID Preparedness Plan. This plan will include information on building reopening, safety and cleaning protocols, worship opportunities, and small group ministries. Please be reminded that when we hear words such as “church reopening” or “worship resuming” we are talking about the physical building of St. Mark Lutheran Church. We, as a collective body of the church, are actively sharing Christ’s love with our friends and neighbors. The church is alive; we are worshipping together.

If you are interested in joining this short-term COVID Response Team, and/or have experience and knowledge in public health, please let Pastor Mollie or Tory know ASAP. Our goal is to create a team of 6-10 people with a wide variety of skills and knowledge so that we can create and communicate our plan and preparations for building reopening to the congregation and outside groups.

As the formation of this team happens, the Church Council has created some preliminary guidelines that we ask everyone to abide by. The following suggestions and guidelines are from the CDC, MDH and St. Paul Area Synod, and will assist us as we plan to structure our church life together along with our COVID Response Team.

- The St. Mark building will remain closed until September 1, 2020. We will reassess the closure in August.
- Sign-In will be required when entering the building. There will be a sheet on the podium as you enter the church, so we can safely monitor who has been in and out of the building. This will assist in contact tracing.
- All gatherings at church (ministry, fellowship, and community groups) will continue to be held virtually, via video chat, text, phone call, email, etc.
- Sunday Worship will continue to be online for the foreseeable future. We will gather together virtually at 10:00 am. *You may also worship anytime if you are unable to join at 10:00 am. Worship videos will continue to be posted on Youtube and Facebook.*
- All summer activities, such as: VBS, service trips, and the Fall Festival will be cancelled.
- We are asking for donations of new disinfectant wipes and sprays, gloves, and masks, to maintain a safe environment for all. As you know, these are difficult to find! If you are able to donate any items, please contact the church office to set up a time to drop off your donation.

As we continue to navigate with the knowns and unknowns of this unique time, may we be reminded of Christ’s love and presence with each and every one of us. We have seen some incredible acts of love and kindness so far, and I encourage us to discover new ways to be the hands, feet, and voice of God’s promises. Deuteronomy 31:6 tells us, *“Be strong and bold; have no fear, because it is the Lord your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you.”* You are not alone. Please reach out for any reason as we walk together through this time and always. We continue to thank God for each and every one of you and pray that you are safe. Know that you are a blessing!

Peace be with you,

Pastor Mollie Dvorak &  
St. Mark Council