

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, please read this message about safe, responsible worship at

St. Michael's:

The public response to the threat of the Corona virus (COVID-19) has been quick and progressive. Last Sunday we worshiped as usual. This Sunday we're trying to ward off a crisis situation. As disciples of Jesus we trust that God will keep us in His care through all adversity. We also intend to be good citizens of our community in the earthly realm.

Please stay at home if you have symptoms such as fever, a dry cough, fatigue or shortness of breath. Report these symptoms to your doctor immediately.

The state of New York has banned events with 500 or more people. Obviously, we are far under that threshold. But we do want to respect people's need for safe, comfortable spacing. Please sit where you'd like but offer your neighbors a little more space than usual. We certainly have enough open space in church to allow for spacing of people throughout, from front to back. We will refrain from all handshaking, both during the service and at the conclusion of the service. We hope to get touchless sanitizers with refill gel for at back of church and in hall, but because of the current shortage, you may want to bring your own travel sanitizer to use at your convenience.

We will not pass the offering plate during the service. There will be an offering plate at the back of the church for us to place our tithes and offerings in – as we would do at a midweek Lenten service.

Since there will be no presentation of the offering, the communion elements will be placed on the altar and not processed down the aisle. The chalice will remain on the altar. The congregation will process forward individually to receive the Lord's Supper in the hand, with wafer and individual cup. Please leave a few feet of space in between you and the person in front of you – but not as much as a wedding procession!

Those who need to brace themselves or sit down while drinking the cup will have the time to do that. Those who prefer to remain seated may notify an usher that they'd like to have communion brought to them. It's not a problem at all.

God is gracious to us in all circumstances. We hope these precautions will allow us to keep our regular worship practice without interruption.

Lastly, we need to pray for our leaders, medical personnel, scientists and those who are already ill. This is not a time to panic, but to be alert and respectful of the health and wellbeing of others.

**In Christ,
Pastor Bauch, the Board of Elders and the Church Council**