

Dearest Kirkebo and Nora Lutheran Family –

I am hoping that this message finds you healthy and preparing for the uncertain times ahead. My prayers are that this will be just a blip in our rear view mirror soon but until that time we must make big changes to how we live our lives and how we function as a church.

It is with this understanding that I must sadly announce to everyone that Kirkebo and Nora churches will be closed for the next 8 weeks. This means that there will be no in-person gatherings – no services, no events, not even Holy Week services – at either of the locations. My heart just hurts thinking about it but it is for the best of all of us and our neighbors that we heed the warnings and guidelines that have been provided to us. But wait, that doesn't mean we won't have church!!

Here is a bit of my plan for the next weeks:

1. You will be receiving an email or mailing of the schedule for messages/services available on line through Facebook and our website. Those services will begin Sunday, March 22nd. For those that do not have internet access – the services will be mailed to you.
2. We will continue in this manner – online and mailed out – through the end of April.
3. Holy Week will be actual services provided through the same means – email/Facebook/website and mail. (I may be reaching out to a handful of you should I need assistance for these services.)
4. I want us to be intentional in keeping connected with each other so ask that we all continue to make those calls – comments on each other's Facebook etc.... so we continue to remain in fellowship even though we are not physically close.
5. I, as a pastoral leader, am not able to friend you on Facebook but will always approve requests from you should you want to stay connected with me as well. Totally up to you either way.

A few other things to note:

1. *We are still functioning as a church and therefore offerings and giving are still needed and requested during this time.* I'm enclosing the paperwork on how to set up on-line giving or you can always send in your offering to the Parish Office as well.
2. If you have ideas of other ways we can stay connected don't hesitate to let me know. This is a new and different time and we will be experimenting with things a lot during these next 8 weeks.
3. Confirmation/Showers/Egg Hunts etc... must all be canceled or re-scheduled. We will monitor when we feel things are getting back to a safe normal and reschedule Confirmation at that time. My apologies for those events that bring so much joy to all those that gather that now have to be canceled.
4. We will hold off on ordering the hymnals until we ourselves get back in the pews.

5. The Perley Parish Food Shelf will remain open on Thursdays from 5-7.
6. The church spaces should really not be used for anything as they have been thoroughly sanitized and we would like to keep them that way.
7. I am working on canceling the Lillys and if we can cancel we will use that money to adorn our sanctuaries or landscaping when we return.
8. Tentatively the May graduation parties will remain on the calendars but those two may need to be canceled.
9. I will be making no visitations – as per the Bishop to ensure that we are not carrying any illnesses to others.
10. Communion – will be offered on an as needed basis. If you and/or your family feel the need to commune I am willing to come to the church at an agreed upon time to provide the meal for you. Just let me know
- 11. IF YOU OR FAMILY are in need of anything – please reach out to me so we can get you some assistance. All requests will be confidential!!!!**

I understand this is a lot – so many uncertainties in our lives right now and it is hard to trust that it will be ok. Just be reminded that there are so many verses in scripture to remind us of God’s never ending love and care for us. Here is one of my favorites:

*¹⁰Do not fear, for I am with you,
Do not be afraid, for I am your God;
I will strengthen you, I will help you,
I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.
Isaiah 41:10 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)*

Trust in this – trust in God – that we too may feel and know the love of God as we navigate through these uncertain times.

Peace and wellness be with you all. May the road rise up to meet you. May the wind be always at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face; the rains fall soft upon your fields. And until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of His hand.

Blessings,

Pastor Intern Michele