**Trinity Lutheran Church COVID-19 (Corona Virus) Update**

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Grace to you and Peace from our Lord Jesus Christ!

The following phased steps outline our plans at Trinity as the Coronavirus outbreak expands and impacts our ministries at Trinity, both within our building and into the larger community. We believe this plan of action offers useful, relevant information to plan our course of action and work to promote the health and well-being of all of us at Trinity in the midst of quickly changing circumstances.

**General Guidelines for All Members of Trinity, visitors, and staff**

\*Please use good hygiene! Wash your hands and use hand sanitizer.

\*If you are ill, or even if you have a cold (with sneezing, blowing your nose, etc.) please stay home! It is ok to miss worship or other church activities. We need you to be well, and we need to look out and care for our members who might be at a higher risk of contagion.

\*We are constantly monitoring information from health professionals including: The CDC, the State of Wisconsin, Sparta School District, Monroe County Public Health, La Crosse Area Synod, the Wisconsin Council of Churches, and the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)

**\*Please note that the situation is rapidly changing, and our response and responsibility needs to match the changes.**

**Phase One** (Our current phase)

**Worship:** As of right now, we will continue to gather for worship on Sunday and on Wednesday Evening. There will be changes to our worship practices:

**-**Communion will be no longer be by intinction;

individual cups and bread will be given to communicants by servers.

**-**Communion servers are to wash hands and sanitize before distribution

**-**It is ok to not receive communion if members are wary:

Jesus is still present to all!

-No physical sharing of the peace.

-Offering plates will not be passed. Worshipers will be encouraged to place offering in plates as they enter or leave worship. Encouraging people to give electronically will be continuing and even increased.

-Hymnals and Bibles will be cleaned after each worship.

Will encourage worshipers to not use hymnals and rely on projection screen.

-We will be developing and implementing a way for us to worship ‘remotely’ (through our website, facebook, etc.)

**Fellowship:**

 -**WEDNESDAY LENTEN EVENING MEALS ARE SUSPENDED.**

**-We will be developing a way for our Faith Formation Mentor Relationships to continue**

-Sunday Fellowship Time will continue

-Social ‘distancing’ is encouraged. Give each other space.

-Give each other permission to stay home.

 **Education:** as of right now, Sunday School and adult class will continue.

**Fellowship, WELCA Circles, Committees and Teams:** We encourage the wonderful smaller ministries gathering of our congregation to think of ways to be in touch with each other that don’t require meeting physically.

**Use of our building by outside groups:** We will be in touch with all the various outside groups that use our space for meetings, asking them to pause in the use of our building until it is deemed appropriate to resume.

**Phase Two**

 **Worship: Continues with the same practices and guidelines of phase one.**

**Fellowship, Education, Circles, Committees and Teams, use of our building by outside groups:**

If the Sparta School District moves to ‘remote learning,’

**all activities listed above will be suspended for the time being.**

**Phase Three**

**In the event that the Sparta School District closes and/or faith communities are asked not to gather in any way, worship will be limited and also moved to an online format and worship resources will be shared for members to be used at home. The church office will remain open and staffed. But all non-worship activities will be suspended.**

**Phase Four**

**If there is a known case of COVID-19 within the Trinity family, the building will be closed immediately. All people will be told to stay home, and the building will be locked. We will work with health officials to follow proper protocol and communication. Worship will be online.**

**Other Important Considerations:**

Please continue to give offering. Our ongoing ministry will have ongoing needs in the midst of this time. We will do everything in our power to keep our costs low, yet our employees need to be paid, our ministries continue, and our giving impacts the lives of people near and far who are in need. Offering can be dropped off, mailed, or given electronically (see our website: [www.tlcsparta.org](http://www.tlcsparta.org)). Please continue with your spirit of generosity!

Have you ever noticed that whenever the disciples encounter a scary situation, Jesus always responds with, “Do not fear!” We trust in the presence of Jesus, who is will us always. And that “nothing separates us from the Love of Christ!”

Pastor Mark Kvale

Les Stanley, council President

Trinity Lutheran Church Council