



St. Luke's Episcopal Church
Spirituality in Action

Dear People of St. Luke's,

March 13, 2020

Yesterday afternoon Thursday, March 12th, I participated in a conference call with Bishop Wayne and members of the Standing Committees of the Dioceses of Eastern and Western Michigan. We met to discuss the impact of COVID19: The Corona Virus, and our responses to it. We reached a consensus as to our recommendation for all the parishes in both dioceses. We are inviting our parishes to suspend public worship for the rest of Lent. This is being suggested for two equally important reasons. We want to care for our people and help limit their exposure to this virus. We also want to do our part in support of public health, thereby caring for our neighbors. This is in keeping with our Christian mission to care for our whole society (see I Timothy 2:2-3, Titus 3:1-2). We are undertaking this spiritual discipline as part of our Christian witness to Christ's care and concern, enacted in this instance by us, for all people.

Thus, at St. Luke's Church we will not celebrate our usual Sunday or Wednesday Eucharists until Palm Sunday, April 5th. We will also not have Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, or Stations of the Cross in the chapel. On Sundays and Wednesdays we will record a small and simple Holy Eucharist with sermon and post it to our website and Facebook page. You may also access daily Morning and Evening Prayer at <https://prayer.forwardmovement.org>.

The public health concern is with large group gatherings facilitating the spread of infection, and smaller gatherings of the elderly and other vulnerable populations. Our small group, team, and committee meetings may continue. Our book studies on Wednesday evenings and Thursday mornings will continue. But **please discern carefully if you should attend any of these gatherings or should remain at home.**

- If you are sick or have flu like symptoms, please stay home. If you or your children are ill, including even mild symptoms such as runny nose, sore throat, cough, and/or fever, please stay home. COVID-19 is mild for some people, but severe for others.
- If you are elderly, cope with a chronic disease, or have a compromised immune system, discern carefully as to whether you should attend, or not. You may wish to consult with your physician. We'd rather have you stay home than put yourself at significant risk.

The church office will be open most Mondays through Thursdays in order to conduct the business and administration of our parish life. The Thrift Shop will be closed until April, Partners in Housing Transition will not deliver furniture until April. The Diaper Bank will be distributing diapers when our community partners are unable to do so.

Please remember to let us know if you have a pastoral need and, especially, if you go to the hospital. Remember, hospitals are limited in the information which they may share, so it's always best if you or one of your family calls or emails us.

A letter from the Episcopal and Lutheran Bishops of Michigan is attached. It includes an excellent prayer you may wish to use. Stay tuned in, as we will do our best to communicate frequently with all of you. And please remember to send in your pledges as our bills will not go away for three weeks.

This is a momentary crisis. St. Luke's has gotten through bigger crises than this. We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13).

Many Blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Randall R. Warren" followed by a small cross symbol (+).

Randall R. Warren, Rector