



Pastor Trish Reedstrom

Dear People of God at Messiah Lutheran:

“May the grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.” Philippians 1:2

What a gift to be alive at a time like this! What a privilege to be people of faith, bearing witness to the grace and peace that is ours in the face of fear and devastation. We are resurrection people, and so, even as we make plans for living in this in-between time, we plan as well for the celebration that is to come.

We begin with the news that many of you already know – effective immediately, all face-to-face gatherings for worship and other non-essential meetings at Messiah are suspended until further notice. We know all the reasons why, and all of us, together, will continue to monitor CDC and other public health guidelines and make plans to gather again as soon as possible. IN THE MEANTIME:

Plans are underway for how we will continue to worship and gather as a community even as we practice social distancing and other public health measures. These plans will evolve daily and weekly, dependent on what’s happening in the world and our community, as well as when we discover what is and isn’t helpful for caring for our spiritual health. In this moment,

1. Watch for an on-line worship service Sunday mornings at 10 AM on Facebook Live. The service will be converted to video and be on Messiah’s web site (<https://www.messiahnorthmankato.com/>) every Monday morning – find it under the media tab on the top.
2. If you are a Facebook user, watch for a daily (Monday-Friday) opportunity of devotion and prayer at 6 PM. If you find them helpful, share them.
3. As we settle into a new normal, we are going to explore opportunity for small groups to gather in this building, or at least, opportunity to move through the space for a time of prayer, meditation, etc. as individuals or families. Our goal is to have this up and running by Holy Week, if not sooner. Our first step will be to establish a prayer station for the community in our gazebo. If you want to cut out some shapes from cardstock, make a sign, or have a couple of pails and can help “plant” a couple trees in some sand or concrete, let us know. (And now you’re curious too, right?!)

Communicating with you will be a top priority for us. We plan to communicate via postal mail, email, web site, Facebook, and our sign outside church. Watch for it!

1. If you don’t have access to the internet or Facebook, we NEED to know! We are exploring other ways to bring you regular updates and devotional opportunities, so please call the church office (507-387-5537) and let us know if you DO NOT have INTERNET AND/OR EMAIL options.
2. Make sure we have updated emails for you! If you have email but did not receive this letter from us in a “What’s Up” email, check your SPAM. If it’s not there, contact us with a current email. Phone or email Jan at messiah@hickorytech.net or Robin at MessiahComm@hickorytech.net
3. We are exploring possibilities for meetings and other gatherings using Zoom, computer and/or audio. If you are someone who has been involved in setting up and hosting Zoom meetings, and want to help us out, please contact Robin or Pastor Trish.

We know you want to help. This week, we will be exploring how we can begin to implement one of our Roadmap 2020 goals: “We will develop a “Need Help? – I Can Help” Board for people to share individual and communal needs and services. There will be a central location for this to occur on an on-going basis.”

1. On Sunday, we started a list of people who stand ready to help one another. Some of the visitation team members gathered on Tuesday to help Pastor Trish develop a phone tree to be in touch with our older members or those who might be ill.
2. We have made contact with FOCP Backpack and offered our services. We will reach out to other non-profits as we hear and sense a need and then pass those opportunities on to you.
3. What will be needed will likely evolve over time. Right now, we think about making calls, sending cards/mail, making deliveries, providing food, doing some cleaning at church if we try to use it for small groups, helping put together care packages, Sunday School activities, etc.
4. IF YOU HAVE A NEED TODAY OR IN THE NEAR FUTURE, PLEASE CONTACT US! Your family of faith is ready to help.

Prayers. We will pray together during our on-line worship times. We will continue our prayer chain. Let us know if you want to be added as someone in need of prayer and/or someone who wants to be a prayer warrior. We will pray unceasingly. “Don’t be anxious about anything; rather, bring up all of your requests to God in your prayers and petitions, along with giving thanks.” Philippians 4:6

Finally, we will need your on-going financial support. We are going to postpone the building projects that have been planned, we will do what we can to limit expenses, and we understand that this is going to be a time of financial difficulty for all of us in a variety of ways. Simply, if you can help continue to support your faith community, thank you. The web site has opportunity for on-line giving if you are interested, or contact us.

We began with Philippians, and we end with Philippians (paraphrased). “Greet all God’s people in Christ Jesus.... All God’s people here, especially those of us privileged to serve you, send our greeting. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirits.” Philippians 4:21-23

Pastor Trish

Intern Pastor Janet

Jan Waller

Robin Blasing