

Pastoral Letter about Response to the New Coronavirus

March 14, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” (Psalm 46:1)

This verse tells us that our Lord is with us in time of trouble and need. God is our strength when we are facing changing or difficult circumstances. Please remember that as we try to respond as faithfully as we can to the rapidly evolving situation with the new coronavirus pandemic.

Out of concern for the most vulnerable among us, we have cancelled worship services and other meetings and events at church as of March 15, 2020, until further notice. This was a difficult decision, but in light of the recommendations of public health officials and guidance from church leaders, we feel it is the most loving and responsible thing to do.

Also, public health officials have said that if someone tested positive for COVID19 after attending worship, everyone at church that day would be placed under quarantine.

ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton (in a message on the ELCA website) talks about this time of disruption that we are in, and urges us now, during this time of Lent and this illness, to fast from physical touch, and to see this as an opportunity to pause and reflect and breathe, to pray and read Scripture, and not to take unnecessary risks.

Please look for updates on the church website: firstenglishlutheranchurch.360unite.com (You can also Google: First English Lutheran Church Whitewater, to get to the website.) You can call me at the church, 262-473-5076, or on my cell phone, 608-354-2058. You can also text me on my cell phone. Or you can e-mail me at pastorsteve@felcww.org

We are working on ways to provide resources for prayer and worship, utilizing our church website. We hope you will stay connected to others during this uncertain time, even when gathering is discouraged. Send cards, or use the telephone and computer to communicate with your family members and others, especially senior citizens who may feel more isolated.

During this time, please mail your offerings to the church. Practicing faithful stewardship and other methods of caring and giving will help us sustain our church and those in need during this critical time.

God is with us. God is with you. “Do not be afraid,” the Lord tells us. God will lead us through this wilderness together.

God’s grace and peace be with you!

In Christ’s love,

Pastor Steve