

A Response to COVID-19

In light of the pandemic nature of the Coronavirus and the resulting anxiety it induces in many we seek to avoid being caught up in the panic on the one hand, while at the same time taking appropriate precautions. It is important in times such as this to remember that we are called to love our neighbor which includes taking measures to slow the spread of disease and to help protect the most vulnerable among us. But at the same time, we are told not to worry or get caught up in the panic but rather to trust in the provision and promises of our gracious God. With these things in mind the elders at The Lutheran Church of St. John have made the following decisions.

- All worship services will continue as scheduled, both Sunday morning and Wednesday night. We will implement the following procedures in an attempt to minimize any risk:
 - o There will be no time of formal greeting or sharing of the peace.
 - o Offering plates will not be passed during worship, but offerings will be brought to a central location.
 - o The common cup will not be used during communion. All those serving and preparing communion will wash and sanitize their hands prior to touching the elements.
- The Open Hands food pantry will remain open to provide food for our neighbors in need. Precautions will be taken to minimize any risk to our volunteers or those we serve.
- All other activities and meetings at the church will be cancelled or postponed at least until children are allowed to return to school. This includes but is not limited to Sunday School.
- There will be no food or coffee served at our worship services or at Open Hands food pantry.

Everyone is encouraged to practice good hygiene. Even if you are not concerned about catching a virus, for the sake of your neighbor care must be taken. If you are not feeling well, stay home. If you are unable to join us for worship, use alternative opportunities to stay engaged with God's Word. Our sermons can be found on our website, the St. James worship service can be listened to on the radio, and of course you can continue to stay active in your own devotions.

If you have any concerns, please feel free to contact Pastor Steve or the board of elders. If during this anxious time we can serve you in any way don't hesitate to ask. Finally, continue to pray for our community, those affected by this virus, and those providing care, always remembering that God continues to be our ever-present help in time of trouble.