

Dear worshipers at St. Andrew;

More and more people are concerned about the Corona Virus, along with the various forms of the flu, and some have also shared their concerns with me. With that in mind, I am sharing with you the following:

On one hand, Scripture encourages us, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

On the other hand, When Jesus sent out his disciples, he told them, "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore, be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16).

We see the application of these two passages when Martin Luther was dealing with The Black Death plague. He wrote these wise practical words that can help inform the way we approach things happening in our world right now: "I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance inflict and pollute others and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me and I have done what he has expected of me and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others. If my neighbor needs me however I shall not avoid place or person but will go freely as stated above. See this is such a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash nor foolhardy and does not tempt God." Luther's Works Volume 43:132 the letter "Whether one may flee from a Deadly Plague" written to Rev. Dr. John Hess

Now concerning one another in the spirit of wisdom, shrewdness, and innocence:

- Stay home If you are sick or your health is in danger of being compromised. Recordings of our sermons are available usually before the following Monday at www.standrewlcms.org under "Sermons." Main Street Living is also available at 9am Central time on FOX station KVRN Channel 15.1, & 10am Central on WDAY Xtra Channel 6.3, and archived on www.mainstreetliving.com/north.
- Frequently wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Cover coughs or sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow
- Avoid shaking hands with others. Greetings may be done with a fist or elbow bump. Be the first to offer such a greeting with a big smile, but don't be offended if someone offers their hand, offers a fist or elbow bump or refuses. Smiling with verbal greetings are good to exchange as well!
- When receiving the bread at Holy Communion please extend your non-dominant hand so that the pastor or assistant can drop the wafer without touching your hands. The pastors and elders sanitize their hands before offering communion.
- Maintain your giving using our website www.standrewlcms.org "Donate Online" or set up regular EFT giving by contacting the church office.
- Alert your pastors about your need for pastoral care, but appraise them of your condition, especially if masks are needed.

Now concerning your church building and worship:

- Extra efforts are being made to clean and sanitize touched surface areas (use the handicapped entrances to enter the building).
- Use wall mounted hand sanitizers at the entrance to the sanctuary, in the fellowship hall before the foodline, and wash your hands. Plastic gloves are used by those who help with serving.

- We have discontinued handshake greeting at the beginning of the services. At the door at the beginning or the end of services, we suggest “fist bumps” instead (not required).
- The pastors and elders sanitize their hands before offering communion.

Also, it is critical your financial support continues for the work of your congregation. The congregation’s expenses continue no matter what is happening in our world or our community. Giving online is easy on our website or setting up regular EFT giving is a simple process as well by contacting the church office.

Finally, it is easy to be or feel isolated. We need each other. Lift one another up in prayer. Remember, “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1). The Lord grant you safety, healing and peace always.

In Christ’s service;

Pastor Jahnke