Dear Members of St. John,

Here are a couple posts I've written on the St. John page on Facebook. I will continue to keep everyone informed of what's going on at church. Thanks!

Pastor Christian Strickland

***Updates***
Confirmation parents: I emailed a confirmation lesson to be completed by next Wednesday

Offering: I know, I know but I have to mention it. The church still has bills to pay! Don’t forget your offerings. You can mail or you can then off in church office. They will be collected and kept safe.

The past few days I've been in talk with a number of pastors regarding this crisis. We've all struggled with what to do and how to do it. We've considered the 3rd commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy." There is also Hebrew's admonition about not neglecting to meet together (Heb. 10:25). And yet, there are also other commandments to consider - the 4th and 5th commandments. Luther's explanation of the 4th commandment tells us the need to obey those in authority over us and the 5th commandment to not harm our neighbor.

I had a conversation with my vicarage pastor/supervisor a couple days ago. He strongly insists the need to take this seriously especially in light of the governing authorities who are asking us to help keep the virus from spreading. I believe they're acting in good faith.

Yesterday, the pastors in our circuit and I were texting one other. One pastor said that his wife, who is a nurse, is concerned about not having enough ventilators. Right now NYC has had a big increase in coronavirus cases. The goal for all of us is to not overtax the health system - for the benefit of our neighbors who are at most risk. Knowing what we know about how diseases are spread this isn't about living in fear but living in cooperation with authority and in care and concern for our neighbor.

These are difficult times and there are all kinds of questions that the church is wrestling with right now. So thank you for your patience and understanding.

Please pray for our doctors and nurses, those who are sick, and those who are concerned about their job or have lost their job. We'll get through this, no doubt. And know that the God of all power and might will work all things for our good.

Pastor Christian Strickland