

Dearly beloved of the Lord at Trinity:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, merciful Father, Your thoughts are not our thoughts, Your ways are not our ways. In Your wisdom, You have permitted this pandemic to befall us. We implore You, let not the hearts of Your people despair nor our faith fail us but sustain and comfort us. Direct all efforts to attend the stricken, console the bereaved, and protect the helpless. Bring hope and healing that we may find relief and restoration; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

On Monday, March 16, 2020 the Columbia City Council enacted an emergency declaration in reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic. Part of the declaration includes a prohibition on any gatherings of over 50 people and any gatherings with more than 10 older adults or other high-risk individuals. Houses of worship were specifically included in the prohibitions.

After difficult deliberation and consultation with the Board of Elders and other congregational leaders, the following decisions have been made.

- All onsite meetings and activities at Trinity are canceled for the present time.
- Wednesday Lenten services and Sunday services will take place with members remaining in their homes connecting through the means described below. Only Pastor(s), an organist, and a designated small choir to sing the hymns will be present.

Holy Communion:

Out of love for your neighbor, I am asking you to forego what is rightfully yours – the physical presence of Christ in the Supper for which you rightly hunger. I am also asking you to heed the request of the civil authority set over us by God for our good. You have undoubtedly heard the call to not assemble in order to “flatten the curve” lest our health care system would be overrun as it has been in Italy. While I ask you to love your neighbor, I will also be happy to deliver the Lord’s Supper to you. Contact me to schedule a time to come to Trinity to receive the Supper.

Pastoral Care:

As always, please contact me if you desire personal pastoral care. I will remain vigilant in assessing ways and means of delivering the Gospel of Christ to you.

Offerings and Contributions:

Trinity is in a good position to weather this storm financially. Still, I would ask that you continue to support Trinity as you are able by mailing in your contribution, dropping it off at church in the designated lockbox, or by using our electronic giving options (see below) so that we remain in a position to help others. The economic impact will be great. We want to remain financially strong as a congregation so we can respond to the needs of members and others who will suffer financially.

Electronic Giving Options:

- You can contribute directly from your bank account or bankcard using a smartphone app. Search for “GivePlus” on the Google Play Store or “Give+” on the Apple App Store, install the app, and follow their instructions on how to make a contribution.
- We are also working on making electronic giving available through the Trinity website. More information will be posted as it becomes available.

Home Altar:

I might suggest you create an area for a Home altar. Designate a place for your household to gather regularly. Place on the altar a Cross, bible, candle and devotional material (the bulletin will be on Trinity’s website for you to download and print).

Worshiping Together Remotely:

Service Times:

- Sunday morning service will begin at 8:00 a.m.
- Adult Sunday Bible study will begin at 9:15 a.m.
- Wednesday Lenten service will begin at 12:00 p.m. (noon).

Bulletins:

- [Bulletins with printed liturgy and hymns](#) as well as the [Trinity Weekly News](#) will be available by clicking the links above and under the “News” tab on the Trinity website, www.trinity-lcms.org.
- For privacy reasons, our prayer list will not be listed in the bulletin. The written list of those in our prayers will be available on the members-only portion of the Trinity website or by contacting the Church Office.

Facebook:

- Go to the Trinity Facebook page facebook.com/trinitylutherancomo/. You do not need to have a Facebook account to join us in the worship service.
- If you go to the page before the live video starts, you may not see it come up. Be sure to go to the page or reload the page shortly after the time the service is scheduled to begin.
- Videos will remain on Facebook for a few days for on-demand viewing.

Ava Speech to Text:

- Closed captioning of the worship service is available through the Ava speech to text app available from the Google Play Store and Apple App Store or on your computer from www.ava.me.
- Transcripts will remain available on Ava for a few days for on-demand viewing.

Trinity Website:

- Links to video and audio recordings of the worship services and Bible studies will be available on www.trinity-lcms.org within 48 hours of the live stream.
- Links to other resources will also be available on the Trinity website.

Church Office:

- The Church Office will remain staffed during normal office hours, 8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.
- In order to limit contact with staff, equipment, furniture, etc., however, you must make an appointment to visit the Church Office in person.
- Please do not visit the Church Office unless absolutely necessary.
- You may contact the Church Office by phone at (573) 445-2112 or by email at church@trinity-lcms.org.

Updates:

Please watch your email and Trinity's website www.trinity-lcms.org and Facebook page facebook.com/trinitylutherancomo/ for any updates to this information. This is a fluid situation so we will be reassessing along the way so that we can resume various activities and, most importantly, the gathering of the faithful around Word and Supper as soon as deemed wise.

For Christians the beginning of the day should not be burdened and oppressed with besetting concerns for the day's work. At the threshold of the new day stands the Lord who made it...Therefore, at the beginning of the day let all distraction and empty talk be silenced and let the first thought and the first word belong to Him to whom our whole life belongs (Dietrich Bonhoeffer – "Life Together").

Your Servant in Christ,

Pastor Brian Thieme