

## People of St. Thomas:

We are in the midst of a global crisis. We're told by public health experts that staying home, whenever possible, is the best way to prevent the COVID-19 virus from spreading exponentially through our city, state, and nation. As a church, we want to model the best behaviors to keep our members, our families, and our community safe.

Council has voted, after prayerful consideration, to cancel all in-person worship services and activities at St. Thomas through the month of April. We are closing the church building until Monday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, and asking staff to work from home, as much as possible, on essential tasks. All St. Thomas staff will continue to receive full pay during this period.

We will continue to gather at our computer and phone screens to worship. Wednesday Lenten messages for our "Grief on the Way" series will be recorded and available, via a link on our website, through Facebook and YouTube. Sunday services will also be recorded for the next two weeks. We hope circumstances will permit us to livestream services for Holy Week and the rest of April from the sanctuary.

On the advice of his family doctor, Pastor Darby will be self-isolating in Minnesota until the church office reopens. He will continue to be available to staff and members of the congregation via email and phone. Contact the office for his email address and phone number. He will share his Sunday message with us for the next two Sundays from Minnesota.

Parents and youth, please watch for an email from Amy Balcam about faith formation activities for families that she's putting together.

Council and staff are working to establish a Care Team that can reach out to members while we're physically separated. We are recruiting volunteers to contact elderly and health-compromised members who are homebound, and to offer contact-free, front-door delivery of some groceries and medicines if needed. If you are interested in volunteering for this ministry, or if you would like to be placed on the call list, please email council president Dawn Bakken. If you are aware of members who aren't being reached by email or Facebook, please let us know, and we will add them to the contact list.

Parish administrator Susan Krieg will be checking email and voice mail on a regular basis.

May God's blessings remain upon our congregation and upon all of God's people,

Dawn Bakken, St. Thomas council president

March 24, 2020