

Good morning:

I know there is a lot of “stuff” going on in the world right now. Regarding the Corona Virus, plans are definitely fluid, changing from day to day and in some cases, hour to hour. As we move forward, we do so with prayer and calmness. Having worked in virology through Oklahoma State University for three years as a research assistant, I am well aware of the science behind this virus. As your pastor, I am well versed in what we, as God’s children, are called to do theologically. Last night I met with the elders. Here is how we will move forward in the church, St. Paul’s, until things settle down and return to some normalcy.

Firstly, we have the responsibility to love our neighbors. That means we do not put them in any danger. This goes along with the fifth commandment and Martin Luther’s explanation commandment: “We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbor’s money or possessions, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his possessions and income.” What this means is that we do not hoard. We buy what we need, only. It also calls us to call upon our neighbors. If you are going to the store, contact your neighbors, especially the elderly, to see if you can pick up anything for them.

Jesus combined the Ten Commandments into two: to love the Lord God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind. This means that as we move forward we do not put our members at increased risk. That being said, beginning with Sunday, March 22, we will no longer gather for worship nor study. Worship will be live streamed at 10:30 am for you to unite from your homes for hearing the Word. Here is the link to click on to take you to that service: (<https://stpaulsenid.com/church/>). We will be using Divine Service 3 for that worship. Attached is a copy of Divine Service for you to follow along with.

As we are in Lent, after tonight’s service, all future midweek services will be live streamed at 6:30 pm. We will be following the order of worship of Vespers. Attached is a copy of Vespers that you may follow along.

In addition to Sunday and Wednesday evening, I will also be providing an opportunity to worship on Wednesday mornings at 9:00 am. We will follow the order of Matins. Again, a copy of the service is attached for your convenience.

On Thursday mornings at 9:00 am, I will be streaming a devotional study. I pray you will join me for this study that we may continue to grow in the Word.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion is available to you by contacting your elder or calling the church office and either myself, or an elder, will bring communion to you.

For the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, and we have a couple of babies that are in need of baptism, I can do that one of two ways for you. You may come to St. Paul’s and we will hold a small, intimate, private service; or, I can come to your home to provide the sacrament.

At this time, Senior Ministry activities are on hold and will not meet. This includes Tai Chi, Balance and Strength, and Bridge. For the present, Wednesday morning Bible Study will continue with Steve Wiederkehr. Friday morning men's Bible Study is on hold for the present and will not meet.

It was decided also that LWML will not meeting during this time.

The Thrivent workshop scheduled for Sunday, March 29th is postponed.

I truly do not like this; however, as your shepherd, the under shepherd of the Great Shepherd, our Lord Jesus Christ, I am called to serve and protect you. I pray you will take the opportunities offered to worship through the live stream. Please know that I am here for you. Jesus loves you and so do I. May our Triune God keep you through this crisis.

In His Service,
Pastor Reber

Psalm 91:

¹He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

²I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

³For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence.

⁴He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.

⁵You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day,

⁶nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.

⁷A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.

⁸You will only look with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked.

⁹Because you have made the Lord your dwelling place—the Most High, who is my refuge—

¹⁰no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent.

¹¹For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.

¹²On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.

¹³You will tread on the lion and the adder; the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.

¹⁴"Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name.

¹⁵When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him.

¹⁶With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation."