

## A LETTER FROM YOUR ST. MATTHEW LUTHERAN CHURCH

Dear saints of St. Matthew Lutheran Church. These have been challenging times for all of us with this pestilence going around the world. We are all invited to “get on our knees” and ask the Lord to help us in times of this plague. According to Luther’s explanation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment in the small catechism, we should “call upon God’s name in every trouble”. He promises in Psalm 50: “call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.”

During this terrible outbreak in Canada and the world we have to make some tough changes to our services and church functions. Please keep in mind that all these changes are made to keep our members and staff safe during this period. Decisions were made to assure that we are also complying with provincial and federal rules set by the government at this time.

As we hear our authorities banning any social gatherings including places of worship, we are called to heed to their directions (fourth commandment) and protect the most vulnerable of our neighbours (fifth commandment: we should help our neighbour and support him in every physical need”). Our church has lots of members in the “risk group”.

**Effective immediately, we are therefore suspending all gatherings and worship services, including this Sunday.** We just received an official statement from the synodical office and the president of the Lutheran Church-Canada has also asked all congregations to suspend their worship services at their churches and go online instead. If you want to read this letter, click on this link:

<https://www.canadianlutheran.ca/concerning-covid-19-statement-from-lcc-president/>

According the 3<sup>rd</sup> commandment, we also should “not despise the preaching of the Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it”. Ministry in our midst will look different now: your pastor and the elders of our church will be reaching out through the available means of communication: social media, our website, phone calls, emails etc. We will offer different resources for devotions, prayers and prayers in our website. **Regarding the worship service**, a devotional form of recorded worship service will be posted in our website, as well as in our Facebook page. There will be no live streaming of the services on Sundays.

If you don’t have a computer and access to the internet, we recommend the Lutheran Hour Ministries’ radio program. You can find the program CHRB 1140 AM, on Sunday mornings at 8:00 am. It is also available in RealAudio at [www.lll.ca/TLHstnlist.html](http://www.lll.ca/TLHstnlist.html). Streaming audio and podcasts [www.lutheranhour.ca](http://www.lutheranhour.ca).

We are also called to be good stewards of God’s gifts of time, talents and treasures. As Christians, we desire to keep the Mission & Ministry among us to others by the preaching of His Word. In order to do that, we ask that you continue to be generous by not forgetting your offerings.

## **WAYS TO DONATE DURING THE OUTBREAK**

If you would like to continue your financial support for the church during this outbreak, please consider mailing a cheque to the office or use E-transfer. E-transfer can be sent to the office e-mail: [smlccsecretary@shaw.ca](mailto:smlccsecretary@shaw.ca). Monies received via e-transfer will be automatically deposited in the church account. Donations will be recorded, and tax receipts will be issued in the beginning of 2021.

For the time being, the church office will be open with shorter hours, from Monday to Thursday 10am-2pm. If you know someone who doesn't have access to e-mails and internet, please let them know about these changes.

May God bless you, keep you and protect you always. He will see us through!

Calgary, March 19, 2020

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