



March 13, 2020

Dear Redeemer Family,

"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me." (John 14:1) These are the comforting words that Jesus spoke to His disciples on the eve of His passion. They were confused and concerned as He was working to prepare them for life and ministry without His immediate physical presence with them. We as a nation and a community are experiencing concern and witnessing societal confusion over the Coronavirus/COVID-19. We as God's dearly loved children have opportunity to give witness to our faith and at the same time live out that faith, working to bring comfort and calm to our local community and our Redeemer family. We hope to do this by establishing practices and procedures designed to do the best we can to protect the children entrusted to our care, as well as support our families by providing information about the present situation. Hopefully we can bring comfort and hope in the midst of the anxiety, that many are experiencing. Your pastor and elders, in consultation with the church leadership, would like to update you with procedures and guidelines we are putting in place to help bring a sense of calm as we respond to Coronavirus/COVID-19. We are taking this situation seriously and seek to practically and lovingly do our best to lessen the risk to our church family.

Pandemic Procedures & Protocol for Redeemer

Out of Christian love for our neighbor (Mark 12:31), especially the elderly, during this time of uncertainty regarding the Coronavirus, the Pastor, in consultation with the Board of Elders have decided the following:

1. All Sunday morning greeters and handshaking in the greeting line have been discontinued until further notice. We also recommend parishioners not shaking hands with each other either.
2. When a pandemic reaches our surrounding counties, we will assess the situation as it develops under the advice of the governing authorities. Remember that the Government is one of the means by which God protects us. (See Rom 13:1-4)
3. Divine Service and all church activities will continue until the time when a governing authority should tell us to stop assembling for public safety. However, please know that if you are elderly or have a reason to be concerned that you may be sick or have been exposed to the virus, it is OK to miss Church. Missing Church in these circumstances would not be *"neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some"* as Hebrews 10:25 warns. You would not be *"despising preaching and His Word."* (3rd Comm.)
4. As is always the case, all people experiencing flu-like symptoms should stay home. In this case, until we know more information about the virus, if anyone in your house has a fever, please stay home. Please DO NOT send any children to Sunday School if anyone in the house has a fever.

5. Regarding Holy Communion, there have been studies conducted for over 100 years regarding the transmission of diseases via the Lord's Supper and there has never been any evidence showing that there is any more risk in communing than standing in a greeting line. The pastor and elders distributing Communion will thoroughly wash their hands directly preceding the distribution of the Sacrament. We will continue to offer the Sacrament at services unless pastor is not there to administer it (see point 4). We also plan to solely utilize disposable Communion cups during this time. However, it must be stated, that if your conscience is burdened by the reception of the Sacrament, it is OK to withhold from taking it! We do not want anyone taking it out of fear or coercion, and that applies AT ALL TIMES! Those who continue to commune, however, should take Communion in both kinds, that is, both the Body (bread) and Blood (wine) of Jesus, as Christ instituted (See Matt 26:26-27; also Augsburg Confession Article XXII.)
6. The offering plates will no longer be passed hand to hand through the congregation. Instead, we will utilize our two wooden offering vessels, designed to receive offerings. As we approach the altar for Communion, Connect Cards and offerings may be placed in either vessel. Or you can leave your Connect Card and offering on your seat and an elder will pick it up immediately after worship.
7. Hand sanitizer has been placed in community areas of the facility.
8. In the event we cannot safely assemble for worship, sermons will be online (Pastor and elders are exploring other "live" options). While heads of household are expected to lead worship at home in normal circumstances as Scripture teaches (Deut 6:6-7, Prov 22:6, Eph 6:4) this may become even more important now! More information will be forthcoming.
9. All communication will first happen via Redeemer's Remind app, as well as our church Facebook page, and website. If you know of individuals who will not receive these, please contact them to pass along the information.

This is certainly no time to panic. It is precisely times like these when the Church has opportunity to be a light in the darkness by teaching all the things that Jesus has commanded (Matt 28:20). It is a great time to show the world how we put our fear, love, and trust in God alone (1st Comm), and yet also submit to the wisdom of governing authorities when and where it benefits our neighbors. Everything will work out for good (Rom 8:28). God's got this, and He will continue to provide all that we need in body and soul unto life everlasting. God is with you. Abide in His love!

In Christ Jesus,

Bob Tappe, Scott Kaden, Alan Wuest, & Pastor Kuhlman

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