



Peace Lutheran Church

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April, 2020

No More Distancing

These are very strange and unprecedented times in which we live. A tiny virus has changed the world. The coronavirus has made thousands of people sick and killed thousands of other people. It is shut down major sporting events, major retail businesses, and even canceled worship services in many Christian churches. It has driven us to our homes in hiding and forced us to learn a lot of new terminology, including the ever popular "social distancing."

Social distancing simply means keeping your distance from other people by at least six feet. It is hoped that, by doing this, people will avoid getting the disease from some people or giving the disease to other people. By doing that, it is hoped that the number of those testing positive for coronavirus will be reduced, deaths will be reduced, and we can return back to our so-called normal lives fairly soon.

Being a distance from one another is not a new phenomenon. A "divine distancing" has existed almost since the very beginning. Because of the sin of Adam and Eve, you and I were separated from God. The more we sin, the more the divine was distanced from us. Unlike social distancing which was designed to help cure the coronavirus pandemic and restore things to normal, this ever-increasing distance from the divine only makes the situation worse and lead us to death and hell.

But God, in His great love and mercy, wanted to cure us of our disease and bring us back into contact with Him. He did not separate Himself from us, but came as close as possible to us by becoming one of us. In Jesus Christ, the Word who was with God and who was God, "became flesh and dwelt among us." (John 1:14) He did not vest himself with spiritual garb that would protect Him from the disease of sin. He took sin – all sin of all people for all time – upon Himself to the cross. By that great sacrifice of His life, the disease of sin which caused our separation from God was eradicated. Death was overcome. New and eternal life was given to all who believe by virtue of Jesus' resurrection from the dead three days later. We were united with God once again.

We rest safely and securely in our God. No matter what happens, even a worldwide pandemic, we are safe. As the psalmist reminds us, "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress." (Psalm 46:11) We need not fear for our God is "a very present help in trouble." (Psalm 46:1) Although we may walk out of the presence of God by our sin, there is nothing from the outside which can ever take us away from God and His love for us. Even if the coronavirus pandemic should worsen and we or a loved one die from this disease, we are not separated from God's love. As St. Paul so strongly states, "For I am sure that neither death nor life, neither angels nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39)

Although we are urged (and rightly so) to participate in social distancing, we need not practice "spiritual distancing," that is, separating ourselves from God during this time. While we cannot gather together physically in our church building, we have been blessed with technology that allows us to gather around the Word of God and be close to God and one another in a new and different way. All of our Sunday worship services and Lent services can be accessed online. (See elsewhere in this newsletter how you may participate in this.) The Church Office will be open, as usual, from 9 AM to 1 PM Monday through Thursday. You can stop by to pick up "Portals of Prayer" and other devotional materials, as well as bringing by your offerings in order to continue supporting this ministry.

No one is saying that life will be easy or that the coronavirus is not a serious problem. However, through Jesus Christ, we remain in our Lord's presence and with His love, no matter what the future brings. In the midst of an ever-changing world, this remains sure and unchanging. No more distancing.

In Christ,

Pastor Steven R. Schlund

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Everyone for cooking, setting up, cleaning, serving and donating soup, rolls, crackers, bread and desserts for the soup suppers during Lent.

Mitch and Val Martin, Pastor Schlund and Matt Sclund for being present so that our Worship Services can be Live Streamed.

Angelika Fisher for cleaning the church.

Everyone on the Prayer Chain for their time and prayers.

Everyone who has donated treats for our fellowship time.

All of the men who volunteer to usher.

Cheri Magnuson for cleaning the Communion linens.

This list is not inclusive. Please accept our apologies if we have missed giving you credit for serving the Lord in any fashion. We know that the Lord knows your service to Him.



April Anniversaries

April 12 Jeff and Vonnie Blomgren
April 20 Dylon and Angelea Bilskemper

Baptismal Anniversaries

April 2 Karen Birkholz
8 Carol Thurston
11 Vic Scheuffele
12 Gary Creek
12 Ruth Lowden
26 Darrell Greenwood
26 Pat Bliss
26 Hunter Denning
28 Cheryl Walker



INCLUDE THESE PEOPLE IN YOUR PRAYERS:

The following people are experiencing health problems:

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Michael Drummond – Lupus
Rev. Mark Grunst of Billings who has Lewy Body disease
Connie Juden
Rev. Erich Kaelberer – ALS
Gary Lindstrand
Wallace Martin, Mitch's brother under Hospice Care
Jane Nicolaus, cancer
Ed and Sarah Ostlund, in assisted living in Billings
Becky Schlund, MS
Steven Schlund, Parkinsons
Christine Wallace, former LWML Montana District president, final stages of cancer

One member who is away serving in the military is **Michael Lewis**.

Thanks to...

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Ladies Bible study schedule

April brings Holy Week and our Easter celebration, a time when we ponder our Lord's passion and His glorious resurrection! The earth is awakening with new life, also. The robins and bluebirds have arrived; now look for some of the first wildflowers to appear in the Lord's perennial garden in the foothills and perhaps a small bouquet on the church secretary's desk. Yellow bells and lavender pasque flowers are among the ones you will find in late April.

The FRIDAY LADIES BIBLE CLASS will enjoy some of those early wildflowers on the table as they plan to continue their study of Ephesians April 17th. Come and join them from 1-3pm at the home of Marge Johnsten, 3000 8th Ave So.

Ladies and gentlemen will plan to gather to assist with hymn singing and a devotion for Assisted Living Ministry at the following locations. On Tuesday, April 14th at 11 pm they will be at Bee Hive Home #2, 2816 15th Ave So. The ever popular no host lunch is scheduled to be held on Friday, April 24th at 11:45 at Jaker's, 1500 10th Ave So. After lunch some will go to Highgate House, 3000 8th Ave So. These are our plans if the restrictions at the assisted living residences lift the visitation ban that was put in place in mid-March. If you are a first-time participant at any of these events, please check with the church office to see if there have been cancellations.

LWML

- ♥ **Our next meeting will be Monday, May 18 at 6:30 p.m. with a Bible study.** All ladies of Peace are invited and encouraged to come and join us! We will be having election of all officers. Remember your Mite boxes!
- ♥ **We are no longer collecting soap.** Lutheran World Relief is no longer accepting soap so we will no longer collect it. Thank you for your continued support.
- ♥ **The Lutheran World Relief Drive will be May 9, 2020.** More details will be available as the time gets closer.

Church Life During The Pandemic

Although God hasn't changed and His love for us hasn't changed, the way that we receive His love and serve one another as His Church has changed during the coronavirus pandemic. The following information is to help you navigate through this difficult time. If you ever have any questions, please call the church office or Pastor Schlund.

Worship Services

Although the pandemic prevents us from physically meeting together, we're still holding worship services which are broadcast through the Internet. Our Sunday morning worship service is at 9:30 AM and our Lent services are Wednesdays at 7:00 PM. To participate in our worship services, go to our webpage at www.peacelutherangreatfalls.org. Click on the icon of the sign for Jesus in the upper right-hand corner which says "Click here for live streamed services in American Sign Language." Then click on the caption, "Streaming Worship." (Not the picture of Pastor Schlund.) Each service is labeled "Peace Worship" plus the date. The worship services will be saved and available to be viewed at another time. If you have any trouble accessing the services, let the church office know.

The Lord's Supper

Our most intimate expression of fellowship with each other and with our Lord is, unfortunately, something we cannot do online. The Board of Elders and pastor are looking for ways to provide the Sacrament to you. One way might be to have small groups of ten or less gather to receive the Sacrament in a short (fifteen minute) service on Sunday afternoon or throughout the week. This would be done by appointment only. If this is something you would desire, talk to your Elder or Pastor Schlund.

Church Bulletins

We provide a bulletin which includes the order of worship, the Bible lessons, and the words for all of the hymns. In that way, you can fully participate in the worship service while sitting at home. You can find the bulletin under the tab on the front page titled "bulletin." Feel free to click on the tab and open up the bulletin on your device during worship or download it to your computer and print it out. The bulletin will be available at least one day before every service.

Church Newsletter

Since newsletters are usually picked up at church, we had to find another way of bringing them to you. Each Church Newsletter will be available on our webpage under the tab at the top of the page titled "newsletter." You may also pick up a copy from the church office.

Christ Lutheran Church for the Deaf

Christ Lutheran Church for the Deaf has decided to suspend their public worship services and Bible Study for the time being. However, they will be available online, too. The worship service for CLCD will be on Tuesdays at 10:00 AM. Bible Study will be on Tuesdays at 10:30 AM.

Church Offerings

Although many of our activities have been suspended or altered, we are still in need of your prayerful support of the ministry here at Peace Lutheran Church. In addition to praying for the ministry here, you can bring your gifts and offerings to the church office during regular business hours of Monday through Thursday from 9 AM to 1 PM or you can mail them in.

Future Plans for Peace Lutheran Church

Federal and state policies regarding quarantines and social distancing have been extended to April 10. The Leadership of Peace Lutheran Church has decided to continue our present policies for the foreseeable future without putting a date on when we revert to our regular schedule. Important events in our churches calendar will be affected by this: Holy Week, Easter, Confirmation, and Pastor Schlund's Farewell. While we would like these events to go on without a hitch as they've always been done, that likely will not happen. However, just as soon as we are able to hold these events, we will let you know.

Future Plans for Pastor Schlund

The Schlunds had originally planned to begin moving on June 8. A truck had been reserved and distant children had cleared their calendars for this event. However, this was all before the pandemic began. Plans to move, sell the house, and do many other things have also been called into question because of our present situation. More information will be provided when possible.