



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

March 16, 2020

Dear Family and Friends in Christ,

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is advising that the COVID-19 virus spreads when people are within 6 feet of each other, and older adults are particularly at risk of getting critically ill if they contract the virus. Our leadership has unanimously come to the decision that we will not gather for worship services for the remainder of March. This is out of an abundance of caution with particular regard for those vulnerable to this virus.

It is natural to want to gather close as a community of Christ during these times. Being without worship and community activities feels counter to our usual ways of being Christian community. We know there will be disappointment at this decision, yet we also know we have the faith and means to continue to care for each other as Jesus teaches us. The way that we will be community for one another in the coming weeks will be different, but we will do our best to be connected.

We have canceled all worship services and events through April 3rd 2020. We plan to update you the week of March 30. Below is a brief outline of how we will continue to be community during this difficult time.

- **Worship can happen even though we are not meeting together.** Pastor Ann and Larry are live streaming a Service of the Word on Sundays at 10:30 am, while regular worship is suspended. We will use resources like this to provide other worship and devotional opportunities, such as a continuation of our Lenten series on Wednesday at 7 pm. Watch the website for updates as we work out glitches and figure out how to best provide these ministries.
- **Pastor Ann, our staff and leadership will be busy encouraging us to continue connection and community through online worship and other online content.** You do not need a Facebook account to visit the Church's Facebook page. Consider creating an alternate email and a simple profile on Facebook so you can interact on the page. In addition to Service of the Word we will provide content during the week. Our Sunday School leader is already posting family activities on [Facebook](#).
- **We are closing our office to the public through April 3rd.** While Pastor Ann and staff will still work their hours and be able to respond to email and phone calls, we need to limit in-person interactions at the office. If your business can be done over the phone or through email, please do so. If not, please call to make an appointment with the person you would like to see. We will do our best to safely accommodate.
- Through April 3rd **we are also asking that committees and groups cease meeting** at the church and to conduct their business through other means. Consider using Zoom, Facebook messenger, conference calls (freeconferencerecall.com), FaceTime, Google Hangouts, or just email.
- Care for our members can happen even though we may not meet in person. **Please do call, email, or use social media, to check in with people who are most vulnerable.** Pastor Ann and those providing pastoral care will practice "social distancing" and rely on social media, telephone, email, and other forms of communication. If you need a call, please don't hesitate to contact Pastor Ann (906 202 9037) Above all, please continue to pray for one another, as Eden will be praying for you and for the end of this pandemic.

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Eden Lutheran Church

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- Keeping ourselves and others safe, **we have an opportunity to care for our neighbor**. There are stories of elderly people unable to shop for groceries out of fear that they will get the virus in the store. The less vulnerable among us will have the opportunity to meet needs of groceries, medicine pickup, or other essentials for the more vulnerable. Please **do** check in with people who are vulnerable. Pastor Ann has started building a list of people who can use some extra care and a list of people who are less vulnerable to this virus who can help with errands and deliveries. Please call or email if you can be added to this list.
- **Please continue to give your offering**. The majority of the ministry of the church will continue, whether or not we gather in our building. We support mission and ministry in the United States and the world through our giving, in addition to providing salaries for staff and the upkeep of our facility. Offering can be dropped off, mailed to the office, or you can request your bank to send an electronic check. If you would like to consider automating your offering through a tool like Simply Giving, you can find the form on the [website](#) or ask for it to be emailed to you.

We realize that these are anxious times, the likes of which none of us have probably experienced before. Yet the church is built on the promise of hope. Our prayer lives will be as important as ever as we navigate these strange and serious waters together. And so pray. Pray ceaselessly. Pray prayers like the following and the ones that lift naturally from your lips and your heart. Let God hear us and let us trust God will do what God does best ... God guides us, strengthens us, unites us and never leaves us.

Almighty and merciful God, you are the only source of health and healing; you alone can bring calmness and peace. Grant to us, your children, a consciousness of your presence and a strong confidence in you. In our pain, our weariness, and our anxiety, surround us with your care, protect us by your loving might, and permit us once more to enjoy health and strength and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

We will continue to be in regular contact and encourage you to stay tuned to health officials and follow their advice as it applies to your situation.

God's Peace be with you,

Pastor Ann Gonyea
Eden Evangelical Lutheran Church Congregational Council