

03/12/20

Dear Trinity Family,

*“If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” (1 Corinthians 12:26-27)*

During this time of uncertainty, it’s important to remember that we are a body — a holy community in Christ and are connected to one another in faith. This bond of communion provides comfort in times of distress and assurance in times of despair.

And yet we are also a community of humans with imperfect wills and imperfect bodies. We contract diseases and often share diseases unknowingly. As the world struggles with the spread of COVID-19 (Coronavirus), there are some things that can be done to mitigate the proliferation of this virus here at Trinity.

- I won’t be shaking hands or exchanging fist bumps before or after worship. I hope you’ll accept a pat on the shoulder or on the upper arm as a substitute greeting.
- I’ll refrain from shaking hands during the Passing of the Peace. I’ll greet you with a gesture of blessing. Please feel free to also substitute another gesture of greeting in lieu of a handshake during this time.
- The Assistant Ministers and I will be washing our hands before worship and using hand sanitizer as we prepare to serve Communion.
- My visits to hospitals and nursing homes will be limited to emergencies or special requests. (It’s reported that some local hospitals and nursing homes are restricting or limiting visits by non-family members.)
- At least one older adult couple from Trinity are refraining from going to public spaces (including worship) until the virus is contained. It’s understandable and reasonable to take this action. In this week’s Gospel reading, Jesus tells the Samaritan woman at the well that worship is done in spirit and truth not solely in a place. It’s OK to worship at home for the time being. While we do not record our services, my sermons are recorded and are accessible [online](#). The [link](#) is always available in Trinity's weekly email blast.

These are common-sense actions we can all take into consideration as we navigate this time of uncertainty. Here is a link to [“Worship in Times of Public Health Concerns”](#) (guidelines and suggestions) from the [ELCA website](#).

The root of the English word “salvation” is salve, and the meaning of the biblical word (Greek) translated as salvation is “healing” or “wholeness.” Let us all practice healing and wholeness.

Grace and peace,

Rev. Doug Gebhard, Interim Pastor