

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings! God is good, even when times seem challenging. We are living through an unprecedented situation, but despite this, God is still with us to guide and direct us. Like many of you, we have spent a great deal of time praying for the many people impacted by this situation. In addition, we have also been praying about how we can respond as a congregation.

Over the last few days, we have weighed different options for how we should move forward together. After Governor DeWine's declaration yesterday banning gatherings of over 100 people (though religious groups are exempt on the basis of religious freedom), we reached out to trusted medical professionals within the congregation. Those professionals to whom we spoke are of the opinion that Trinity should not hold our regular worship services for the next three weekends, abiding by the three week ban on large gatherings. They cited the need to "flatten the curve" in an attempt to prevent further spread of the virus, while also protecting those in the church who are the most vulnerable. In a meeting this morning with representatives from Findlay's churches, Mayor Muryn urged church leaders to abide by the ban and hold their services remotely. These are credible individuals who have thoroughly researched this issue, and they do not make these recommendations lightly.

For these reasons, **Trinity's church council voted today to suspend in-person worship for three weeks.** In addition, other official meetings and Bible studies will be cancelled unless necessary to offer specific care and nurture to those at risk. The office, for now, will remain open from 8:00-4:00, Monday through Thursday.

Trinity Lutheran Church is more than just an in-person worship service in the sanctuary. We know the news of this cancellation may be difficult to accept, but we are the body of Christ, and there are many ways for us to connect with one another. In the weeks ahead, we will explore different ways of worshipping, connecting with one another, and serving our community. *Here are ways to stay connected:*

1. **This weekend's worship will be recorded on video and can be watched on Facebook live.** We strongly encourage you to like our page at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/180356576432/>. You will receive a message when we "go live" on Sunday morning, as well as any other time there is a message or update. You can also watch old videos, as recordings are still available later.
2. After the service is recorded, **you can also access the video of our worship through our Youtube channel** – please go to https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC97FQZNetkQh-bTbKz_IDIQ and click the button to subscribe. The more people who subscribe, the easier it will be for both members and individuals from the community to find it. You will also receive a notice when a video is posted.
3. **Watch for future emails about ways to continue our *Grounded in Prayer* Bible study** via Zoom or some other phone or internet format. We are researching ways to offer a few times for members to join together for a virtual version of our studies, praying and studying together – just over a distance.
4. **Check in with each other.** Everyone needs all the support and encouragement they can get. Check on your friends and other vulnerable members often.
5. **Let us know if you or someone else becomes sick...** Pastor Will and Pastor Denny will follow up on the phone or through video throughout this closure.
6. **Serve one another and our neighbors.** During this crisis, there will be many people in our community that struggle with a loss of income, a lack of childcare, or the grave risk of hunger. While some are hoarding resources, others will not be able to leave their homes to get food, medications, or other basic necessities. Are you willing to deliver food to our neighbors in need? If we issue a call for volunteers to help clean the classrooms for our day care, will you respond?

Don't forget: Gods mission through our church continues, even if our physical gathering together is limited/prohibited. The members of Trinity are very generous, and we know we can count on your financial support of our ministry. During this crisis, the mortgage still needs to be paid, as do the utilities and insurance. Most of our staff will still be working to meet the needs of our congregation and help us to stay connected to one another and God's mission in this place. How can you give if you are not here?

- Checks can be mailed to the church.
- You can use online banking via your banking institution to make a digital payment.
- You can go to the church website, www.trinityfindlay.org, and once there, you can click on the GIVE ONLINE button.
- You can make a contribution via a Text message – just contact the office, and we will talk you through the simple steps.

What a blessing that we are in a Season of Prayer – spend extra time this season praying for:

- The other members of our church, particularly those who are most vulnerable to these types of infectious diseases.
- Those in the medical professions who put their health on the line every day to care for those who are sick
- The livelihoods of those who will miss work due to their own, or someone else's, illness
- Those who are working tirelessly to come up with new treatments for these illnesses
- Those who will be isolated and cut off from others for an extended period of time
- Those in under-developed parts of the world who do not have the healthcare system that we have
- Those who are filled with fear and anxiety over this virus.

In the end, God is good, all the time. Trust that we are all in the loving arms of our God, and He promises that He will never leave us or forsake us. Breathe deeply and trust that the Holy Spirit will guide us in the weeks and months to come.

Sincerely,

Your Church Council