

March 30, 2020

Precious Children of Our Heavenly Father,

Can you imagine the joy and the wonder of that first Easter? Matthew gives us these words from the angel as they addressed the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said.”

This year, Easter will look much different than it ever has. On Easter, April 12, our church building will not be open for the celebration of the resurrection. Both county and state have said that gatherings of more than 10 people are not permitted to be held. Our facility will not be in use for worship, or the usual daily activities, until April 18, at the earliest. We will be assessing the situation prior to that date to let you know when it is legal and safe to resume collective worship and other activities.

I hope that we can stay connected as a congregation during our time apart. You may go to our website – www.alutheran.org – to view, or read, the sermons that have been preached since March 15. Also, our newly established shepherding program seeks to keep in touch with our many worshippers on a weekly basis. You should be hearing from one of our members, checking up on your well-being, soon.

And I hope, if you have needs – spiritual, physical, emotional, that you let this be known to me, so I can care for you in a personal way. The congregation has established a “Virus Relief Fund” to meet the needs of our congregation and community during these difficult days. Let us know if these funds can help you, or others.

Mike Zehnder, the Director of Music Ministries saw a sign that caught his attention. It read, “The Church Has Left The Building.” That is true. But we must remember that the Church is not the building. The Church – God’s people – you – are in the world, among your friends and neighbors, serving them and loving them in some amazing ways. The Word through the Church will not be silenced. Though we will not be together on April 12, we will celebrate its truth and reality even now through these troubling and challenging times. Without doubt, the Church lives even though it has temporarily left the building.

Stay in the Scriptures and be fervent in prayer during these days. Some free resources available for your use are from Concordia Publishing House: <https://www.cph.org/default.aspx>? And Lutheran Hour Ministries at <https://www.lhm.org/>.

May God grant you much grace as you live in God’s faithfulness.

In Jesus,

Pastor John Larson"