



March 18, 2020

Dear friends and family of Grace Lutheran Church and friends in our Escambia and Santa Rosa County Communities,

"Fear not, for I am with you always. Be not dismayed, I am your God. I will help you, strengthen you and uphold you with My righteous right hand!" Isaiah 41:10

With God, the entreaty to "fear not" is always followed with a promise! So, with confidence in our God, we trust in Him to be with us during all times and all circumstances. That means that during this uncertain time with the COVID-19 (Corona) virus, we put our trust in God, as well as being prudent in making decisions.

Fear is a natural human emotion. Faith is a gift from God given to His people. Both exist in us. So, we are trusting, praying, confident, unwavering, AND cautious, serving, leading for the sake of our community.

The corona virus pandemic has given us an unprecedented challenge AND opportunity.

After much prayer, consultation, and, at the recommendations of the CDC, Florida State Health Department and our local government agencies as well as our LCMS national and district offices, we have decided to suspend all gatherings at Grace at least through and including April 5th. We will re-evaluate and share our decision for what we will do after April 5th by April 2nd.

Among the dozens of articles and posts I have been reading from religious leaders, business leaders, and government officials, I have been reminded of the importance of prayerful, balanced, thoughtful, and collaborative decision making in unprecedented moments. This we have done in regard to these unprecedented moments in our lives.

Please remember and KNOW that You are loved by the God of the universe. Jesus proves it. He wins, every time, and in every situation. The victory over this intruder is already secure. We make this decision upon this foundation.

We believe that God is very much alive and at work in our world right now. He is not surprised. He is not caught off guard. He knows. He loves. He lives. We have been given a very special, (once-in-a-lifetime perhaps) opportunity to share the Good News. And, right now, because of COVID-19, in new ways. let us take the lead for the sake of our community.

Here are some of the particulars we want you to be aware of:

- No gatherings at church through at least April 5th
- No VPK preschool through at least March 27th
- Announcement concerning what will happen after April 5th by at least April 2nd

We are working on creative ways to keep you connected with worship, through — at a minimum — audio messages and devotions, but - God willing - also by live-streaming as soon as are able to work out the details. Please stay tuned for more updates on this soon.

Here's what we are asking YOU TO DO:

- Keep checking our website and your email for up-to-date information.
- Feel free to share anything we share with you with neighbors, friends and family members. We are working on creative ways to stay connected with you throughout this fluid situation.
- Pray for God's reign to be seen in our church and through us and others in our community in such a profound way that many would come to know Jesus' love in new, and dynamic ways.
- Continue to pray for your leaders for wisdom, courage, and creativity.
- Continue to support your church with your financial gifts so we can remain a strong presence in this community. You can give online here during this time:

https://www.eservicepayments.com/cgi-bin/Vanco_ver3.vps?appver3=wWsk24ZWJSTZKsGdIRMKI g0BDvsSG3VIWQCPJNNxD8upkiY7JIDavDsozUE7KG0nFx2NSo8LdUKGuGuF396vbUGT3_RPbvs iZPYz36HyJNMyncaLP6E7yxwrIDkINVbnDNgFOGj2HHxicWlgQ-qPxBPm7EmoT2djiObd6VNvOfE =&ver=3

(If the link above does not work, you can simply copy and paste it into your browser)

or you may mail your gifts to 6601 N. 9th Ave. Pensacola FL 32504

or go to our web page www.GracePensacola.org then click "About" at the top of the page, then click the **RED** "Online Giving" button. Thank you for continuing your support through your Tithes and Offerings!

May God use us to share peace, love, and compassion as we are given the opportunity. May I ask you to pray fervently for those opportunities, AND for courage and grace to follow through.

Also, as always, the team at Grace desires to serve you. If you have a need to connect with us, you can reach Pastor Huesmann at (262) 707-2630 or Head Elder Bruce Dietly at (850) 393-6037. Feel free to text us if you prefer.

God's Peace and Love to all!
Pastor Bernie Huesmann