

Dear members of Our Father's,

Yesterday, the Governor of our state issued a ban on group meetings of more than 10 including churches. The church is the Body of Christ, the assembly of the saints, and you are those saints. It is in this assembly that Christ gives His gifts, the preached Word, Holy Baptism, and Holy Communion. The writer to the Hebrews exhorts us not to give up meeting together. If we do not assemble, then there is no church. We need God's gifts and we need one another. Even in times of persecution, famine, pestilence, plague, and all kinds of disasters, the Church continued to assemble around God's Holy Word and Sacrament for strength and comfort. That will continue to be the case in the days ahead as we face the uncertainties of the coronavirus, Co-Vid 19.

So how do we go forward as the Body of Christ?

Until further notice there will be no in-person services. Wednesday Vespers and weekly Divine service will be livestreamed via Facebook at the Our Father's Ev. Lutheran Church page. Afterwards these services will be available in the archive for later viewing. For those who are not on Facebook, the livestream video is linked to our church website (ofls.org). The order of worship will also be available on the website as a PDF.

I will remain at church after the 4:30 pm service for those who desire to receive the Sacrament. Twenty-minute time slots are open between 5:20 and 7:00 PM which will keep us under the ten-person mandate. Please contact the church office (414-282-8220, if the secretary is not there, follow the directions to be connected to the Pastor) or email Pastor at prfabrizius@ourfatherslutheran.org to schedule an appointment between 5:20 and 7:00 pm on Wednesdays. After the Sunday morning 8:00 AM livestream, I will remain at church to again accommodate groups of 10 to receive the Sacrament at twenty minutes intervals beginning at 9:20 until noon. Please make appointments for this as well.

Finally, beginning immediately, you may also contact the church office or email Pastor to set up a time Tuesday through Friday from 9:00-11:00 AM, 1:00-2:40 PM, or 6:00-7:00 PM to come individually or as a small group of family or friends to receive the Lord's Supper.

There will be no Sunday school, Sunday Bible class, or Wednesday morning Bible class.

As your pastor, I want to remind you of some important considerations:

If you feel ill in any way, please do not come to church for the Sacrament out of love for your fellow members. If you are experiencing fever, a cough, or other signs of respiratory illness, stay at home, take care of yourself, and get better.

Wash your hands frequently. We will have soap and hot water available. We will refrain from shaking hands.

The pastor will make sure and wash his hands thoroughly before serving the Blessed Sacrament. The Altar Guild is always diligent about cleaning the holy vessels used in the Sacrament, but they are taking extra care in this challenging time. Pastor will also be diligent about the cleansing of vessels.

You should only come to the altar with members of your household. Any single person from a household would commune individually at the altar so that we abide by the recommendation to remain six to ten feet apart. Please do not touch the cup to assist the Pastor for the next few weeks. Do not touch the altar rail. This may mean that some of you will receive the Sacrament while standing. Avoid touching the hand railing going up or down the steps. If this is a problem, the Pastor will bring the Sacrament to you.

The Sacrament is the Holy Body and Blood of our Lord who does not seek to harm us in His cup. Repeated studies regarding germ transmission on the cup, particularly a major study in 1989 at the time of the Aids epidemic, have found no evidence of any transmission by drinking of the common cup because of the alcohol, the metal, and the use of the purificator to wipe the cup. We will return to the use of Port wine in the Sacrament as the higher alcohol content will also be helpful in killing any virus. We will be soaking the purificators that wipe the chalice in Everclear for the next few weeks as a way of doing all that we can to prevent transmission.

Finally, if you are in one of the higher risk groups, consult your primary care physician on whether or not you should be leaving your home. **At times in the church we may have to fast regarding the Lord's Supper. If you are instructed to stay home, you may have to refrain from receiving the Sacrament for a while for your own health's sake.** This is a very sad thing for your Pastor to be forced to say, but currently doctors are advising the elderly especially should avoid outside contact. I would not want to bring illness to your household accidentally.

A reminder that offerings will be necessary even though you may have to limit your church attendance. Offerings may be dropped off at the church office or mailed directly to the church if you cannot come for the Lord's Supper. The pastor, teachers, and other staff need your support as our expenses will not diminish during this time. Mr. Wingfield has added our current financial position regarding offerings below. Our current shortfall is \$62,491.97. Please prayerfully consider your contributions during this time.

YTD Offerings for Last Year (7/1/18-3/17/19)	\$440,865.75
YTD Offerings for Current Year (7/1/19-3/17/20)	\$397,873.42
YTD Offerings needed to meet Current Budget	\$460,365.39
YTD Offerings Surplus/(Shortfall)	(\$62,491.97)

If you have questions about these revised practices, please contact Pastor, Mr. Wingfield, or a member of the Board of Elders. As always, if you are hospitalized or need spiritual guidance, please contact Pastor at church or at home.

Let us all be fervent in prayer to our loving Father for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He would use this time in the world for the repentance and faith of many and that the Gospel preaching would flourish around the world.

Your servant in Christ,
Pastor Fabrizious