



Leechburg First United Methodist Church

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Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ our Risen Lord!

*The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me.
My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him. Psalm 28:7*

We are living through a difficult time in world history, probably one of the worst most of us can remember. It is with a very heavy heart that I must tell you that we are canceling our worship services until further notice. Even though the directive for social distancing is currently for two weeks, I fear this crisis will not end in a mere two weeks. Please know that I have struggled greatly with this decision, and I waver even as I write this.

As your leader, I must take your needs, your health and safety, into account. The COVID-19 virus has taken over our lives. People who were healthy yesterday might be sick today. A negative test today doesn't guarantee a negative test tomorrow. People who are healthy could be spreading the virus without knowing. I cannot justify being physically together knowing the potential danger of exposure, especially to our vulnerable folks.

This situation is not the same as the government banning religious activities or banning religion altogether. We can and should find ways to be together through a virtual presence. We have the telephone, email, texting, our web site and a host of social media applications through which we can stay connected. By this weekend, I am hoping to solidify some ideas of how to best share in worship and ministry together.

Which brings us to a difficult topic. You know I try to avoid talking about money, but we are in a bind. Without worship services and regular offerings, we will not be able to meet our financial obligations. I hope you will continue to make your regular contributions to the church. You may choose to mail a check, or you can make your contribution online through your bank's web site.

In the meanwhile, keep yourselves and others safe. Don't go out unless you must. If you are going out, check with others – especially the vulnerable among us – to see if they need something you can pick up for them. If you are needing something, please call Terry or me, and we can arrange it for you. Call one another to offer a word of good cheer, an inspiring scripture, or a prayer. Read your Bible and meditate on God's Word, sing and pray and worship God. Know that I will keep in touch, and I am praying for all of us.

Let's pray: *Father God, sometimes we don't even know how to pray, what to ask for, or how to live out your will for us. In these times, we cry to you "Lord have mercy!" and we know that your Holy Spirit dwells in us and prays for us according to your will in*

groanings we cannot understand. We pray for peace and calmness to prevail. We pray for you to stop this virus in its tracks and restore our world to normalcy. We pray for those who are ill to be healed. We pray for vulnerable people to be protected. We pray for leaders of the church and the world to make the right decisions. We pray that our faith may not be forgotten during this time of physical distancing. May your name be glorified throughout the world as we see instances of your love and power around us. We pray in the precious name of Jesus, who taught us to pray: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive others who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Let's sing: **God Be with You till We Meet Again**

God be with you till we meet again, By His counsels guide, uphold you,
With His sheep securely fold you, God be with you till we meet again.
Till we meet, till we meet, Till we meet at Jesus' feet;
Till we meet, till we meet, God be with you till we meet again.

Grace and Peace!

Pastor Beverly