

Sample Congregational Plan: Responding to the Coronavirus

As we move to being church in a time when we cannot physically gather in the same space, what are some things that would be helpful for church leadership to consider in creating a plan for what may well be an extended period of needing to suspend in-person gatherings? Below are things to consider with your leadership:

- Worship alternatives –There are a number of resources for live streaming on Facebook, videotaping sermons and mini services and posting these on your website. The synod will be providing a worship service that will be posted on the synod website each weekend.
- Caring for Members – Set up systems to care for one another, making sure people stay in touch through phone calls, providing for grocery deliveries, etc.
- Council meetings – As the landscape continues to change, how will the leadership keep in touch and gather through technology to make decisions for the well-being of the congregation? The synod is expanding their Zoom account and will make that available to congregations who need to set up virtual meetings. Contact the office for help in setting up a meeting.
- Educational opportunities for adults and children – With schools closed, children are now being home-schooled. How can Christian education for children and adults move to “home” or to a virtual model through technology?
- Giving and financial decisions – We do know that when people do not come to worship, giving can go down. If you have electronic giving in place, this is a good time to expand that through your congregation. There are resources on the synod website. Council leaderships also need to look at their congregational budgets and spending to make the best possible decisions.
- Continuing to do outreach ministry – The community still needs the church to be the church and continue reaching out to help those in need. Below are suggestions from our synod Lutheran Disaster Response Director:
 - Many communities are developing foundations to help those impacted by COVID-19. Seek out what exists in your area, maybe through your local Community Foundation or the United Way 211.
 - Donate to your local food pantries
 - Make financial donations to the major foodbanks in Missouri and Kansas, such as Harvesters, The St. Louis Area Foodbank, or other members of Feeding America. They can do so much more to make a dollar stretch to provide a tremendous amount of food for the hungry in our states. These organizations supply much of the food pantries, school backpack programs, elderly food care, etc. throughout the area.
 - Volunteer with your local foodbank to help package food to be sent to help others.