

Dear Redeemer Family,

The coronavirus has disrupted our everyday life including our ability to worship and partake in the Lord's Supper together. The medical community and our government are recommending "social distancing" as a way to help contain the spread. Recently, Governor Whitmer instituted an Executive Order requiring all residents to shelter in place for up to 3 weeks. This further complicates our ability to commune together as a congregation and worship our Lord.

In last week's communication, we stated we would have an announcement regarding communion by this week's end. Also, since that time, the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS) posted their position on providing Communion during these times. In their statement, they discuss worship and the distribution of the Lord's Supper in times of pandemic and crisis. To summarize, the Synod stresses the importance of public worship and encourages all members to receive the gifts of Christ in Word and Sacrament, but know there are times when obligations of Christian love may lead individuals not to worship due to an illness. In addition, congregations have suspended services to protect their members from inclement weather. Under similar circumstances congregations are suspending services due to COVID-19. But what of the Sacrament of Holy Communion during these times? Again, the LCMS notes that, in times of hardship, congregations have had to suspend services and Communion. In early colonial America, congregations without Pastors were often unable to receive the Lord's Supper for lengthy periods of time. We are not unlike the early church and are in uncharted territory with this pandemic

For this reason and the government's request that we shelter in place for 3 weeks, we believe it is in the best interests, safety and health for all members that we do not offer communion at this time. The Board of Elders, along with the Pastors, will reevaluate this decision in 3 weeks and hope that, at that time, we will be much closer to a time when we can all begin to worship and commune together as one body in Christ.

We will communicate again next week regarding Holy Week and Easter services. I continue to pray for the health of all Redeemer members as well as all mankind.

May the peace of the Lord be with you and comfort you in these times,

Pastor Randy