



## Calvary Lutheran Church, ELCA

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Beloved Members and Friends of Calvary,

It is with a heavy heart that we write to inform you that after much prayer and discussion with the leadership of our congregation and taking into account the recommendations of the CDC and our own Nebraska Bishop, Brian Maas, we will be suspending all in-person Worship Services and Events involving more than 10 people for the foreseeable future. Please know that this was not a decision we made lightly.

To quote Bishop Maas, *“What is clear in this pandemic, as in other viral contagions, is that it can be easily transmitted by those who are not ill—or who do not know they are ill. Our love of neighbor demands that we refrain from endangering her or him by ignoring public policy, medical advice, and common sense. Martin Luther himself wrote of those who “do not avoid places and persons infected by the plague, but lightheartedly make sport of it and wish to prove how independent they are . . . This is not trusting God but tempting him. God has created medicines and provided us with intelligence to guard and take good care of the body...” Now is the time to be using that intelligence and the medical knowledge God has granted us—for the love of our neighbor.”*

Now is also the time to remember that the Church is more than just people gathered in a building, and that we do not cease to be the Church just because we are not able to gather together for a time. In this regard, we will be providing Worship online on Sundays at our normal worship time of 10:00 a.m. and on the remaining Wednesday evenings during Lent at 6:30 p.m. and if necessary, our Holy Week Services.

Our plan presently is to Livestream these Worship experiences on our Facebook page. To participate, you will simply log on to Facebook and go to our facebook page: Calvary Lutheran Scottsbluff a few minutes before the worship start time and when you see a banner across your screen that says ‘Calvary Lutheran is Live’, click on the banner and you should be able to watch worship in real time. We will also save the video to our Facebook page for viewing at a later time and place the link on our website: [calvarylutheranscottsbluff.org](http://calvarylutheranscottsbluff.org) Bulletins for the services will be placed on our website, so you can download those ahead of time, if you wish to follow along in that way.

As we go forward, we will need a handful of people to help us with the livestreaming of each worship experience, so if you would be willing to read lessons or prayers, help with video recording, etc., please call, text or email us and let us know.

We also hope that you will remember the expenses of the church (utilities, salaries, insurance, etc.) all continue on, even if we do not gather together. So consider this your gentle reminder to send or drop off your offerings to the church office or you may go to our website and use the ‘give now’ button on our home page

“Helping others receive grace, purpose and direction by proclaiming Christ’s love.”

to give electronically. If you have not set up an account beforehand, you will need to do so first. If you need any help with this, do not hesitate to contact us.

Please also remember your offerings to our Food Programs that we support. The Cat/Pup Packs programs are going to be continuing to provide food for students on the weekends and donations for the Food Pantry will probably be needed now more than ever.

Also, as we said in an email we sent out last week, let us hold each other, both near and far, in our prayers. We especially pray for those who have already lost loved ones through this disease and those who have been sickened by it or those who are self-quarantined. We pray for the students and teachers and their families as well as the businesses whose lives and livelihoods have been disrupted. We pray for our medical professionals who care for those who are ill; we pray for wisdom for those seeking to develop treatments and vaccines and for all who make decisions as we struggle to contain this disease. We pray for God's healing hand to be upon our world and for God's strength to sustain us in the days and weeks ahead.

Lastly, remember these words from Psalm 46, *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble. Therefore we will not fear...the Lord of host is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."* Be assured, God is walking with us through the uncertainty of the days ahead and that we as your pastors care about you. Please feel free to call, text or email if there is anything we can do for you or if you just need to talk.

Grace and Peace,  
Pastors Sheryl and Chris