

We've been ordered to stay home. The virus that started on another continent has reached us. Nonessential businesses are to keep their doors closed until further notice. The public Divine Services for the time being have been suspended. Six feet minimum spacing if you have to go out to get groceries. Fear of the infection of the Covid 19 virus are valid and we seek to care for our neighbor by not exposing them if we carry it.

If this pandemic can serve a purpose (which of course it can) let it be this: to remind us of our frailty due to our infection of sin, and to seek every more greatly the mercy of God in Jesus. If we have treated flippantly or taken for granted the gathering of the believers in God's house, let us yearn for it once again. If we have put receiving the gifts of God as an occasional extra if nothing else is going on, let us return with broken hearts and contrite spirits. If we count other things as a bigger loss in all of this than not being able to kneel together at the Lord's Altar to partake of the medicine of immortality, let us cry out for mercy as we rethink our priorities and crave the one thing needful.

Our Lord has not abandoned us in what is a time of separation and isolation. Should we see it as discipline? Yes. But not abandonment. Should we see it as a call to examine our lives? Yes. But not separation from our Creator. Jesus lives. He has promised that nothing in all creation, even Covid 19, will be able to separate us from the love of God.

He burst out of the tomb Easter morning to be our hope in what seem to be hopeless days. He came forth alive to be our life in the face of death. Our Lord stopped at nothing to secure for you a place at His heavenly banquet. When our doors open again, let it be to the sound of great rejoicing to feast again together on Him who defeated death and promises that we too will come forth from our tombs alive.

Until that time, may we be taught to be fervent in God's Word and prayer and find comfort that He hears and will provide according to His good and gracious will. Now is a good time to form a lasting devotional time at home with your spouse and/or children. We depend on Christ alone. Lord willing, this fast will end soon and we will gather with a renewed zeal for what Jesus has done for us and distributes to us in our little church.

*Why should cross and trial grieve me?  
Christ is near with His cheer;  
Never will He leave me.  
Who can rob me of the heaven  
That God's Son for me won  
When His life was given?  
(LSB 756:1)*

Christ is risen,  
Pastor Suggitt