

Dear Saint Michael family,

As promised in our message to you last week, we are constantly monitoring the latest information, directives and mandates being released. I was listening to President Trump and his team yesterday as they shared with us that for the next 2 weeks we all must limit gatherings to ten people or less. And the reason for that is because we are at a crucial time and opportunity to lower the infection rate of this virus, slow its spread, so that we do not overwhelm the hospital system.

**In light of this new information, we will only have worship available by live stream, on-line, for the next 2 weeks, March 22 and March 29, at <https://livestream.com/smlcs>.** In order to help you keep your pattern of worship, you can watch that live, on-line, at our normal worship times (Saturday 5:30 pm, Sunday 8:00 & 10:45 am), or watch it at your convenience as it will be recorded and posted on our website. **Lenten midweek services (March 18, 25, and April 1) will also be live streamed only at Noon and then recorded and posted for those choosing to watch at 7:00 pm or other times.** Thank you for your continued support of the mission and ministry that we are able to do together. **Your tithes, offerings and alms can be mailed in or you can also [give electronically by clicking here](#).**

**All meetings, gatherings, Bible Studies, Sunday School, and Youth activities are also being canceled for the rest of the month.** Obviously, we are in unprecedented times for our world and for the Church. We know that it is hard to take in all the changes that are happening in a short period of time. Here at Saint Michael we are trying to respond prayerfully, conscientiously, purposefully and responsibly. Yet, respond we must for the sake of our neighbors and those who are most vulnerable to this pandemic.

So, we are asking you to stay connected through a variety of ways that will not increase its likely spread. Staying connected is important for all of us even as we keep physical distance. We want to know how you are doing, what questions you may have, how we can pray for you or serve you, or how you might be able to serve others as we go through this unusual time together.

We are better together! Better as we go through this with each other and better knowing that God is with us! Psalm 56:3-4 says, “When I am afraid, I put my trust in You, in God, whose Word I praise – in God I trust and am not afraid.” As we have been saying, in the midst of this everchanging situation we are not afraid, but on the other hand we also do not want to be foolish; we trust God, but we also do not want to test God. We love God first and foremost, but we are also called to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Many people have been finding guidance from Martin Luther as he and the Church faced the Black Plague. This is what he wrote, “I shall ask God mercifully to protect us, then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus, perchance, inflict and pollute others and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, He will surely find me. And I have done what He has expected of me. And so, I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others. If my neighbor needs me, however, I shall not avoid place or person but will go freely as stated above. See, this is such a God-fearing faith, because it is neither brash nor foolhardy and does not tempt God.”

May God keep us all in His care and keeping! Pastor Jon