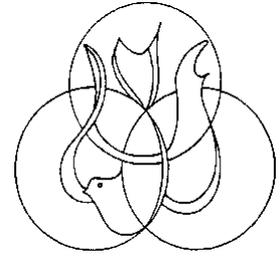


Trinity Lutheran Church

1323 Central Avenue
Alameda, California 94501
(510) 522-5220
Stephanie Johnson, Pastor



March 14, 2020

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Greetings and peace to you in the name of our Creator who loves us, Jesus our Savior who is with us, and the Holy Spirit who guides us and binds us together.

We are living in a whirlwind of ever updated information regarding Covid-19. The leadership of Trinity wants to reassure you that our life together is of utmost concern to us at this time of vulnerability.

We have communicated steps we have been taking to ensure your safety as we gather. However, as of last night, the Church Council and taking advice from the Alameda County Public Health Department has decided to **suspend our worship and other gatherings for the next 3 Sundays**. Prior to the third Sunday we will re-evaluate our need to further suspend activities.

Yesterday the ACPHD recommended that members of the “vulnerable population” (those with compromised immunity, hypertension, diabetes, and chronic respiratory illness as well as those older than 60) limit their public gatherings to 10 or fewer people. While our sanctuary can provide space for plenty of social distancing with the number of people we worship, we have made this decision out of love for each of you and a sense of responsibility to our wider community hoping to help keep from overwhelming our community medical services during this crisis.

Here is what Trinity will be doing in the meantime:

Worship, Devotion, and Prayer

- Each Sunday, a video will be posted on Facebook and on our website with a devotion (a little less formal than a sermon) I will deliver based on our weekly lectionary readings. We will pray together for our community, our world, our healthcare workers, leaders and members.
- I will be experimenting with opportunities to gather online in Bible Study and discussion.
- The weekly bulletin will continue to be sent out in our weekly update and published on our website.

Financial Stewardship

- You are encouraged to continue your weekly giving to help us meet our financial commitments and be prepared for the ministry we will do when we reconvene and as we will continue to serve our community as new needs may emerge.
- Offering can be mailed to the church or dropped off at the church by sliding an envelope with your offering through the mail slot in the Church Office’s door.
- Try paying your offering by scheduling a payment through your bank’s online “bill pay” option.

Staff Availability

- Jessica has been authorized to work from home during this time. She and I will continue to check the office voicemail daily Sunday – Thursday. Jessica will remain available through email at TrinityAlameda@gmail.com. She has also offered that you may call her on her cell phone at (510) 812-4752.
- I will be in my office Monday – Thursday from 10am – 1pm and will also be available by email at PastorTrinity@gmail.com. You may continue to reach me on my cell phone at (510) 846-0883. Please be sure to leave me a message.

Continuing Our Relationships and Sense of Community

- I will be using this time to experiment with ways we might be able to meet for real-time bible study online.
- Updated directories will be available to each of you (and mailed if necessary) so that we can check in with one another and remain in contact with each other through phone calls, emails, and cards.
- We are called to serve one another. If you become sick or if you are concerned that running an errand like grocery shopping or picking up a prescription will compromise your health, we encourage you to call the church office. Jessica will coordinate with those of us who are less at risk for complications from this virus to help others make sure they have what they need.
- As we live into this new reality and this changing situation, we will become more comfortable with how to remain connected even when we are distancing ourselves physically. Be patient. Be creative. Be bold in offering what you can and asking for what you need.

It is said that “necessity is the mother of invention.” It is easy to see this time as discouraging, frightening, and isolating. I believe that this will be a time of true creativity and unity. I am an extrovert and will miss the energy I receive when we meet face-to-face, but I am committed both to your health and the safety of our greater community. We won't reconvene too soon, but we also will be eager to come back together as soon as it is safe to do so. I look forward to (hopefully!) seeing you all together again on Palm Sunday, April 5, but please continue to check your email/mailboxes and our website for updated information.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stephanie", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Pastor Stephanie