

Dear Members,

The council and Pastor Beltz digitally met last night. We discussed at length our life together moving forward during this time of State and National emergency. We will proceed faithfully, with caution, in obedience to our Civil Authorities as God wants, and with love and service to our neighbors. In relation to all our neighbors, we will remember that the fifth commandment urges us to, “help and support him in every physical need.” With that in mind, here is what we will do moving forward.

### **Sunday Morning**

#### **Moving Forward, our Sunday mornings will be by appointment.**

Any family or individual is free to schedule a time with Pastor Beltz between 9 A.M. and Noon on Sunday. **PLEASE CALL Pastor Beltz (870) 476-0028 AND DO NOT STOP UP UNANNOUNCED!** More on this below. For the sake of order please contact Pastor by Saturday evening to schedule a time. Pastor will be as flexible as possible. However, we are doing what we can to avoid breaking the new laws of our quarantine and more importantly managing our contact with each other.

All the major doors propped open so that you do not need to touch them. Hand sanitizer will be available for you as well as soap in our bathroom. When you enter there will be a sign-in/sign-out sheet for us. This is so we can trace any infection if it were to happen. You will enter the Nave/Sanctuary space and find the assigned pew toward the middle of the Nave on the North (Pulpit Side) section of pews. This will allow Pastor and you to keep distance between each other.

**Please keep your footprint in the building small. Stay upstairs and limit your presence to the Bathroom and Nave of the Building. YOU WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR WIPING DOWN THE PEW WITH DISINFECTING WIPES AND/OR SPRAY BEFORE YOU LEAVE.** We will provide wipes and spray for you to use. However, if you have your own please bring them to use.

During this time Pastor Beltz will lead you through Confession/Absolution, Prayer, Scripture Reading, a Short Sermon, and the Lord’s Supper (if you desire).

With regards to the Lord’s Supper; Pastor will bring the Supper TO YOU in the Pew. Pastor will serve the Host off the Paten (tray) to you. Pastor will **ONLY** serve the Blood of the Lord from the Common Cup during this time. This is for a few reasons:

- 1) It is easier for Pastor to manage bringing to you in the pew.
- 2) Silver has anti-microbial properties that make it safer and more sanitary.
- 3) Pastor will also be able to sanitize the Common Cup more effectively between each family unit (Like the Host, Pastor will only use the wine needed for each group. He will not have a full cup of wine shared between us all.) We hope that makes sense. If it does not, call Pastor Beltz.
  - Again, as you leave please wipe down the pew and any surfaces you have touched. We will not be using Hymnals during this time. Please bring your own Bibles.
  - When you arrive please stay in your vehicle until you see the group before you exit the building.

ALSO, if you have friends, neighbors, and/or family who are looking for pastoral care, spiritual guidance, comfort, assurance, PLEASE share this information with them. Pastor Beltz will do all he can (within reason) to care for them during this time. Have them call Pastor Beltz!

### **Offerings and Finances**

During this time we understand if you are unable to financially support the congregation as you once did. We ask, though, that as you are able please remember the Church. Remember to give an offering. If there is a time when the Ministry of the Word is more important FOR YOU, the other members of this congregation, and the members of our Community, it is right now. We are all feeling our sin, we are all feeling the Shadow of Death as it presses upon us. We need Jesus. Many other people are beginning to feel this need as well. Even though we are in the midst of death, we have life in Jesus.

This reality hopefully leads some of us TO GIVE MORE to the Work of the Word during this time. Some of us will not have as much income, but some of us will have more. During this time seriously consider increasing your financial offering to St. John.

**We are urging the congregation to utilize the online giving platform.** This has been successfully used by members of the congregation. If you want help setting that up please be in touch with Treasurer Beth Fenton (641) 295-0044 and she will help you. You will need to contact your own Bank to determine their procedures and make the necessary arrangements on your end. Beth will provide the account and routing number necessary to complete this process. **Another good option is that you enclose your offering in an envelope and send it to MidwestOne Bank here in Oskaloosa.** They will be able to deposit your offering straight into our account. Checks are the best option these days. Please follow these directions when sending a check to MidwestOne:

- On the memo line write " for deposit only in account ending 10" MidwestOne Bank, PO Box 90, Oskaloosa, IA 52577

If neither of these options is preferable to you please contact Beth Fenton or Pastor Beltz to make other arrangements.

With regards to our current financial situation we are simply assuming that our cash income will be reduced. We are prayerful it will not be the case. We are preparing for leaner times. We are tightening our belt with regards to congregational expenses and have decided that we will only make payment to Pastor Beltz as well as our essential utilities during this time.

With regards to those of us in St. John who will lose income during this time, please be in contact with Pastor Beltz if you need financial help. We do have some monies available to financially assist members. We also have several people in the congregation willing to donate food, hygiene products, and other supplies as they are needed. Please Call Pastor Beltz or the Elders if you are in any need.

### **Caring for the Older Wiser Lutherans of St. John**

The Council of St. John is constructing a list of our Older Wiser members that we will distribute to the congregation. The list will have names and phone numbers. Please be sensitive with this information, and please use this information. Call these members, talk with them. Get

their mailing addresses and send them notes, pictures from your children, and anything else that will brighten their day. Times like these make us all feel isolated and in need. Some backspin is that this will give the many children in our congregation something kind and loving to do!

Also offer to bring supplies, food, or other items to them as they have need. As the Lord draws close to us let us also draw close to each other.

### **Building Use**

**Please, DO NOT COME TO THE CHURCH. As the operations of St. John are shut down there is no need to be in the building. If a need arises outside of Sunday Morning, please contact Pastor Beltz to make arrangements.**

**DO NOT COME TO THE BUILDING JUST TO GET OUT.** WE do not want this Virus to stay in the building. Experts are saying that Covid-19 lives for 24-72 hours on hard surfaces. If you come here one day and someone else the next we could be spreading the Virus thoughtlessly. We do not want this to happen. **STAY HOME! YOU DO NOT NEED TO COME TO THE BUILDING UNLESS IT IS FOR PASTORAL CARE. DO NOT COME UNLESS YOU CALL PASTOR BELTZ and schedule a time!!!!** This applies to EVERYONE! (870) 476-0028

We understand that you might want to come and sit peacefully in the Nave/Sanctuary in private meditation and prayer. We encourage you to do so. **BUT CALL PASTOR BELTZ FIRST AND LET HIM KNOW! (870) 476-0028**

Also, we must not forget that this is Pastor Beltz's home. During these times we must be sensitive to the fact that we would not want people randomly stopping at our homes unannounced.

### **Adult/Family Study**

During our time of imposed isolation we want to try to maintain as much communal activity as possible. Pastor Beltz is working to provide a study through a digital platform. This might be through Google Hangout or some other platform, but it will take place on Monday Evening at 6 P.M. and give us a time to connect with the Word and each other. It will provide us with some connection and refreshment, which is much needed.

Pastor Beltz is also hopeful that this platform will provide him the capability of recording our studies so that they can be available at any time for the members of St. John.

### **Digital Presence**

Several Members of St. John are working to increase our digital output during this time. Janet Herz is making changes to our website to include all email communication. She is also working to make any informational or devotional videos available through our Website. If you are lacking information please use our Website: [stjohnosky.org](http://stjohnosky.org)

Pastor Beltz has also re-entered Facebook. If you have recently received a friend request from him, it is really him. He will try to utilize Facebook more frequently and provide information and Pastoral care through that platform. If he can figure out the livestreaming function, he might use this to foster times of corporate Study and Prayer.

We are also working to make our Sunday morning services, prayers, and sermons available through YouTube or some other digital video platform (Vimeo, Twitch). These offerings will be available through our Website as well as through the platform from which they originate.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is obviously our desire that this Virus and these changes end quickly. God will or will not do this. We do not yet know. For the time being these are our best efforts to love and serve each other. It might be the case that we will amend these items. There is still a possibility for complete State and Federal Quarantine.

As I mentioned earlier, this is a time when we feel our need, our sin, and the Shadow of Death. At the same time this is when Our Lord draws us closer to himself, speaks to us, and promises, "You are mine. I will not let you go." John 18.9