



THE LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD

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Dear Friends in Christ,

As I write this letter to you, the Governor of Iowa has issued a *State of Public Health Disaster Emergency*. Even in a time of emergency, we are people who live in hope. Our hope comes to us not from the things in this world, but through our relationship with Jesus Christ.

Does the Governor's order stop Sunday services? The polity of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod does not give a district president the authority to tell churches to stop services. I am strongly encouraging our pastors and people to follow civil authorities according to the Fourth Commandment (i.e., honoring parents and other authorities), and they are doing so according to St. Paul's direction in Romans 13. I do not believe the government is trying to limit religion at this time. Instead, I have heard our Governor and others ask for our prayers. Instead, I view this limitation of church services more as a duty and opportunity to act for the benefit of our fellow citizens, especially those most vulnerable ("love your neighbor as yourself," Mark 12:31). We respect government authority as it acts for the physical well-being of our great nation and the world.

Does the Governor's order stop worship? No! But it will change the way many of us do so. My assistant, Rev. Keith Haney is preparing a "Best Practices" resource to assist pastors and congregations as they continue the mission Christ has given us of sharing the Gospel in our communities. This will be posted on our district website [www.iowadistrictwest.org](http://www.iowadistrictwest.org). If you have ideas, please send them to [Keith@IowaDistrictWest.org](mailto:Keith@IowaDistrictWest.org). I trust our great pastors and laypeople to act appropriately. We have well-trained clergy, and they are consulting their lay leadership.

I know that many of you are concerned about finances. Remind your people the importance of their continued stewardship of the gifts God has given, especially in moments like this. Appeal to them—let them know that those who have been blessed at this time may need to give more—they will respond! Ask them to mail their offerings or provide a secure dropbox for their gifts. Provide online methods for giving. We soon hope to have a "Best Practices" menu on our website [www.iowadistrictwest.org](http://www.iowadistrictwest.org) that will provide methods of online giving.

1 Peter 1:4 reminds us that our relationship with Christ "**is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.**" It comes to you through faith in Jesus Christ and is "**guarded**" (1 Peter 1:5) by the power of God. These are powerful words given in difficult times and for difficult times! Your faith is given and guarded by the power of God! Think about it, the same power that divided the Red Sea so the children of Israel could cross on dry ground; the same power that protected Daniel in the lions' den; the very same power that raised Jesus from the dead, keeps you in the one true faith!

Our hope is a living Hope! A hope that will result in eternal praise, honor and glory when Jesus Christ is revealed. The hope of a glorious inheritance in Heaven! You are all in my prayers.

Always in Grace,

President Steve Turner

*On a Mission to Support Christ's Mission*