



THE ATLANTIC DISTRICT
of the LUTHERAN CHURCH – MISSOURI SYNOD

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Brothers in Christ,

As concerns over the Coronavirus continue to grow through New York State, we have seen a number of schools and other institutions close for a time. The concerns of our members and communities continues to rise. The governor and local municipalities are creating guidelines to be followed. It remains important that you are continuing to communicate and make plans amidst this crisis with the leadership of the church.

I encourage you to be pause all outside building use for a time. Now is a time to focus on worship and serving the members that are in need. Other events taking place at the church are an unnecessary risk. This may include not only social gatherings, but pausing midweek bible study and such.

If there is a confirmed case of Coronavirus within your community, you need to reach out to the Department of Health. They will provide the next steps including cleaning and closure timeline as necessary.

You need to look at the cleaning practices of the church. Surfaces that are most often touched should be cleaned/ disinfected often. Hymnals are harder to wipe down and clean. It is advisable to look at using a printed liturgy that can be disposed of as a temporary measure.

At risk members of the church should be called and encouraged to stay home for a time. It is important for their protection. I strongly encourage you to reach out and talk with them directly. In the end they need to make their decision.

Physical contact needs to be minimized. The Dept. of Health is recommending Social Distancing. The sharing of the peace, greetings before and after service should all be verbal. When people sit in the pews why not spread out as best as possible and see if we can fill the space with our voices. Member visitation should mainly be taking place via phone, text, etc. for the time being. We need to see how this continues to spread. We also do not want the potential cause of spreading the virus.

Holy Communion is special to us all. Those that are assisting need to wash hands prior and after each table if possible. It may be a time to move to a Service of the Word for a short time.

Please remember that these are temporary measures as we walk together through our response and care during the Coronavirus.

“Engaging the World with the Gospel of Hope”

Lord of the Church, guide and direct our paths. Help us as we seek to care for all in our communities. Protect those who are most at risk. Bless all, especially our medical professional and emergency personnel, as they serve all those affected. May we point people toward you and the cross, that we might know the care you have for us. May we serve any we find in need. Thank you Lord for the blessing you are to us. Amen

Bishop Derek Lecakes

Rev. Derek G. Lecakes
President/Bishop of the Atlantic District