



THE ATLANTIC DISTRICT  
*of the* LUTHERAN CHURCH – MISSOURI SYNOD

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Brothers in Christ,

Blessed Lententide!

As I am sure you are all aware, the Coronavirus continues to have an impact in many areas throughout our district and around the world. A number of public school districts, universities, and other institutions have ceased operations as the Coronavirus continues to grow.

We serve a variety of populations. The elderly, especially those with underlying health issues involving respiratory or immune deficiency, are most vulnerable. The key phrase we see being used in this situation is “out of an abundance of caution.”

The Surgeon General has said, “The response to the Coronavirus has moved from containment to mitigation.” This seems to imply that it is expected that Coronavirus cases will continue to grow.

I have directed Task Force 8 – Disaster Response to do some scenario planning. This means they will be looking at a number of different scenarios to make recommendations as this situation continues to change. These will be released to you as they are prepared.

Our response as the church can be challenging. We are still called to be Christ to the world around us. We still have made vows before God and his church to serve our people and the community in which we live. We are to be a non-anxious presence, while taking the situation very seriously and protecting those who come to us for care. This may mean some temporary measures that change how we do things. We have the opportunity to be the love of Jesus in the midst of this.

These are some recommendations that I am making for you and the church to strongly consider:

- If a case of Coronavirus is discovered in the church or an associated group who uses the church, immediately contact state or local officials and the Atlantic District for guidance. You may need to communicate with the congregation and others who use the church. The church will need to be disinfected and may need to be closed for a time. We will help you think through the pastoral care implications.
- If the church is closed or quarantined, you must follow the directions you receive from the authorities.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. (Romans 15:3. ESV)

- If a case of Coronavirus affects a member of the church, what does pastoral care look like? You must make an informed decision. Do I provide pastoral care via telephone or video? If my member is dying and I go see them face to face, how will that affect the care I can provide to the rest of the members? Am I putting them at risk?
- If you are visiting members in the hospital or even in the home, I recommend that you are using universal precautions to protect you, the one you are visiting and the any future visitations. Universal precautions: wash hands or sanitizer when entering & exiting; gloves; mask, and gown.

Lord, protect us from all harm and danger. Provide comfort and care for all who are being affected by this virus. Strengthen and encourage all those who work and care for those affected. Give us wisdom as we plan for the coming next steps that we may be able to continue to share your love in the midst of this anxious world.

If you have any questions please reach out me or task force 8 Chair – Rev. Thomas Cusanelli.  
[pastorcusanelli@gmail.com](mailto:pastorcusanelli@gmail.com)

In Christ,



Rev. Derek Lecakes

President/Bishop of the Atlantic District