



*From the Desk of...*

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*Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation. Isaiah 12:2*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ –

During times of uncertainty, we turn to our gracious God for both guidance and strength to push forward with our lives as members of the Body of Christ as well as members of our own families and communities. We also look for ways to use the God-given gifts of reason and intelligence to protect each other and those we love. In that regard, I offer these suggested actions in light of the Coronavirus [COVID-19].

1. **Wash your hands!** The virus can live on a variety of surfaces for several hours, including fabric and metal. If possible, carry hand sanitizer with you and use it often – or wash your hands under warm water with soap for at least 1 minute.
2. **Stay hydrated.** The World Health Organization reports that the virus begins in the throat, and that a dry throat is a breeding ground for the virus. Drink plenty of water – taking a sip every 15 minutes or so. If infected by any virus, this will cause it to enter the stomach where your normal stomach acids will kill the virus.
3. **If you are not feeling well, call or consult your physician's office – and stay indoors.** Worshipping together is a blessing from God, and I look forward to each opportunity to do so. However, should you not feel well – have a cough or running nose, are sneezing or have a dry cough – please stay home. We would not want you to become more ill by exposure to any germ, nor to share them with others.
4. The **Sacrament of the Altar will continue to be celebrated at our churches.** However, there are some changes to our normal practice: The host will only be placed in the communicant's hand, no longer placed on the tongue. This will prevent cross-contamination of the remaining hosts. Also, although the combination of the wine's alcohol and the wiping of the chalice removes harmful germs from the vessel, only the individual cups will be presented. Should you wish to receive from the Common Cup, please let me know at the time of being served.
5. The Coronavirus is highly contagious, the central reason for so much concern; we feel as if we are not in control. However, in one regard we can be. Unless you are certain of the health of people around you, **please refrain from offering holy kisses, hugging, even handshakes to others.** Be creative in your greetings – use fist pumps, elbow bumps or even waves – whatever you do, we will know you are greeting one another in Christian love.

I encourage you to avoid the sensational reporting concerning this crisis and rather read the studied pronouncements from the World Health Organization and/or the CDC, both of which can be access via the internet [Google or Bing]. But most of all, I encourage you to pray and to rejoice that our Lord *was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.* Isaiah 53:5

God bless you all –

*Pastor Henry*