



March 25, 2020

To the members of our family, our St. Stephen Congregation,

I wanted to reach out and check in with each of you and see how you've been holding up the last two weeks. Undoubtedly this has been a very difficult and trying time for many of you and I want you to know you have been in my prayers each day.

It is vital that we remain focused and calm, and listen to responsible news outlets, and more importantly our elected leaders for the latest information on social distancing and other necessary measures to insure this passes as quickly as possible. Please be responsible in how you conduct your schedule and do what you can to prevent the spread of this virus to the vulnerable in our community and your own potential exposure.

I have been in touch with our council since this began and we are continuing to make the important decisions needed to keep this church moving forward and viable in your absence. Please make every effort possible to get your tithes and donations to the church through the mail if you can. We must continue to help this church recover to a strong financial position as we spoke of late last summer. That goal remains even more important now in the face of this uncertainty.

Many of you are naturally concerned now about Easter and the potential that we may be unable to hold worship services as we would normally wish to do; the risk remains real. That being said, as of the writing of this letter (and we know things change almost daily) government leaders are hoping to relax some restrictions just prior to Easter. If that holds true, it is my intention to hold Easter services as previously scheduled. As of now I am planning to hold Easter services, but will retain the option to postpone them should this situation get worse, or if advised by our government authorities to continue our present course. Let us pray for a swift conclusion to this difficult time and the health of all of us.

In my last letter I asked you to focus during this season of Lent, continuing to hone your spiritual practices and reengaging on a more personal level your own connection to God, and the purpose of Christ on the cross for each of us. I ask you again as your Pastor to remain engaged. As an aid in that endeavor, I am also sending in this email, two separate links (at the bottom) on daily reading of the Psalms specifically related to times of sickness, hurt, and healing. Using these helpful guides each day, you can construct a daily prayer regimen or time of reflection in your schedule that I am certain can help ease the strain of this time and reenergize you for the days ahead. Take time amid this silence to breathe, to hear the voice of God and see the work of God in all that is around us. This is an extended Sabbath that can offer us benefits in the slowness of life and the pace of our days; use them to good benefit for yourselves and the world around us. Keep this church and our city in your prayers and be open to helping wherever you can those in need during these unprecedented times.

Should you need me for anything at all please reach out. My email and phone contact are below. I will continue to update you as we move forward.



Blessings in Christ;
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<https://www.ibelieve.com/faith/beautiful-psalms-for-healing-to-read-and-pray.html>

<https://www.psalmsquotes.com/healing.htm>