



FAITH

LUTHERAN CHURCH

OREGON, WI

# *PANDEMIC & PEACE*

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FOR GOD HAS NOT GIVEN US A SPIRIT OF FEAR,  
BUT OF POWER AND OF LOVE AND OF A SOUND MIND.

## **PANDEMIC**

A pandemic can be overwhelming. Compounding the virus have been the stock market crash, panicked media reactions, closures, and *everyone* sharing their opinion.

## **PROMISE**

God doesn't give His opinion. He gives His Word. His promise.

Christians are not to be conformed to the world's anxiety and fears (Romans 12:2).

God loves us (1 John 4:9).

He sent his Son to be our brother according to the flesh (John 1:14).

Having made satisfaction for our sins through his death, our Lord Jesus rose and ascended to sit at the Father's right hand in power of all things (Romans 8:34).

This changes everything.

The eyes of faith see the world for what it is. No virus, stock market crash, or panicked media reactions can rob Christians of their hope that Jesus will give his victory and dominion over sin and death to all who believe in him (Romans 8:37). Christians have peace.

## **PEACE**

When Christians get sick and are dying, they haven't lost God's blessing. Rather their confidence is strengthened (Romans 5:3).

Sufferings teach that nothing in this world lasts. God's love for us in Christ, however, endures forever. For those who have been baptized into God's name, he has promised resurrection and eternal life. This Word of promise will not fail. God is faithful.

## **WHAT TO DO?**

When sickness and death test the foundation of Christian trust in God's mercy, the Scriptures teach a four-fold attitude of faith, prayer, compassion, and mercy:

## **FAITH** – Trust in God's Salvation, Kindness, and Fatherly Care

*Psalm 27:1 – The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*

Everything that robs this world of comfort reminds us to repent. This world will pass away. God's kingdom will not. In other words, disasters force a Lenten piety on the church whether it's time for Lent or not. So, take out your Ten Commandments, read them slowly and out loud. Go to your pastor and confess your sins. In the absolution he preaches, you'll discover a greater kingdom than can be found in this world. You'll discover your Father's unconditional love bought with the price of Jesus' blood.

## **PRAYER** – Seek God's Favor According to His Promises

*Psalm 70:1 – Make haste, O God, to deliver me! O Lord, make haste to help me!*

Continue to seek God's mercy in his promises. For close to two thousand years both the church and Christians have survived countless plagues, famines, persecutions, and the fall of civilizations. Neither the Gospel nor the Sacrament needed to be curtailed and sacrificed to survive past disasters. Therefore, we should continue hearing the Word and receiving the Sacrament for our comfort and salvation. If you do not pose a risk of infecting others, as you are able, continue to attend the divine service and receive the Lord's Supper with confidence. If you received the common cup in the past, take comfort in the fact that both the alcoholic content of the sacramental wine and the precious metal of the chalice mitigate the transmission of germs. Another great advantage of continuing to meet together is being able to pray in the presence of your fellow Christians for the afflicted. God has promised to hear these prayers and for the sake of the faithful the Lord will answer according to his good and gracious will.

## **COMPASSION & MERCY** – Have A Heart Open to Your Neighbor & Love Your Neighbor As You Love Yourself

*Psalm 41:1-3 – Blessed is the one who considers the poor! In the day of trouble the Lord delivers him; the Lord protects him and keeps him alive; he is called blessed in the land; you do not give him up to the will of his enemies. The Lord sustains him on his sickbed; in illness you restore him to full health.*

Once our hearts have been set at peace, we can consider how to best serve our neighbors. There is a two-fold danger of recklessness on the one hand and debilitating fear on the other. The Christian avoids both by faith. Reckless behavior – not washing hands, intentionally exposing yourself unnecessarily to infection, etc. – tests God and makes light of the means by which the Lord intends us to protect ourselves and others. On the other hand, running to the store and clearing out the shelves with more than you would normally need robs your neighbor of the necessities he and his family need to get by. Use your best judgment in changing habits that might contribute to the transmission of disease. There's no law that you must shake hands. So if you don't feel comfortable doing that, don't do it. Follow the guidelines and direction of both government officials and the medical experts.

## A GUIDE FOR PRAYER

Start by praying for yourself and those closest to you.

Pray for those who are sick.

Pray for those who are caring for those who are sick.

Pray for those who are working to stop the disease and prevent further spread.

Pray Psalm 91

*<sup>2</sup>I will say to the Lord,  
"My refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust."  
<sup>3</sup>Surely he will rescue you from the fowler's trap,  
from the destructive plague.  
<sup>5</sup>You will not fear the terror of night,  
nor the arrow that flies by day,  
<sup>6</sup>nor the plague that prowls in the darkness,  
nor the pestilence that destroys at noon.  
<sup>9</sup>Yes, you, Lord, are my refuge!  
If you make the Most High your shelter,  
<sup>10</sup>evil will not overtake you.  
Disaster will not come near your tent.*

Make the sign of the cross in the name of the Trinity and pray Martin Luther's Evening Prayer

**I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray You to forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.**

And then lie down in peace, and sleep.