

LIVING WORD

Weekly Update

Tuesday, March 24, 2020

Update

How are we going to function as a church? What does it mean to be the church in these trying times? First of all, as I mentioned in my sermon on Sunday, “The church isn’t quarantined! It can’t be quarantined!” Think about it! The Roman’s tried to contain and kill the church. They couldn’t. All sorts of Communist and Fascist governments have tried to kill or co-opt the church in some way, and they all failed! To see this truth, we just have to look at China and Iran today. Both governments are actively trying to silence, quarantine and kill the church and yet the church is growing...exploding in fact! The church can’t be squelched or quarantined because the Holy Spirit can’t be bridled, controlled or contained! That is good news! Great news!

That being the case, we are stepping forward as the church that can’t be quarantined in exciting ways. We are looking at all sorts of ways that we will function and even grow during in this time. Currently we are serving the community by agreeing to house the American Red Cross blood drive at our church building. Some of you have volunteered to help with that or donate blood. Others of you have helped deliver Meals on Wheels to an increased number of shut ins. Thank you for being the church! You will find in this communication how we will be functioning as church in the coming weeks. There is important information for each of you below!

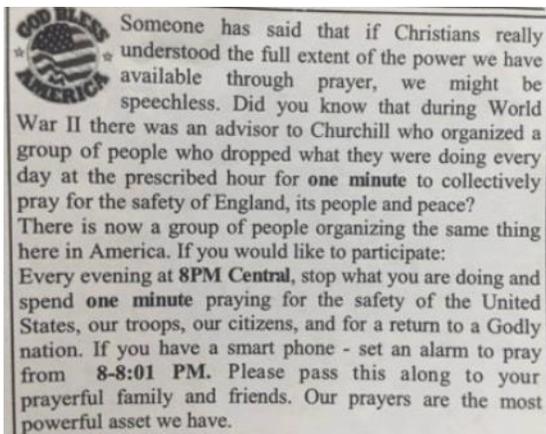
Community

- Office: For the time being, there will be staff on location at Living Word during regular office hours: Monday-Thursday 9AM to 4PM, Friday 9AM to 12:00PM. However, we ask that you call ahead to visit about how best to connect during this time.
- Gatherings: There will be no small groups, Bible Studies or activities meeting on location at Living Word until we are given the all clear to gather in person and in groups.
- Worship Services: For the foreseeable future, Worship Services will continue to be done via live stream on our YouTube channel LivingWordMarshallMN. www.youtube.com/user/LivingWordMarshallMN
 - Wednesday Night Lenten Service at 6:30 PM.
 - Sunday Morning Worship Service at 10:30 AM.
 - You can either join us live for these services or watch them with your family at a later time.
 - For viewing the live stream or recorded videos, we suggest you go directly to the YouTube website link above versus trying to access it via our website. Our website provider, Sharefaith, has been inundated with other churches using their platform, causing ours to lag during periods of high usage.
 - We suggest you subscribe and sign up for notifications to our LivingWordMarshallMN YouTube channel. By doing so, you will receive a notification on your computer or mobile device whenever we go live or add a new video. Just so you know, we are adding videos to our YouTube channel for keeping up with other groups (Confirmation, First Communion, Ignite, etc.) so you may receive notifications for videos other than worship services. If you’d like any help figuring all this out feel free to call one of us (preferably Greg!! Haha!).
- “Work as Worship” small groups (March 25 & April 1): The questions and scripture for this week’s session is attached to this email. We encourage you to discuss them at home with your family or discuss them with a friend, neighbor or co-worker following the Wednesday evening Lenten Worship Service.

- “2 Minute Faith Break” Videos: We will continue to provide you with these little faith breaks on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday. They will be shared via email, on our Facebook page or available on our YouTube channel.
- Community Life Groups: All of our active members and active non-members have been assigned to a Community Life Group consisting of about 10 households. We’ve already asked one person in each of those groups to call or communicate with the others. Please let us know if you don’t hear from somebody and would like to be added to a group. Please be open to the communications from these group leaders. We aren’t trying to burden you; we are trying to make sure that everyone is cared for and lifted up. This will help us all stay connected, check in with every member, receive prayer requests and answer questions.
- Children & Youth: Greg Pavek or Jaci Peterson will be connecting with various groups each week regarding Bible Education, Ignite, Confirmation, 1st Communion. Be watching for communication from them via email, text, Zoom, etc.
- Bible Studies: We are continuing to consider options for Bible studies going forward during this time of social distancing. Stay tuned. If you are a Bible Study leader or somebody who would like to give or receive input about how to do this, please reach out to us.
- Weekly Updates: We be sending updates out via email at least weekly. Please look for them, read them and share the information with others, especially if there is somebody you know that doesn’t have access to electronic communications.
- Marshall Lyon County Library: The local library has accumulated a great wealth of information on their website regarding the community’s response to COVID-19. www.marshalllyonlibrary.org/

Pastoral Care/ Prayer

- If you or somebody you know is in need of physical, emotional or spiritual support please reach out to us.
- Part of our response as Christians is to walk through this together with grace, love, confidence and faith. We are here for you.
- We want to pray for you. Please reach out to us with prayer requests! Email us or submit a prayer request via the prayer ministry link on our website <https://www.livingwordmarshall.org/prayer-ministry/> .
- If you’d like us to mail you a “Our Daily Bread” daily devotional booklet, please let us know. We also have a 14-day Easter devotional available we could send to you.
- Now is a great time to spend additional time studying God’s Word, watching online Bible studies, etc. Our website has a link to numerous ministry resources including free access to Right Now Media, Bible reading plans, etc. <https://www.livingwordmarshall.org/resources/>
- We invite you to join in a nationwide call to prayer from 8:00-8:01PM daily. See the below newspaper article that’s been shared with us.



Encouragement/Devotion

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴and into an inheritance that can never perish,

spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you,⁵ who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.⁶ In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.⁷ These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 1 Peter 1:3-7

Wow! Today I am thankful for a truth that isn't sugar coated. Peter writes: "for a little while you may have to suffer grief in all kinds of trials". In this text I hear someone who isn't trying to convince me, or manipulate me or sugar coat my life, but rather he's being straight up and truthful. Peter is being honest with us and we can agree that what he's telling us is the truth, because we see and feel that reality. Things are hard! We are facing trials of all kinds. What Peter invites us to do today, is to think about where we've been placing our hope. He invites us to reassess what's important and to look again at our priorities. In our current circumstances we are all forced to look at our lives and as we do, we see the truth about who we are and what we need. The sugar coating isn't real, it isn't lasting, it's not enough. In times of plenty we fool ourselves by believing the excess is expected, un-ending or even deserved. What happens when that all gets stripped away? What happens when we are forced to think about what we really "need" or what's truly important? All of the sudden all the sugar coating, the icing that we've long relied on and expected or even trusted...when that goes away, we discover that our **true need** is **WAY** deeper than the toys, vacations, financial stability or comforts that we long took for granted. We discover that our hope isn't in those things, because as much as we want to believe in them, we can't. They are all temporal. They will all be consumed by fire, or calamity, or death. Our hope **MUST** come from somewhere else!

Perhaps, just perhaps, God is blessing us by this current trial. Stick with me here. I'm not dancing around rejoicing in what's happening. I'm merely saying that God's plan may be for our own good. He will certainly use it for good! Scripture tells us that God is a "jealous God!" God is jealous for our love, trust, reliance and praise. God wants us to find our HOPE only in Him! That is why we hear the following all over in the scriptures; "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble!" Over and over the people of God are brought to a point in their life when the only place to turn is to the Lord. He is our refuge and our strength! In times of plenty and excess this truth often becomes merely words, but when the troubles hits, we learn the truth that mostly we'd been putting our hope and trust in the wrong place. In fact, what we'd been putting our hope in like money, jobs, vacations, stuff...they had become idols! An idol is anything that you fear, love and trust that isn't the Lord. An idol is something or someone that you are putting your hope into apart from the Lord! Those idols can't be our hope because they are dead, but Jesus can because He is alive! He is our living Hope! Peter reminds us to flee to our refuge. Run into the arms of hope, Jesus!
1 Peter 1:5 tells us that through our "faith" we are "shielded by God's power!" That doesn't mean the calamity and struggles won't hit us, it means that we won't fall into despair. It means that though we face trials, we do so in faith! It means we won't lose HOPE because hope is holding us!! Jesus is alive. He is our Living Hope! I need to be reminded of this truth over and over again. I trust that you do too. ~ Pastor Dave

How to Reach or Connect With Us

Church Office 507-337-9673

Pastor Kelly 507-828-3434

Pastor Dave 320-583-3647

Intern Pastor Greg 507-621-1817

Jaci Peterson, Children's Ministry Director 507-828-6677

Kim Deines, Office Manager/Mission Coordinator 507-530-4410

Kathy Dahl, Financial Secretary 507-423-5113

Office Email livingword@livingwordmarshall.org

Website: www.livingwordmarshall.org

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/LivingWordMarshallMN>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LivingWordMarshall/>

God's Peace,

Living Word Pastors, Staff & Leadership