



Rev. William E. Coleman
Pastor

LUTHER MEMORIAL CHURCH
LUTHER MEMORIAL ACADEMY
(A Christian Day School)

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April 15, 2020

Greeting to the faithful people of Luther Memorial Church,

Luther Memorial's Church Council has voted **to not hold worship services** at Luther Memorial Church in our sanctuary on Sundays, April 19, April 26 and May 3 and May 10. Please note that Church Council will make the determination if additional services will not be held in our church building after May 10, and you will be informed of that decision. We continue to be mindful of what is being suggested by our governmental and healthcare leadership, **but please remember that we are providing online worship services, bible studies, and pastoral reflections in the following three places:**

1. Luther Memorial Facebook Group page (if you are not included in our Facebook Group, search for "Luther Memorial Church Erie PA" and send a request to be included in the group and I will accept you when the request is made)
2. Luther Memorial's Church website under the "Resources and Worship" tab and then the "Sunday Morning Worship" tab. The church website is www.luthermemorialonline.org
3. Luther Memorial Church's YouTube Channel (Go to YouTube and search for Luther Memorial Church Erie PA and then subscribe.)

If you are having difficulty connecting to what we are providing online, please contact myself or Norma and we will help guide you there.

I am grateful to so many who have been preparing and delivering meals to be helpful to those who have a more difficult time getting to the store. I am grateful for your phone calls and cards to one another. I am also grateful for your continued offerings to this ministry and ask for your continued support. We are so blessed by your generosity, thoughtfulness and faithfulness!

Realizing there are needs that congregational members have we are not aware of please let us know if you become aware of any needs. I will remind you of the recently formed Member Outreach Ministry (MOM) which asks members of the LMC community to seek out those in need who might not know help is available or may be reluctant to ask for or accept help. Members can request funds in any amount up to \$500.00 to satisfy an immediate need. The form to make the request can be found on our website under the "Resources and Worship" tab and then "Resources & Forms". The form to be completed is called "Member Outreach Ministry (MOM) Request for Funds Form".

Finally, I have always believed that the Church is not about the building, but about the people, and so while we have not been able to be the Church in the ways we are familiar with, **we are the Church outside of this building. We are still Church!** We have received the Gospel and we share that with others, especially now, as hope is needed more than ever. I know we are going to get through this, not without many bumps and bruises, but God walks with us through the valley of the shadow of death, and because so, we will not be afraid. Keep your heads up, and never lose hope.

Be well,
Pastor Bill Coleman

What Am I Feeling?

Have you felt “out of sorts”, irritable, frightened, unable to focus, sad or angry? Have you found yourself teary eyed or crying since the pandemic started? I know I have, and this is normal because we are grieving. Some think we only grieve when a loved one or a pet dies. But we also grieve over the loss of a job, financial instability or loss of health. Now we are grieving over the loss of our “normal” lives, which may be as simple as the change in routine, or as difficult as feeling the loss of our freedom. We Americans don’t like to be told that we can’t go where we want or do what we want. Now we have to stay home, and we feel that loss of freedom. And what about the children who are grieving? They miss seeing their friends or teachers and their normal routine, and maybe they don’t even realize why they are feeling this way. I feel bad for the seniors in high school and college. These are supposed to be wonderful times and now everything is changed. We need to be kind and compassionate with them during this difficult time.

Does this sound familiar to you and if so, do you know what to do? As a culture, Americans don’t talk much about grief. Now many of us are carrying grief, unspoken grief. When we don’t talk about it the experts say, “It doesn’t go away.” Then it can come out as depression, anxiety, social isolation or fear of just leaving the house, loneliness or even thoughts of suicide. This is when we most need to connect with other people through phone calls, sending cards or social media. Talk about how you feel. “Grief can’t be fixed, but it can be acknowledged” and that is the best medicine. Our faith in God will get us through this. I read that after 9/11 more people reached out for spiritual support than mental health counseling. Please listen to Pastor’s Maundy Thursday’s sermon about the phases of grief for an excellent description of the journey of grief.

Coronavirus grief is a vast, collective grief of a worldwide loss that though we are physically isolated, a lot of people are also mourning together.

Advice I read is to be better at letting ourselves mourn. So I’ll start at the beginning: This is hard. I’m hurting. If you’re hurting, too, know that you’re not alone. And know that when this is all over “grief won’t have the last word. That same God who walks with us day by day through grief also holds out to us the promise of new life. Hold onto that hope and keep reaching toward the Light, which is Christ.”

In Christ’s Love and Light,
Linda
Faith Community Nurse

References:

“Faces of Grief” WELCA- Daily Grace

“Trouble Focusing?”- NY Times- April 9, 2020; R. O. Kwon