God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. (Psalm 46)

March 17, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

These are obviously trying and difficult times as we daily receive new information about the COVID-19 virus and its spread across the nation and world.

A recent announcement from the CDC has indicated that groups of more than 50 people are advised not to assemble, and everyone needs to practice social distancing. The CDC has asked that these restrictions be in place for the next 60 days. The White House yesterday has set the group limit at 10 people.

OSLC’s Executive Committee met last night to determine our next steps in joining the battle against COVID-19 in addition to the information that we shared yesterday.

We reluctantly inform you that we have come to a very difficult, but necessary decision to protect the well-being of our congregation and the wider community. We will close our facilities to everyone but staff until further notice. This means that we will worship together electronically for the foreseeable future.

We have made this decision in concert with other congregations in our area together with the guidance of the Northern Illinois Synod and reviewing similar action communicated to the community by the Diocese of Rockford and other faith communities.

In order to keep us together as community, we will offer Saturday evening and Sunday morning worship through Facebook and YouTube. We are also exploring ways to include those who do not have electronic means of communication so that we can keep everyone connected who wants to be connected. To view online worship, visit oslcrockford.com and click on the links in the upper right hand corner to connect to our Facebook and YouTube pages. Our Facebook page will stream worship at our regularly scheduled worship times: Wednesdays during Lent at 12 & 6:30, Saturdays at 5:00 and Sundays at 8:30 & 10:45.

Please know that we are aware that our faith community is important to you in bringing prayer and comfort in this time of concern and existential crisis here and abroad. Please continue to pray for our congregation council, cabinets, volunteers, pastors, deacon and staff as we seek to minister to your needs as effectively as we are able during this time.

So, following Illinois Primary voting in Shepherd’s Gate today, March 17, our facility will be closed until further notice. Please consider that all meetings will be postponed or happen electronically.
while we clean and disinfect the building. Meeting decisions will be made by council and cabinet leadership, and other group leaders. Our outside groups that use our facilities have been contacted and most have postponed meetings at least into May.

If you are in need of conversation or prayer, please do not hesitate to contact Cyndi Hlavin, Deacon Marti, Pastor Scott, Mike Booker or myself (Pastor Len).

Finally, a reminder that our ministry with you and our community partners continues to move forward and your financial support is very important. Please consider using electronic giving. Go to the Give menu on our webpage at www.oslcrockford.com, select “Make a Gift” for online giving and click the “Make a Donation” button. Consider mailing in your gifts if you give by check. Thank you for all you are able to do to help keep our ministry strong during this extraordinary time.

We Pray:

Gracious God, it is good for us to gather as your beloved in community. We treasure your presence with us in word and meal, song and prayer. Be with us in these days when gathering together as often as we would like is not possible. When we must be apart for reasons of safety, we trust that you surround us with your sheltering wings. Encourage us in connecting as we are able, reaching out to our neighbors in need and being persistent in prayer. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our constant companion. Amen.

Sincerely in Christ,

Pastor Len Hoffmann
Interim Senior Pastor
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815-399-0531

Mike Booker
Council President
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815-298-5813

For the safety of all, we do not want OSLC members to stop by the church at this time. If you have a fob, please do not use it. Entrance to the facility should only be considered in the event of an emergency.

Please sign up for our text alert system to receive OSLC news and/or encouragement. Text the word “CONNECT” to 815-205-1099.