

Beloved LCN community,

Our Lenten wilderness journey has taken a strange and hard turn over the past week, as the unfolding reality of the COVID-19 threat has led to the call for “social distancing” in the interest of mitigating its spread.

Last evening, the LCN Council held an emergency teleconference to discern what is best for our congregation in terms of worship and service at such a time as this. We talked about how much we cherish gathering in body for worship and fellowship, and brought that into conversation with the plea that many public and health officials have made for religious communities to lead by example in exercising an abundance of caution. We contemplated whether we could safely adapt the “6 feet apart” recommendations in our public worship, and shared what we were hearing from other churches and institutions in our area. And then we made the difficult decision that **as of today, LCN will cancel all in-person services and gatherings at church at least through April 1st.**

But though we will not gather physically in the weeks ahead, we can still find ways to worship and pray together. For tomorrow’s morning worship, we are working on a way to record and/or livestream a shortened service featuring music by Katherine Sipolt and our guest flutist Maria Hedberg, and prayers, scripture, and a sermon led by Pastor Kari Jo. Council is actively brainstorming other ways to stay connected and to express love and care for one another in the weeks ahead. Later today and tomorrow, they will be calling every member to check in and find out what would be helpful for you. We’ve already compiled a long list of ways to share devotions or other uplifting messages (including humor!) by email, social media, and the art of greeting cards and telephone calls. Expect more from us from the weeks ahead, and let us know if and how you’d like to participate.

Above, beneath, and through this all, we are clinging to the cross of Christ and trusting that Jesus walks with us in this season of unchosen fasting from our gatherings. I am deeply grateful for the love and faithfulness of the LCN Council, for the flexibility and good humor of our music director Katherine Sipolt, for the care and wisdom of our Parish Nurse Rita Busick, and for the multiple gestures of compassion that you have already extended to one another.

In the promise of resurrection,
Pastor Kari Jo

P.S. To see Presiding Bishop Eaton’s related address, go [here](#).