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Regarding COVID-19

March 17, 2020

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others (Philippians 2:1-4).

Dear Zion Family,

Our Lord Jesus established His Church to ensure that His salvation would be shared to the ends of the earth. In His Church we receive the grace, mercy, and love of God in Jesus Christ through the read, preached, and sung Word of God and the Holy Sacraments. Through these means God transforms us into a people who reflects His loving nature to others. Therefore, in our families, our congregation, and in our communities we lovingly serve one another in Christ's name.

As we respond to COVID-19 (Coronavirus) the Lord provides us opportunities to serve one another in love. In response to this virus governing officials and the CDC have issued the several recommendations for individuals over 60 years old, those with chronic health conditions, and those who have compromised immune systems (for example: lung problems, COPD, cancer).

- Stay at home as much as possible and avoid crowds. Forgo non-essential travel. Limit gatherings to 10 people.
- Make sure you have access to several weeks of medications and supplies in case you need to stay home for prolonged periods of time.
- When you go out in public, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact, and wash your hands often.
- Stay up to date on CDC Travel Health Notices.
- If you are ill, Manning Regional Healthcare Center requests that you call before coming in (712-655-2072).

These may change by the time you read this letter, so please check the CDC's website (www.cdc.gov) or contact your local healthcare provider for up-to-date information.

Looking to the interests of others:

In our families:

If you are under 60 and are in good health, please ensure that the individuals in your family who fall into the higher risk category (listed above) have the supplies they need at home. If they do not, please go shopping for them.

In our congregation:

If you are under 60 and are in good health, please volunteer to go shopping for higher risk individuals in our church family who do not have immediate family nearby who can help them. If you are willing to do this, please contact the church office. If you are aware of someone who could benefit from such assistance or if you need

assistance, please contact the church office (712-655-2352). As members of Zion, we encourage you to assist us with prompt and efficient communication by ensuring we have your contact information (new email, updated cell numbers, contact information for college youth, etc.). You may email this to us at zionmanningslcms@gmail.com or call it in. Please make this a priority.

If you have grown children that live some distance away, we ask that you share their contact information with the church office in case we were to need to contact them regarding a change in your health. Further, we encourage you to download the Zion app (instructions below) as it serves as a means by which we can communicate with the congregation through notifications.

In our community:

Please check with your neighbors. If they fall into the higher risk category and don't have someone to shop for them, please consider assisting them. If you are unable to do this, please contact the church office so that we can arrange for their assistance.

You may find more information on COVID-19 in Iowa here: idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus.

Guidelines for worship:

For the time being, our worship services and scheduled events/programs/gatherings have been suspended. We are exceedingly grieved by this, but believe it necessary to comply with the recommendations of our public officials and servants who have been placed into such positions to care for the wellbeing of us all. We give thanks to God for their diligence and committed efforts to decrease the spread of this virus. We also give thanks to God for our selfless healthcare professionals, along with cleaning crews, working tirelessly to ensure our health. And we pray that the impact of this virus will be minimized by these aggressive actions.

Does this mean the mission and ministry of the church has stopped? No. The way we do ministry has simply changed. I (Pastor Conner) am working closely with Zion's leadership to ensure our members are cared for. Here are a few of the steps we are taking to accomplish this as well as things you can do to stay connected and to support the mission:

- I have assigned each elder a segment of our members for whom they are to be responsible. If you have special needs, they will be assisting me in ensuring you receive appropriate care. Your elder is detailed on the next page. Their numbers are in the directory or can be acquired through the church office.
- Our services will be recorded/streamed through our Facebook page. If you do not have Facebook, you can either log onto Facebook and search for Zion Lutheran Church, Manning, or access Zion's page through the Zion app (download "The Church App" and choose "Zion" – also allow notifications so as to expedite our ability to communicate with you). Please note that we are working diligently to upgrade our equipment to improve your experience. If you would like to learn how you can support this effort, please contact the church office.
- I encourage you to be in the Word daily. Many of you do daily Portals of Prayer. Wonderful. You may also benefit from The Lutheran Hour's radio broadcasts. A chart detailing times and channels is included on the next page. The Lutheran Hour also provides a variety of daily devotions on their webpage (www.lhm.org). You can also access a Bible reading plan through the Zion app (it will even read the Bible to you!). I also encourage you to make use of the edifying podcasts available through Issues Etc. (available as a standalone app or accessible through the "links" tab of the Zion app). Your family would also benefit from the excellent videos available through The Bible Project (www.thebibleproject.com/explore).

- I will be sharing periodic addresses with the family and friends of Zion through our Facebook page. Please check in often.
- I will begin offering a daily prayer through our Facebook page (I hope to stream a prayer each morning at 7:30 a.m.). I encourage you to join me as you are able. It's important that we are in regular prayer individually and together.
- I will communicate with our confirmation families via text and Facebook to ensure parents are equipped to continue teaching their children at home. As we move forward we will make a final decision on confirmation questioning and confirmation Sunday.
- Please watch for further communication in the coming weeks regarding Holy Week and Easter.
- You may support the mission and ministry of Zion (something needed now, more than ever) by mailing in your weekly/monthly contribution, establishing an electronic transfer from your bank (if you have questions on this, you may call the church office for assistance), and through the Zion app (you can give 24/7 quickly and easily).

Lutheran Hour Radio Broadcast Channels and Times:

KDSN	Denison, IA	107.1	FM	Sun	6:30 AM
KDSN	Denison, IA	1530	AM	Sun	10:30 AM
WHO	Des Moines, IA	1040	AM	Sun	7:30 AM

Elder Assignments (divided by last names):

- Paul Christensen: A-C
- Mike Gore: D-G
- Don Lamb: H-K
- Bob Genzen: L-O
- Tim Kienast: P-R
- Eric Ramsey: S-Z

I give thanks to God for the many capable and committed servants at Zion who are working behind the scenes with me to ensure the mission and ministry of Zion moves forward. Friends, we are the church and our neighbors need us to be the church. So let's move forward together in confident and fearless faith in the name of Jesus.

Caring in Christ's Name,

Pastor Conner, Zion Elders, and The Safety and Security Team