

Dear Friends in Christ,

I thank God for each one of you. As followers of Jesus now is the time to let our courageous faithfulness shine forth. Many of you have been and remain committed to finding creative ways to be the Body of Christ and to remind one another and our community that God has not abandoned God's world—that this is God's church and we are God's hands and feet!

Last night our church Council meet for the first time via Zoom. I would like to share some highlights of that meeting with you all as they affect our community life together.

- Taking into consideration the guidelines from the CDC and the strong encouragement of our Bishop Bill Gafkjen to congregations throughout the Synod, the Council has decided to suspend/postpone all in person activities through Wednesday, April 1st at Messiah. This decision was not taken lightly and will be re-evaluated by the council on Sunday, March 29, to examine how/if other activities need to be postponed, cancelled or modified going forward.
- The church has opened a Zoom community meeting teleconferencing account that can be used for video meetings and even worship via distance technology. If you are interested in using this platform to connect with your regularly scheduled church meetings and activities please contact Pr. Erik directly via email: pastor.erik@messiahelca.com or by cell: (775) 750-7266
- **To that end, our first ever Zoom worship opportunity will be tonight at 6:30 PM.** All are invited to follow this link below as we continue our midweek lenten series “By Faith...” Tonight we will consider the faith of Moses. To access the meeting follow the link: <https://zoom.us/j/673842645> Zoom can be accessed using a computer's web browser or through the “Zoom Cloud Meetings” available at the App Store or Google Play Apps. It can also be accessed (audio only) via any telephone.
- Our office staff will work to make the office open during our regular office hours, however if you intend to come to the church, please call ahead to make sure that someone will be there as some responsibilities are being done handled remotely.
- Council also decided that our entire first quarter community benevolence of \$2500 would be given to the Family Promise Stability Builder's Network in Hendricks County. For those that are unfamiliar with this organization it is what I would describe as a parallel organization to Family Promise of Hendricks County that seeks to help homeless families with a new start. In particular, the Stability Builder's Network works with individuals in Hendricks County who find themselves in need of outside assistance—anything from financial assistance, to childcare or even transportation needs, the Stability Builder's Network seeks to help people stay out of homelessness and provide more stability for those in need in our community.
- Our church food pantry will continue to operate in a drive through format during its normal Saturday hours. Additional food supplies such as canned chicken and peanut butter are especially welcome at this time. Also a our church “Blessing Box” for those walking/driving through the parking lot has been put up and functions as another way for people to take or leave some basic food items for those in our community.

There is no denying that life and work are completely different now. *For all of us.* We are a church—not closed—but dispersed. And as a church, we remain faithful to our calling to be courageous in caring for our community—both the church and the broader community in times of stress and concern. As these days turn into weeks I would encourage you to extend some extra grace to those around you and maybe especially yourself in the midst of these challenges. Yes, life is different, but we are in this together and we have been given all the grace we need to see this through the one who has shown us God’s perfect grace—Jesus Christ.

Grace and peace,
Pr. Erik