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**Rev. Chris Neptun, Pastor**

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March 13, 2020,

Dear Church,

It is astonishing how much can change overnight. Last night the council met had chosen a course of action we felt would be best for Holy Trinity in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic we are dealing with. While we were aware schools would be closing in varying measures, we were not aware of the response many church bodies would take and have adjusted how our congregation will respond.

I have given this much prayer and discernment, but have come to the following decision:

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Glenview will suspend all in person congregational gatherings, INCLUDING WORSHIP until further notice.**

This means we will not worship this Sunday. Mid-Week Lenten soup suppers are cancelled until further notice. Bible studies, small groups, and social gatherings will not take place either. I strongly discourage any social gatherings such as women's breakfast and the men's breakfast to not meet until further notice. As a leadership team, the council will converse remotely via phone, email and other messaging to assess our situation. The congregation will be updated weekly via email, social media or phone to keep you informed.

We are not alone in a response like this. The Arch Diocese of Chicago has also suspended congregational gatherings including worship until further notice. The Episcopal Diocese of Chicago has as well. Glenview Community Church has cancelled meetings and worship as well. The Metropolitan Chicago Synod has not made a decision for its congregation but has left the decision to each congregation to act as it feels best for their situation. This afternoon I met with Pastor Post from Ascension in Northfield, Pastor Berg in Northbrook and Pastor Kopka at St. Philip. If they had not already made decisions to suspend activities for their congregations, they were in the process of deciding. I also spoke with the executive team members who were available on this topic.

As we are a congregation with a particularly aging population and also many with compromised immune systems, we are concerned with everyone's well-being but are specifically concerned with theirs. The well-being of each person is the reason for these actions. This is why we have decided to suspend all in person gatherings for Holy Trinity.

Many of you are reading this letter via email or social media. I will be calling those personally whom I am aware may not have access to email or social media to let them

know. I would encourage each of you to check in on each other as well to be sure as many of us receive this news as possible. It not only my hope that you would check in on one another to assure we would be well informed of this but also to care for one another and provide for one another as is necessary.

In the 1527, Martin Luther wrote this in response to the Black Plague which had returned to Europe:

*"I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance inflict and pollute others and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me and I have done what he has expected of me and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others. If my neighbor needs me however I shall not avoid place or person but will go freely as stated above. See this is such a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash nor foolhardy and does not tempt God."*

Do what is necessary to promote good health. Refrain from gathering in places where you are not needed, but be available for your neighbor when they are in need.

Please watch for further updates through email, our website, myHTLC.org, Facebook @HolyTrinityGlenview, and also on Instagram and Twitter.

I continue to pray for each of you and this congregation. I know you do as well.

God's peace to you dear church,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "P. Chris". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and personal.