



## *Christ United Methodist Church*

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is with frustration and sadness that we receive our Governor's 'Safer At Home' order. Coronavirus has taken a great toll on our hearts, as we worry about getting this highly contagious illnesses, and worry about the medical personnel who are on the frontlines fighting to get people well. Now, fears increase as more businesses are closed, being listed as 'non-essential.' Travel and vacation plans have been postponed indefinitely and we are not able to see family and friends, except through electronic devices.

These are definitely unprecedented times we live in. Never have we seen the world 'shut down' because of an illness. True, the plague ravaged nations in the past, and a little over a hundred years ago, the Spanish flu decimated huge portions of the population. But, never have we seen the whole world 'shut down' in order to stop the spread of COVID-19.

This is good news and bad news. I've already listed the bad news, but hear the good news. Leaders in every country are trying to slow the spread of coronavirus so fewer people get sick at once. If we didn't enact 'shelter in home' orders, hospitals and supplies would be more overwhelmed than they already are, and more people would die. Hopefully, this way, the spread of the virus will be slower and more people will become immune and be able to go back to work. Plus, they would no longer be a threat to spreading the virus to those who can't handle it, at least until a vaccine is available. Enacting 'social distancing,' and obeying it, means we hope to limit deaths to less than 2%, instead of the 25-60% who died in the plague. So obeying the Governor's orders is very important.

In order to continue worship, I have sent printed sermons to those without electronic communications. To those with email and Facebook, you have received sermons as well. I hope to get worship videos up on our church website, **MerrillChristUMC.org**, and Facebook page – **Merrill Christ United Methodist Church – Merrill WI** – as soon as possible so please check those sites weekly. Be sure to invite people to "Like" our Facebook page so that they can get connected also.

So, Church, how are YOU doing? Are any of you in trouble? Is anyone happy? Is any of you sick? How is it with your soul? Please send Sandy or me your joys and concerns. Feel free to call me if you want to talk (608-606-4648), or email me at "LuvUGod2004@yahoo.com." Call on one another to check in and see how your family is doing. "We are the Church together."

I know you have heard all the instructions on preventing the spread of COVID-19, covering coughs and sneezes, washing hands frequently for at least 20 seconds, and avoid touching

your faces. Lincoln County Health Dept. is an excellent source of answers to your questions. You can also log onto the CDC website for more information.

In our prayers, let us especially pray for our medical and emergency personnel, law enforcement, government leaders, government workers, all the essential workers and businesses who risk their health so that we can receive the much needed “fruits” of their labors. Pray for students and teachers who are having to conduct education in new ways. Pray for parents and families trying to adjust in the middle of a crisis. Pray for us all to grow in love and compassion, grace and forgiveness that we may come out of this crisis with healthier bodies, families and societies. Let the love of Jesus Christ flow generously from our lips that we might offer comfort to the scared and overwhelmed.

If you have any suggestions for how we can more effectively support one another, please let us know. And, **please, don't forget to mail your offerings to the church office.** Sandy will come in periodically to check the mail and take care of office details, but the building will be locked at all times. We may not be able to meet in person, but our expenses continue.

As we adjust to the unusual circumstances we find ourselves in, let us remember these words by the Psalmist in Psalm 91.

God bless you,  
*Pastor Laverne*

*“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.” Surely he will save you from the fowler’s snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.*

*“If you make the Most High your dwelling— even the LORD, who is my refuge— then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent.*

*“Because he loves me,” says the LORD, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation.”*