

Zion Lutheran Church

10801 Winder Cr.
North Battleford, SK. S9A2B6
306-445-5162
www.battlefordslutheran.sk.ca



A Pastoral Letter Concerning Zion Lutheran Church and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Tuesday, March 17, 2020

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change... The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

~Psalm 46:1-2, 7

Greetings in The Name of The Risen Lord!

Every day the ground beneath us feels as if it is shifting sand. That which we once took for granted is slowly being taken away from us. It is true, "We are dust, and to dust we shall return."

This letter is difficult, but hopeful.

We will be God's Church!

Starting today we will no longer be able to gather "in person" for community prayer, fellowship and worship ministry. I pray that this status soon passes. We have adopted this posture out of a "Love of Neighbor"- not wanting to contribute to the spread or duration of this virus.

Ways we will be Church:

- We are developing a "**Faith & Friends**" list. We will care for one another. This will connect and match people together for support: daily phone calls, leaving sermons and notes of encouragement from Pastor Sheldon in mailboxes; sharing genuine compassion and love with your "friend". We might be "*social distancing*", but none of us should experience "*social isolation*".
- **Online Sunday morning worship services.** We are working to provide for the proclamation of God's Word and community prayer. Join with us this Sunday (March 22) at 10:30am for a "live stream" service lead by Pastor Sheldon from Church (hosted on our Church Facebook page)
- We are in the process of developing an online **PRAYER & SUPPORT GROUP** for daily prayer and encouragement.

- We will begin an online weekly Bible Study
- Pastor Sheldon will continue to minister, pray, encourage, and visit to build and strengthen the Body of Christ- in, with, and around us.
- These initiatives (and more) will debut over the next week

Help Us Be Church

- Pray. Wash your hands. Love your neighbor...We are the Salt and Light of the World.
- Join with us on Facebook: “Zion Lutheran Church, North Battleford”
- Stay current using our website: www.battlefordslutheran.sk.ca
- Be mindful that not everyone has access to online technology, please share our activities, blessings, and announcements with those you can.
- Please contact Pastor Sheldon as individual needs become known: (cell) 306-480-7124 or email: sheldon.gattinger@gmail.com
- Be patient. We are creating new ways of ministry and fellowship “on the fly”. We are here for you. We love you. Together, we will make the Love of Christ known.
- ***These will difficult economic days for the Church.*** Your blessings will sustain our efforts. Please consider giving through the following ways:
 1. **Online-** link to giving found on our website: www.battlefordslutheran.sk.ca You will receive an immediate tax receipt
 2. **Electronic Funds Transfer (ETF)-** please use zionlutheran@sasktel.net as your payment hub (charitable donation receipt will be provided by church)
 3. **By Mail-** Donations can be mailed to Zion Lutheran Church- 10801 Winder Cr., North Battleford, SK. S9A2B9
- **Be Hopeful!** “Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” 1 Cor. 13:7

Let us pray...

We pray to you almighty God, in this time of anxiety and apprehension. You are our refuge and our strength, a very present help in time of trouble. Do not let us fail in the face of these events. Uphold us with your love, and give us the strength we need. Help us in our confusion, and guide our actions. Heal the hurt, console the bereaved and afflicted, protect the innocent and helpless, and deliver any who are still in peril; for the sake of your great mercy in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

May the Lord Bless You and Keep You,

Rev. Sheldon Gattinger

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