

+ New Jerusalem Ev. Lutheran Church +  
3233 Apples Church Rd. Bethlehem, PA 18015  
Church Office: 610/838-0731

March 24th, 2020

Dear members of New Jerusalem,

*Grace and peace to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.*

To say that we are now living in trying times would be a complete understatement. As I'm sure everyone is aware, employees at grocery stores are doing everything they can to keep the shelves restocked; truck drivers are traveling non-stop to deliver goods to the stores and warehouses; hospital and other medical personnel are working exhaustingly long hours to offer care during this pandemic; schools and colleges are shut down and teaching by remote access; businesses deemed "non-essential" have also been shut down for the foreseeable future; and the government has declared a national emergency the likes of which we have rarely, if ever, seen in our lifetimes.

Please use your best judgment and practice good safety measures during this time, particularly those who have been identified with a higher health risk. Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly. Strictly limit your exposure to other people unless you have to go out for necessary medical appointments or to purchase items at the store. These are some of the best ways to help "flatten the curve" of infection. And though we must distance ourselves physically for a time, that doesn't mean that we can't stay connected. Make an overdue phone call (especially to those who are elderly) ... write an old-fashioned handwritten note ... send a text ... airdrop a family photo. Your efforts will definitely be appreciated!

Also crucial during this time of crisis is the continuance of giving your financial offerings to the church. These may be mailed to the office at the address noted above. Please consider using tape or water to seal your envelopes to lessen the transmission of germs. The congregation certainly understands if this imposed isolation has caused hardship due to unexpected unemployment at this time.

Additionally, I'd like you to invite all those who use social media to "like" Friedens Evangelical Lutheran Church's Facebook page or website ([www.friedenscentervalley.com](http://www.friedenscentervalley.com)) in order to watch recordings of remote worship. A brief worship service was added this past Sunday and another will be coming later this week. While it's certainly not the same as being together in person, it is a way we can share in our devotions together. Please know that we are only as far away from each other as our thoughts, hearts, and prayers. If anyone should need to reach me, my telephone # is 610/762-2139. Be well. God's peace be with you all.

The Rev. Lisa K. Borrell  
New Jerusalem's Visitation Pastor

# “Lockdown”

by Brother Richard Hendrick, Franciscan priest

Yes there is fear.  
Yes there is isolation.  
Yes there is panic buying.  
Yes there is sickness.  
Yes there is even death.

But,

They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise, you can hear the birds again.  
They say that after just a few weeks of quiet the sky is no longer thick with fumes, but blue and grey and clear.  
They say that in the streets of Assisi, people are singing to each other across the empty squares,  
keeping their windows open so that those who are alone may hear the sounds of family around them.  
They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.

Today a young woman I know is busy spreading fliers with her number  
through the neighbourhood so that the elderly may have someone to call on.

Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples  
are preparing to welcome and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary.  
All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting  
All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in a new way  
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality to how big we really are.  
To how little control we really have.  
To what really matters ...  
To Love. ♥

So we pray and we remember that  
Yes there is fear, but there does not have to be hate.  
Yes there is isolation, but there does not have to be loneliness.  
Yes there is panic buying, but there does not have to be meanness.  
Yes there is sickness, but there does not have to be disease of the soul.  
Yes there is even death, but there can always be a rebirth of love.

Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.  
Today, breathe ...

Listen ... Behind the factory noises of your panic,  
The birds are singing again  
The sky is clearing,  
Spring is coming,

And we are always encompassed by Love.

Open the windows of your soul  
And though you may not be able  
to touch across the empty square,  
Sing.

