

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH



439 E. NORVELL BRYANT HWY. ♦ HERNANDO, FL 34442 ♦ 352-746-7161 ♦ REV. DENNIS W. KOCH

May 5, 2020

Greetings in the name of our risen Lord, Jesus!

Now that we are about to have worship in our building, we need to discuss the ongoing projects, events and committee meetings that take place here at Good Shepherd.

When it comes to opening our building for activities outside of worship, we will be taking it one step at a time. We are not opening the church (at this time) for every activity we had before the pandemic began. We are forced to balance the church's spiritual, psychological and social needs against the value of human life. We need to be vigilant right now. Some tough choices will need to be made. The Coronavirus pandemic is not over, and we cannot let our guard down. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to do things differently than we used to do them. I use the image of 9-11. When 9-11 took place, the world changed. We were forced to do things differently than we had done before. COVID-19 is no different. It too, is forcing us to do things differently as well.

For the immediate future, outside groups will have very limited use of the building.

- SOS may use the kitchen and restrooms, but they will not be allowed to use any other part of the building. They are required to clean any areas that they use.
- AA may use the classrooms they were using before, but they must wipe down the tables, chairs, and counters that they use for their meetings.
- The Cub Scouts will not be meeting until next fall.

Committees are still being asked to use your telephone and/or other digital devices to communicate as much as possible. Computer programs such as Zoom, Hangouts, Facetime and Skype were designed for this purpose and they work well. If you must meet in the building, it is on a as needed basis. Please limit the number of people meeting to 10 people or less. Physical distancing will be required.

We, as a congregation, will need to keep precautions in place in order to try to keep everyone in our building safe from contracting COVID-19. We will not be having special events such as dinners and luncheons in our building until it is safe to do so. This includes coffee hour on Sunday morning. Coffee will be available for those who wish to have a cup of coffee, but there will be no food served on Sunday mornings. And, we are asking those who do stop for a few minutes in the social hall for coffee, to please clean up after themselves by clearing their trash and wiping down any tables and chairs they might use.

We welcome your financial support for this congregation. Just like the businesses in our community, our finances have taken a big hit because of the stay-at-home order. The offerings we have received are far from what we received before the pandemic. Unless something changes very soon, we will be forced to lay off some folks that you all have come to love and who depend on that income. Please remember that although we are not in the building for worship, the church still has financial commitments.

Finally, I know many of you are making personal sacrifices as we continue to live through the pandemic. Jesus calls us to sacrificial living as he himself was obedient to the sacrifice that was set before him. That does not mean many of us are enjoying the sacrifice. Look for the blessings along the way. The God that we know in and through Jesus is still present with us and you might just see the Glory of God that can and will be brought out of all this.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis W Koch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Pastor Dennis W Koch