By now you are probably aware that the number of cases of COVID-19, the illness caused by coronavirus, is expanding and many organization, schools, and churches are taking preventative measures in order to minimize its impact. Early responses like that of “social distancing” is a means of limiting the spread of the coronavirus. Our Pastoral staff and church council with input and guidance of our ELCA Bishops has been monitoring this growing situation.

Because the next few days and weeks will be critical in our response to this health crisis, our staff and council have made the decision to cancel worship for this coming weekend, Saturday March 14th and Sunday, March 15th along with our Wednesday Lent worship on March 18th both at Trinity and St. Timothy. Gathering as a community of faith is important especially during time of crisis and so although separated by space, we will be providing a devotional to be used in your home, via our website tlcmidland.org which will unite us in community. Our building will remain open for individual use for prayer, individual communion and counsel with Pastors, and time for personal reflection. Our tithes and offering contributions will be able to be offered through our drop box outside the church office, US postal service or from our secure website.

All church activities at church, preschool, along with outside groups will be canceled from March 15th- March 20th. If you need to get in contact with our office or Pastoral staff, our phones will be staffed and monitored throughout the week. Our Pastoral staff and church council will meet online on Friday, March 20th to discuss a broader response and any further cancellations. We are already making plans for services to be available online in the coming weeks.

It is in anxious times such as these, that we need not panic but be reassured that our Lord comes beside us giving us courage to face the days ahead. Our decisions have been made with the utmost concern for everyone especially those who are most vulnerable. Our Lord encourages us to be compassionate and mindful of our neighbors. I would encourage you to listen to the words of our ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton as she encourages us in this time of Lent to take this time as our Lenten fast as we prepare for our celebration of Easter on April 12th.

Please watch for updated communication from the church and in the meantime, please do not hesitate to reach out to our Pastoral staff, if you have concerns or emergencies, we look forward to being of service to you during this time. Now is a time to keep each other in prayer.

Gracious God, it is good for us to gather as your beloved in community. We treasure your presence with us in word and meal, song and prayer. Be with us in these days when gathering together as often as we would like is not possible. When we must be apart for reasons of safety, we trust that you surround us with your sheltering wings. Encourage us in connecting as we are able, reaching out to our neighbors in need and being persistent in prayer. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our constant companion. Amen.

In Christ’s service,
Pastor Gerald