

March 27, 2020

Dear Prince of Peace Family –

I pray you are healthy and in good spirits. First off, we have received a recommendation from Bishop Hutterer for ELCA church campuses to remain closed through May 1. After wrestling with this recommendation and the latest information from the CDC and AZ public health officials, Prince of Peace has decided to heed our bishop's recommendation. This means I am hard at work planning online worship services for all of April, including Holy Week and Easter. While this isn't what I had hoped or prayed for, I am confident it is the right decision for Prince of Peace. I will never give up finding new ways to express God's amazing love during this time.

While we are not greeting one another in person each Sunday, my heart is warmed at the many ways we are reaching out and caring for each other. We are the church whether we are physically together or not. For many years I have prayed that we will be the "hands, feet, voice and heart of Jesus in our community." Now more than ever, this is our calling and we are living into it. Here are just a few of the amazing things I have witnessed this week:

- 1) The POP Calling plan is happening, and new friendships are being built over the phone as we care for and pray for one another
- 2) POP members delivering food and essential items to each other
- 3) POP members engaging in "social distancing visits" with our older members in their front yards and carports
- 4) Our POP youth ministry meeting for lunch regularly over ZOOM and sharing highs and lows
- 5) Our POP children's ministry sharing videos back and forth with staff and each other to stay connected
- 5) Either our church council or preschool board meeting every night of the week over ZOOM to help navigate our future together
- 6) POP Preschool classrooms coming together over social media to ensure our preschool children are connected to their beloved teachers

Thank you for your prayers and for finding new ways to care for one another in this time.

As we move forward together as God's people, please know that the POP staff is working every day to find new and innovative ways to extend God's love to the POP family and beyond. We are quickly mastering new skills to better serve you.

If I can be of assistance to you in any way, even just to share a short prayer together over the phone, please reach out (408-472-0529).

May God's peace be yours today and always,

Pastor Rick