

MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP

Dear beloved members of the Northeastern Minnesota Synod,
Grace and peace to you in Christ our brother and Lord.

Martin Luther's writings have been “gold” for me lately:

“Since God has given me in Christ all the riches of righteousness and salvation so that from now on I need nothing except faith, why should I not therefore freely, with all my heart do all things pleasing to God who has overwhelmed me with irresistible riches? I will therefore give myself as a Christ to my neighbor and do nothing in this life except what is necessary, profitable, and salutary for my neighbor.” (From "The Freedom of the Christian" 1520)

I am strongly recommending that no worship or other in-person gatherings take place in our church buildings throughout the month of May, at the very least. I urge us instead, to focus on what Luther learned from Scripture and preached during widespread sickness in his day: live out your faith by serving your neighbor. Our neighbor is everyone. Serving as Christ to our neighbor right now is slowing the pandemic we all live in these days. Make no mistake the COVID-19 pandemic will be with us yet for a long time, beyond the summer months, into the fall, and beyond. It is vital that we be mature Christians here, and pay attention to the world as it is and keep on slowing the virus spread, in spite of our deep desire to gather with others “like we used to.” I know it is difficult to wait to gather, but we must do this so we can all gather together in the future.

I am committed to be your encouraging Bishop for this extended time. I believe that in Christ the Savior of the world, we have all we need for this time we live in.

Martin Luther, once again: “Behold, from faith flows love that serves one's neighbor and takes no account of gratitude or ingratitude, praise or blame, gain or loss. We do not distinguish friends from enemies because God's love makes us free.” (Freedom of the Christian)

Yours in Christ and in faith, hope, and love,

+Bishop Aitken

Northeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA