

Community Spread During Holy Week

Are You a Carrier?

We are living through an unprecedented time in the history of our world. Half of the world is under a stay-at-home order, hoping to slow the person-to-person spread of the COVID-19 virus. It is a first-time virus in our world so we have no antibodies to fight it off. That means the entire world's population is fertile soil to receive the virus, if unabated. People can be contagious without knowing it, infecting other people. Just being in the presence of someone with the virus can cause it to spread. As a result, at last count the virus has spread to 181 countries of the world.

Let's look at something else that is contagious but very positive and even more powerful than a world-wide pandemic. You have the potential to spread the faith just by being in the presence of others. Just by showing that God lives through you can be enough to influence others in a positive way. If we approach stressful situations, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, with a sense of peace it can make an impression on others. *"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* (John 16:33). People may want the peace in their life that they see in yours.

During times of crisis people often turn to God for comfort. We experienced that on 9/11. Now may be the opportunity when people will be receptive to the hope that Jesus provides. Some government officials are trying to give us hope by setting target dates for when restrictions might be lifted. Many people scoff at dates because they think they are politically motivated. What we all need is genuine hope – the hope that only God can provide. That is where we, as followers of Jesus, can step in and share the hope of Jesus Christ. *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit* (Romans 15:13). We know that God promises to be with us during times of crisis and that He can make good come from a bad situation.

During this time of isolation you may have limited exposure to people. Your inner circle starts with family members that live under the same roof. Many families have members who are at different stages in their spiritual journey. Your words of encouragement can help them in their faith walk. You can also make phone calls to friends you think might need words of encouragement and comfort. Your circle of influence is as wide as you make it. Plant seeds and let the Holy Spirit go to work. You don't need to have all the answers as you create opportunities for people to seek the Lord. That is when the Holy Spirit does its work. *So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow* (1 Corinthians 3:7). Winning people to Christ is done one person at a time. It can be done through you. Even in self-isolation you can be infectious for the Lord.

Holy Week is when Hope became reality through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus took man's sin with Him on the Cross, including yours and mine. *When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!"* We know that Jesus will emerge victorious from the empty tomb on Easter morning. Hope will be fulfilled. At this difficult time it is a message of comfort that we all need to hear.

Holy Week is the perfect time to encourage others because the resurrection is the most important event in the history of mankind. Look for ways to suggest to not-yet believers what Easter means to you. But don't stop there. Point to Jesus. If the Holy Spirit opens a person's heart watch an on-line Holy Week service with them. People don't even have to get out of the comfort zone of their homes to get a front row seat in the sanctuary. Then, let the Holy Spirit do the work. This is a unique opportunity to share God's love with others. Yes, you can be a carrier in a way that can change lives!

Prayer: Dear Lord. We know the results of Holy Week. Let us share our excitement with others to help build a bigger Kingdom. Amen.



Pictures of church members posted at their usual seats at Fountain of Life Lutheran Church. Empty church but also an empty tomb.