



## Coronavirus Update: 25 March, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ at St. John's,

Though we wrote you just yesterday we feel compelled to write again today.

**We will still hold Divine Services at St. John's in accord with the plan that we sent you yesterday, with twoscore (40) half-hour services per week beginning on Sunday, 29 March.**

The church council last night found nothing in the Shawnee County Health Department Safer at Home order issued on the afternoon of Tuesday, 24 March, that thwarts the elders' decision to offer and hold Divine Services at St. John's beginning this coming Sunday, 29 March.

Those Divine Services in groups of no more than 9 faithful at a time + the pastor will take place in the Courtyard and the nave. We are offering them both on Sundays as well as at various times Monday through Thursday.

We ask the congregation to sign up to attend those Divine Services so that we can assure our brothers and sisters in Christ of gatherings of 10 or less. Register your attendance at [stjohnlcmstopeka.org](http://stjohnlcmstopeka.org) > [SignUpGenius button](#) (upper right side of the homepage). If you register for yourself *and an additional person* please make sure to give the total number in your party. You can also call us during normal business hours (M-Th, 8 AM – 5 PM) at 354.7132.

We encourage those with mobility issues to select a Courtyard Divine Service so that you can enter and exit at grade.

**Compelled by love for neighbor, if you have a reasonable suspicion that you may spread the virus or fear that you may contract it by attending church, please remain home.**

By the definition of the Shawnee County Health Department order of 24 March, St. John's 10-person Divine Services cannot be classified as large public gatherings. Section Three (page 7) of that order reads as follows: "All large public gatherings of people in the County are prohibited unless otherwise ordered by the Public Health Board or by the Local Health Officer. Large public gatherings are those with more than ten (10) people in attendance or anticipated to attend, both indoor and outdoor, except for Essential Businesses." (full text [here](#)—scroll to bottom of page)

Further information released on 24 March on [WIBW](#) lists "Religious Leaders" among Essential Businesses exempt from the county order.

As we strive to continue to provide pastoral care for the congregation through the ongoing gathering of the faithful around the Word preached and the Sacraments administered, we pray that through these very means, as the Lord promises, you will all be kept firm and steadfast in the Faith and at last come to everlasting life. During this stressful and dangerous time, keep your brothers and sisters in Christ in your prayers, along with our congregation, community, and the world. May the good Lord strengthen the faithful and bring those in error and unbelief to repentance and faith. Amen!