

## Michigan Bishops' Statement on the Coronavirus

March 12, 2020

Friends in Christ,

As your bishops, we care deeply for the well-being of all our people and for the communities we serve. As Christians, we are called always to love one another as God loves us, caring for the most vulnerable among us. There are many unknowns about this public health crisis, but this much is clear -- social distancing is an essential part of our collective response.

Many of you may have already seen Governor Whitmer's new advisory this morning urging people to avoid large gatherings to prevent the further spread of COVID-19. In light of this recommendation, and in awareness that many in our congregations are amongst the most vulnerable population, we encourage congregations to refrain from coming together for in-person worship for the remainder of the month of March.

As People of God, it is our moral, civic, and spiritual obligation to care for one another by taking the necessary steps to slow the spread of this virus and continue to serve our communities with generosity, hope, and joy.

*O God, where hearts are fearful and constricted, grant courage and hope. Where anxiety is infectious and widening, grant peace and reassurance. Where impossibilities close every door and window, grant imagination and resistance. Where distrust twists our thinking, grant healing and illumination. Where spirits are daunted and weakened, grant soaring wings and strengthened dreams. All these things we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.*

**In God's Love,**

**The Rt. Rev. Wayne M. Hougland, Jr.**

Bishop, The Episcopal Dioceses of Eastern and Western Michigan

**The Rev. Dr. Donald P. Kreiss**

Bishop, SE Michigan Synod ELCA

**The Rt. Rev. Dr. Bonnie A. Perry**

Bishop, The Episcopal Diocese of Michigan

**The Rt. Rev. Rayford Ray**

Bishop, The Episcopal Diocese of Northern Michigan

**The Rev. Dr. Craig A. Satterlee**

Bishop, NW Lower Michigan Synod ELCA