Dear ILC Family:

David addressed these words to God the day the LORD delivered him from his enemies, especially King Saul:

“I love you, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.” (Ps. 18:1-3).

In the midst of the trial, David was acutely aware of the loving and protecting presence of his God. We too rely on the God of David, our rock, fortress, deliverer, refuge, shield, horn of our salvation, and certain stronghold.

COVID-19 is surely an enemy of life and well-being. Our hearts and prayers go out to those directly affected, the millions threatened, and those under “stay-at-home” orders, including us. Yet, we confess that our God is greater than any of our enemies, including this virus. He will deliver us in Christ both now and into His eternal Kingdom! And so like David we continue to “call upon the LORD,” trusting that in His mercy. God hears our prayers and will lead us through these challenging times.

Our Worship Plans Going Forward

Because of COVID-19, we are facing new challenges daily. One such challenge impacts our worship, Bible studies, and the way we gather around Christ, His Word and Sacrament.

We concur with our Governor’s assessment that “religious services” fall under the “essential services” category (see “Which CT Businesses Are Essential Under Governor’s Executive Order” https://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/coronavirus/what-businesses-are-considered-essential-under-gov-lamonts-executive-order/2243283/). When it comes to attending church in person, we all need to decide on the basis of faith, prayer, common sense, conscience, and personal context—without judging the decisions of others.

We plan to provide the members of Immanuel with the option to attend worship at church, while also providing worship services on our YouTube channel. With many deciding for conscience and health’s sake to not attend services in person, our attendance numbers are expected to fall well within Connecticut’s mandate of fifty people or less. Indeed, to help stem the proliferation of the virus, the federal guideline limits gatherings to ten persons or less. As your leadership at Immanuel, we share this vital goal. The sooner this outbreak is checked, the sooner we can return to gathering together in our fullness, as our Chief Pastor Jesus desires! So we are calling on eight persons, who feel led by the Lord to lend vigor and voices to our services. Hearty hymn-singing and liturgical participation will enhance the authenticity of worship and the quality of YouTube recordings prepared for our Church family and beyond. Please let either Oyeniran or Pr. Chris know if you would like to participate in this way. Of course, we continue to invite all persons who desire to continue worshipping in person, within the bounds of our Connecticut mandate.

We will also congregate responsibly. With the spacious nature of our sanctuary and limited attendance numbers, there should be more than enough room for proper social-distancing.

To that end, we will have a modified worship/Bible study schedule going forward as follows:

- Our “Crucified King” Lenten Midweek services at 7:00pm on Wednesdays (no 11:00 am service). The format will vary between shortened services in the vein of Evening Prayer, Vespers, or a Service of Prayer and Preaching.
  - **Fantastic Idea!** In lieu of physical fellowship, we will host “online Lenten suppers” on Wednesdays from 6 to 6:30pm. Sit down to dinner at your home and join us online or on the phone for conversation and community! Contact Renate at renate.roehl@immanueldanbury.org for more information.

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• We will have shortened Divine Services on weekends that will offer the Sacrament, both common and individual cups. These will be offered on 5:00pm Saturdays and 10:00am Sundays. Again, these will be uploaded to our YouTube channel (Below is this past weekend’s worship):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XOj8B2WAc6g

• Bible Study—"On Mission with Jesus—Show Me How” will be held online Sundays at 8:45am. Those physically present on campus will have means to access the study. Please click the link below:

Join from your computer, tablet or smartphone. https://www.gotomeet.me/timschultz2/ilc-sunday-morning-bible-study

Participate via your computer’s audio/video or dial in using your phone. +1 (872) 240-3212

Access Code: 178-877-741

• Confirmation Class—For the time being, there will be no classes. Please continue with your Bible Book logs and Sermon reports (especially when our YouTube channel gets populated). Pastor Chris will be checking in with each confirmand personally and can answer questions concerning confirmation essays and lesson materials.

• Sunday School- We will be offering online Sunday School through video conferencing starting this weekend. More information will be sent to Sunday School families directly, but anyone is welcome to join us! Pre-K through 2nd grade will meet from 11:30 to 12 - join us at https://meet.google.com/nkt-inhog-kgg. Contact Renate at renate.roehl@immanueldanbury.org with questions or for more information. 3rd through 6th grade will be meeting on Zoom with Mrs. Walter. Contact Mrs. Walter (or Renate at renate.roehl@immanueldanbury.org) for more information.

• Prayer Time—Paul encourages us, “Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication” (Eph. 6:18). So, the sanctuary and altar will be open for prayer from 2 pm until 7:30pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Fridays. If you would like to come and pray or need prayer, God’s house is open. These are times for earnest intercession not only for our church family, but the entire Greater Danbury area, and beyond!

If you have a prayer need that you would like to share with our Prayer Team, please send it to Pastor Chris at chris.chandler@immanueldanbury.org or Twyla Walter at twylaMark6@gmail.com. Please copy the church office at churchoffice@immanueldanbury.org on these requests

• Confession and Absolution—Although, it is not our typical practice, we would like to make available opportunities for individual confession and absolution. David was an imperfect man with some terrible failures in his walk with the Lord, but he knew who to resort to in contrition and repentance (see Ps. 51). These are times for fasting, solemn assembly, great contrition and repentance before our gracious Lord for all people and especially the “priesthood of all believers” (see Joel 1:14-20). Please let Pastor know if you would like to avail yourself of this opportunity and he will arrange a time with you.

How best to contact the Church Office and Pastor Chris:

churchoffice@immanueldanbury.org chris.chandler@immanueldanbury.org

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Supportive Hands is Able to Provide Assistance!

Groceries/Medication/Pharmacy pickups/Social Contact/Prayer requests

Email: hollrahd37@gmail.com

In closing, the Triune God is our family and we are His sons and daughters. Again, as David reminds us, it is the Father's normal means to be our rock, fortress, deliverer, refuge, shield, horn of our salvation, and certain stronghold! God provides for our needs through one and another, the family of the Son's love and our neighbors. So now more than ever, let us love one another and be there for one another in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit and so light up this present darkness with His love!

In Christ,

Oyeniran Oyedeji, Music Minister
Renate Roehl, Sunday School Superintendent
Dennis Ruopp, BOLM Chair
Timothy Schultz, Vice President
Trip Thunhorst, President
Rev. Christopher Chandler, Pastor