

# Office of the President

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CHURCH OF THE  
LUTHERAN BRETHREN

March 13, 2020

Dear Church of the Lutheran Brethren,

I greet you in the sure name of Jesus Christ our Lord, and in the certain hope of His love and care for the Church and the world. In the Apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians, he glories in all that we share in the oneness of the Church: *"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."* Ephesians 4:4-6. In a time of uncertain circumstance and cautious separation if not isolation from others due to a virus besetting our world, may we rest ourselves in the hope of the Great Antidote of Him who calls all His own together with Himself.

I am writing to you from the home of our missionary family, David and Sonja Narvesen, in Doh, Chad. Bee, our daughter Karina, and I have been on a couple week visit to our mission in Chad, with visits thus far in N'djamena, Adere, Boudamasa, Bousso, and here in Doh. It has been a rich and blessed time of witnessing our mission here, and listening to and conferring with our missionaries, both LBIM and our Chadian missionary partners. Tomorrow, we leave in the early morning for Lere. There we will join with the EFLT (CLB of Chad) where a thousand or more believers are expected to gather this weekend for the Centennial Celebration of the CLB mission and resultant church in Chad.

I write to assure you of my prayers and care in this time of caution and concern regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19) in our world, among our neighbors, our families and in our congregations. May Christ give His Church, and give us — that part of the Church known as the Church of the Lutheran Brethren — great confidence, hope, and wisdom as we prepare and make decisions as congregations and as individuals in the communities and neighborhoods where we live and minister. May we remember ourselves especially during this trial as witnesses of the Gospel and ambassadors of peace, comfort, and reconciliation in our world.

As I have been able to access communication during this travel in remote areas, I have followed the world and national news and CDC and WHO updates and advisements, as well as the social media discussions and other postings from our congregational leaders in our varied contexts regarding their decisions and steps for protecting themselves and their neighbors during this pandemic. I have appreciated the spirit of concern, compassion, wisdom, and shared discussions. May God continue to give us all calm and wisdom in the developments of days ahead.

Peter wrote in his first epistle these words to the disciples who were being tested in uncertain times, *"In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith — of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."* It is my prayer that during this time, our faith may be proved genuine, and that Jesus would be revealed to our neighbor and our world through our faith.

I will ask the Church in Chad this Sunday morning to join with their brothers and sisters in Christ in North America in intercession regarding the virus and the witness of the Church during it. I would call the CLB in North America, whether in corporate worship or personal prayer at home, to join together in this prayer.

Grace & Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Paul M Larson".

Rev. Paul M Larson  
President, Church of the Lutheran Brethren