



## City of Leavenworth

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### City Council

Carl J. Florea - *Mayor*  
Carolyn Wilson  
Mia Bretz  
Sharon Waters  
Clint Strand  
Jason Lundgren  
Anne Hessburg – *Mayor Pro Tem*  
Zeke Reister  
City Administrator - *Vacant*

March 30, 2020

Community Members,

I hope everyone is doing well today! We definitely know that the longer this goes on, (and it looks like it will be at least another month), the more difficult it will be for all of us. More difficult to be positive. More difficult to keep the fears at bay for those not working, or for those living with compromised immune systems. More difficult to find ways to stay sane and caring and engaged. Tempers will be frayed for even the most easy-going. Some of us, like me, are having to go without hugging or kissing our grandkids, something that was always a highlight of my week. It was also something that gave some respite to my son, Micah, and his wife, Beth, who are raising a special needs son who is challenging on the best of his days. So, they, like many other parents these days, are having to figure out how to make it all work with their two boys, ages 9 and 4, without the help of schools, therapies, or grandparents.

I don't know about you, but my emotions are rawer. My family will tell you that even in the best of times, I can be a pretty emotional guy. But this weekend, as I watched and heard the various responses and stories surrounding the COVID-19 outbreak, I found myself choking up quite often. (For those of you who don't know, "choking up" is the older male version of crying). I got choked up watching the wonderful stories of people helping each other out, like the paper delivery man who ended up running to the store for all his home-bound customers.

But there were tragic stories as well. Like hearing about some who have come down with the disease, and who end up dying all alone. This one is especially hard for me to hear. One of the greatest privileges I have had in life is when, as a pastor, I was invited to share in the closing moments of a person's life. It is one of the hardest, and most intimate, times in our journey on this earth. And it is a mystical time. I was honored to be present as we said goodbye. In 2004, I was able to be present, along with my two sisters and my dad, when we prayed and sang to my mother as she breathed her last. Her name was Grace, and that is what she embodied to me. Whatever I have learned about being graceful and compassionate, I learned from my mom. Saying good-bye was the hardest thing I have ever experienced in my life. But being able to be with her in that moment, is one experience I would not trade for the world.

Dickens started his great book, *A Tale of Two Cities*, with this, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair..." Living in the tension of opposites. That is what much of life calls us to, but that call is all the more expressive of the world we live in this day. May each of us, find enough of the best, of the wisdom, of belief, and Light, and hope to get us through the worst, the foolishness, the incredulity, the Darkness, and the despair! Stay safe! Stay committed to hope and community!



**Carl J. Florea, Mayor**

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