

Covid19 Update 3/13/20

Dear Messiah Members and Friends,

Our Executive Team met last night to make decisions regarding our life together as a faith community. These decisions are responsible efforts to meet the twin challenges of protecting health and continuing our vibrant community life and ministry.

I want to assure you that the Executive Team is heeding the call of our governor to work to safeguard both our personal - and our larger community's - health and safety. We are also following the directive given by the King County Health Officer in regard to gatherings of under 250 people.

Here at the church, this means we are making the following changes to our life together:

- All public gatherings at Messiah are cancelled until further notice. Our church building and church office will be closed.
- There will be no "in person" services of worship on Sunday mornings or Wednesday evenings. This will be in effect until further notice

I know these changes are dramatic, but I believe they are necessary for health and safety as we chart a course forward through these unprecedented times. As difficult as these decisions are, they do open up for us the possibility of practicing new ways to be and do church together. I think we will learn new skills, and acquire new insights, and the benefits will flow for years to come.

This is our first new practice:

- We will be live streaming on Facebook a worship service on Sunday mornings at 9:30am. You can watch live on Facebook or connect through our website. You do not need a Facebook account to do this! On Saturdays a link to see the service will be emailed to you, along with worship materials and the week's announcements.

While the building and the church office will be closed, ministry at Messiah will continue. It is important at this time that we continue to live into our Micah 6:8 verse and "act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God." We will be exploring creative ways to still be the church together even when we are not gathering inside our church walls.

What will this look like?

- In addition to doing online worship, our church staff will continue to work hard at their ministries. They are available via phone and email. They will be doing a lot of their ministry online. They will also be providing faith resources and reflections via Constant Contact. Look for more information on this in the days to come.
- As long as folks are well and following the appropriate social distancing guidelines, staff will be available for face-to-face visits, coffee dates, and mutual prayer support. Just call and talk about setting up a visit. Staff contact information is below.
- I am speaking with our community meal and Wednesday foodbank leaders about ways to provide food for those with need. This may mean creating sack lunches, box meals, or pre-bagged groceries that can be utilized outside the church building.
- I am encouraging ministry groups, Bible studies, and service projects to continue beyond the walls of our church building in ways that are productive, yet also safe for the health of those participating.

I also want to mention that for the next weeks our ongoing ministry will be vital, both to support one another and to assist those in the community who are affected by the coronavirus. The

church still needs everyone's ongoing financial support. This is a time we need to, as much as possible, remain steadfast or even increase our sharing of time, talent, and treasures.

Folks have asked me how they can give financially to the church in these times. Three ways are available. First, mail your offering to the church or drop it off through the mail slot on the north side of the building. Second, set up a bill payment method with your bank and establish a regular routine of giving. Third, give online through the church website or call Lynne at the church office and set up a Simply Giving account.

Look for a regular flow of information to be shared through Constant Contact. We are also adding a number of other pathways for you to receive information. In the coming weeks you will receive updated information about the church's website, as well as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter accounts. If you know someone who is not receiving information from Messiah, please encourage them to call the church office and update their contact information.

Finally, I want to share that we as a church are committed to exploring new ways to enhance our life of faith together. We are here to support one another! The virus cannot stop the church. We are going to continue to be who we are, do our ministry, love one another, and walk together through these next weeks and months.

Blessings in Christ, Pr. Harris
