

3/18/20

Dear Faith Family,

Due to the governor's recent mandate, as well as COVID-19 continuing to get closer and closer to home, the leadership of the church has decided to cancel our Sunday services. We believe it is no longer wise to continue to meet and could unwittingly place people in harm's way. While we have enjoyed having service with those of you who have turned out the past two weeks, we believe it is in everybody's best interest to remain home and practice the social distancing the experts are advising. It is not for lack of faith or giving in to fear, but rather out of a deep desire to love one another, our neighbor, and our community that we feel God is finally leading us to take this step.

Therefore, instead of having services on location, we have decided to post pre-recorded "services" on our webpage (www.fairedmonds.org). Paul Shaw, John Faley and I are working hard to come up with a weekly package that would include some of our favorite worship songs, the Doxology, a sermon, and the Lord's prayer—many of the elements we hold so dear that will hopefully bring comfort and relief during this time and help us to keep our eyes on Christ.

As part of this, I am also planning on breaking off from 1 Corinthians, and instead provide a series of messages that speak more directly to what we are experiencing and that would be appropriate (and hopefully enjoyable) for the whole family. Our hope is that you would sit down with those in your household and listen, worship, and engage in the "service" together. These service packages should be available by Saturday evening of each week, so you can choose to listen at whatever time works best for you. This coming weekend's sermon will be on Psalm 23.

At this time our hope is to be able to open the church again for Easter weekend, but we realize that may be unrealistic. We will keep you posted as we draw closer to the month of April, believing that God is a God of miracles and nothing is impossible for Him, but that sometimes He chooses to work in mysterious ways.

In addition to these items, I want to make you aware of a couple of resources, as well as some suggestions for us all. First, a new Facebook group called, Coronavirus Virtual Prayer Meeting, has been started by a network of churches across Edmonds. This is for believers in Edmonds to encourage one another and join together in concerted prayer for our city. This group is also calling all believers to pray each day at 7 p.m. While there is nothing magical about this time, and I urge you to pray all throughout

the day, it is an attempt to be praying “together” even when we’re not face to face. The link to this page is: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/southsnocoprayer/>

Second, our consistory thought it would be a fun idea to have members of our church have a way to share messages of encouragement for the whole church. If you have any stories or testimonies that could encourage our body, please share them on our church Facebook page and/or email them to me personally. I will try to include one or two each week in a congregational email so that all can benefit. The guidelines for this are simply that they would be personal stories (not forwarded accounts or articles) that would provide encouragement to the whole body and bring glory to God. Of course you are also encouraged to send us prayer requests and let us know if there’s anything we can do to help.

Third, I wanted to invite any of you feeling lonely and isolated during this time to feel free to stop by the church during the week. Most weekdays I am at the church from 9 to about 3. If you’re driving or walking by, feel free to stop and chat. If you want to make sure I am there, feel free to set up an appointment. Taking care of our spiritual, emotional and psychological health is going to be just as important as protecting ourselves from the virus. The longer this goes on, the more we will need to find ways to connect with others. Please know I am available if you need me.

Next, let’s make sure we are looking out for one another: please continue to give to the church, sending your tithes and offerings through the mail (we have a lock on our mail box); I encourage you to be calling and emailing people from the church (as well as friends, family and neighbors) on a daily basis; if someone has a need, let’s get creative in how we can fill it; and if *you* have a need, don’t be afraid to share it with others. God has provided us with community and family to be the support network we need during times of crisis. This is what it means to be the body of Christ!

And finally, remember God’s got this! While this exact situation feels unprecedented to us, history shows the world has gone through times like this (and much worse) before. I think of my grandparents and the wars they faced, going through the Great Depression, etc. We call them the greatest generation because of the times they went through, how they endured, and how those times shaped and molded them. God is not oblivious to the things going on around us. Instead, He is working and using this crisis to grow our faith and draw us close to Him. Therefore put your trust in Him and see what He will do in and through us during this crisis. COVID-19 is no match for God’s love! He will see us through!

Peace!

Pastor Andrew

(425)563-5713

andrewedmonds@gmail.com