

Special Message from the pastor and consistory Re: Covid-19

Dear Faith Family,

In response to the growing concerns over the spread of Covid-19 (aka Corona virus), here is what the leadership of Faith Community Church is choosing to do. For now we aim to continue having church services at our usual time on Sunday mornings. However, we will be taking a few safety measures when we meet:

1. We won't be greeting anyone with handshakes or hugs, and instead encourage you to bow to one another as a sign of love and respect. Additionally please continue to use basic health practices of washing your hands, coughing and sneezing into a cleanex (or at least your arm sleeve), and keeping a respectful distance when engaging in face to face conversations.
2. We won't be passing the offering plate. Instead, the plates will be stationed in the back where you can drop off your tithes and donations without needing to touch anything. You can also mail these in.
3. We highly encourage anyone who is sick (with any kind of cold or flu or other virus) to stay home. It is also advised that people over age 70 or individuals who are at higher risk of weakened immune systems consider staying home for their own safety.
  - a. Reminder: our Sunday sermons are usually available online approximately 24 hours following the services. You can find these at [www.fairedmonds.org](http://www.fairedmonds.org) under the worship tab.
4. **For this Sunday only**, we will be cancelling our other Sunday programs, especially those involving food distribution. This includes our fellowship time (coffee and snacks), the Signs of the Sacraments Class (for kids), and our Lent Series (The Jesus I Never Knew). This will give our leadership time to meet and decide what we want to do moving forward.
5. It is advised that all other small groups and Bible studies decide on their own whether or not it is essential for them to meet during this time. Not knowing how long the

spread of this virus could last—it could be months before it dissipates—we need to be careful not to cut ourselves off from the body, but we also need to be cautious and limit any potentially risky interactions.

Having established those guidelines, I also want to address the fact that this situation raises a couple of particular challenges. The first is church giving. While we realize that people need to stay safe, our church, our staff, and our ministry partners still rely on your faithful giving to be able to stay afloat. We encourage you to continue to find ways to give faithfully and generously during this time. You are always welcome to mail in your checks as we will continue to process donations that come in this way.

Second is the reality that this crisis may cause people to feel isolated, fearful, anxious and depressed. In these uncertain times we need to be able to rely on the body and find our support in Jesus. To remedy this, we highly encourage you to maintain consistent, focused time in prayer and Bible reading, and we also encourage you to reach out to others. Your church family, including your pastor and members of our consistory, are just a phone call away. If you are struggling in your faith, need help getting groceries or other necessities, please don't hesitate to ask.

While the comparison is a little dramatic, I'm reminded of a story I read about the church during the middle ages. When everyone was fleeing the big cities during the time of the black death (bubonic plague), it was churches who decided to stay behind to minister to the sick and dying. While we don't want to be naïve or foolish, our faith in God is bigger than any disease or epidemic. God is still in control, and He still calls us to minister to one another, share His love and be a light in the darkness. As we remain faithful and step out in faith, He will remain faithful to us!

Having said those things, maintain your trust in Jesus and persevere in the faith.

Peace in Christ,

Pastor Andrew on behalf of the consistory

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