

RE: COVID-19 (Another Very Important Update from Faith Elders)

Date: March 14, 2020

Dear Faith Family and Friends

Things are developing very fast. The elders have been wrestling with two choices about Sunday worship and other gatherings.

Continue meeting (with abundance of caution) OR stop (for now). There are really good reasons to go either way.

We have made the decision to make this Sunday's worship, the last gathering until further notice. The following is our thought process.

First, decision to stop gathering is not because we believe there is high risk of infection right now. In fact, the risk of infection is still quite low. However, public health officials and epidemiologists are encouraging/pleading everyone to practice social distancing, including not meeting in large groups. This is to "flatten the curve" and thus, not put a strain in our health-care system. One example we keep hearing about is, "we want to learn from Italy's unfortunate delay of responding to COVID-19." So, by listening to the experts, we would be participating in slowing down the spread of this virus.¹ **We believe this is one way to love God's world.**

Second, even though our faith family members are relatively young, and thus, not in the vulnerable age category, there are still people we need to be concerned about. There are few people with pre-existing health conditions that we want to protect. Also, many of us live with or often come in contact with elderly people. If one or few of us become contagious, we will likely be okay (for most, it has been described as a really bad flu), however we will be putting the elderly at risk. **We believe this is one way to love people right around us.**

Third, not meeting all together (for a little while) may also be a great opportunity to **love God's people**. In the days ahead, we will be encouraging and challenging everyone to do three things. 1. Pray for every faith family member and friends 2. Have small group time (in person or online) 3. Reach out to some people individually.

Of course, you can do this on your own. But, to help you, the elders and deacons will be creatively coming up with ways to still be relationally connected. If you have any suggestions, please do not hesitate to speak with one of the leaders. **SPECIAL NOTE. The elders will be reaching out to every adult member next week to see how everyone is doing.**

Now, having said all this, this Sunday's worship will be as follows.

¹ There are lots of info about this. One news article is <https://www.cbc.ca/news/health/coronavirus-canada-social-distancing-1.5497789>. We encourage you to take a look.

11:45am - **NO Junior High and Youth Bible study**

12:15pm - Disinfecting out of abundance of caution. (*Wayne and Sean will be disinfecting all the door handles and bathrooms on the first floor. We will also do a good wipe down of the pews. If anyone wants to help, please just come to the sanctuary at this time.*)

NO Handshakes and hugs (We are asking everyone to do this.)

1:00pm - Sunday worship
NO FaithKids Bible study
NO Communion

2:00pm - NO Food or Drink
Fellowship in the sanctuary

2:20pm - Finish

Though Sunday gathering will be little bit different, we are really looking forward to being with our faith family and friends.

Final thought. Social distancing is about temporarily keeping a physical distance. Let us take this moment as an opportunity to draw relationally even closer to God, God's people, and God's world.

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16 ESV)

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. (Proverbs 17:17 ESV)

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. (Colossians 3:12-15 ESV)

We love you very much. God bless you, your family, and our faith family.

Elders of Faith Church

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