

March 12, 2020

At St. John's UCC, we are working on putting together our response plan to coronavirus (COVID-19) and how best to protect people from exposure and illness.

This means carefully considering how we gather together, particularly for worship, education, and socialization as a church community. A team has been formed to put together an infectious disease response plan, which will be implemented within the next few days.

Loretta Zimmerman, Kari Rock, Mary Lou Hendrickson, and I have begun this work. We are pulling together resources from multiple sources and speaking with leaders from within the congregation and nursery school to formulate the best and most effective plan.

To best serve our community, we must be proactive. We cannot wait for something to happen. We want to take steps that are in the best interests of everyone and err on the side of caution. Please share this information with others.

Therefore, beginning Monday, March 16, we will suspend the following activities until further notice:

- Church School for children and adults (including Upper Room, Ernie's class, confirmation, and children's church school classes)
- Coffee Hour (before and after church)
- Bible Studies (including the Ladies Bible Study, Mom's Group, Lectionary Bible Study, and Bible and a Beer)
- Musical Rehearsals (including choir and both bell choirs)
- Yoga and Dance Classes
- Scouts (Boys, Girls, and Cubs, including Roundtables)
- Lenten Services on Wednesday nights (both meals and services)

Operation of our Nursery School and Head Start classrooms will be guided by decisions made by the Chambersburg Area School District. Information on prevention has been distributed to parents and families in our Nursery School. Similar materials have been shared by Head Start with their families and staff.

We may need to be creative in terms of ministry meetings and how we continue to plan and prepare in the life of the church. Encouraging participation in ministry meetings using Zoom or conference calls is something we will be considering as we move forward. We ask that all meetings that are not essential to the operations of the church be suspended at this time. No decisions regarding the holding of worship services have been made at this time. Please exercise your own best judgment and prioritize the health and safety of yourself and those around you. We will keep you informed regarding Sunday morning and Saturday evening worship and the protocols that we will put in place. Financial contributions may be mailed to the church office. Continue to check up on each other; phone calls are a great way to stay in contact with members of our community.

The United Church of Christ Disaster Ministries has put together an excellent page of resources for congregations and individuals. https://www.ucc.org/disaster_coronavirus_resources_from_the_ucc

As always, we ask that you make decisions for yourself that benefit not only your own health but the health of your neighbor -- this is part of the Christian way. That means not coming to church if you are sick, washing your hands frequently, and praying for all those affected by this virus.

Please let us know if you have any further questions or concerns.

Peace,
Pastor Caroline, Lisa Fair (Consistory President), and Loretta Zimmerman (Office Manager)