

Friends in Christ-

The last week has brought about a pause to a lot of things that bring us joy and changes to our routine. There has been a lot of talk about COVID-19 and what that should or shouldn't mean to our daily lives and activities. As I have had conversations with Doctors, Other Pastors and with the new guidelines coming out daily, I have determined that it would be reckless to ignore the issue and hope it will go away on its own.

Here are things that we **WILL NOT** be doing:

- **Closing Church-** It is times like this that the comfort of the Gospel and the community of Christ are most needed to raise up one another. If there is a time when physically gathering together becomes too risky, we will have a plan in place to continue sharing the Gospel. This may be dictated by government or circumstance, so it is a possibility in the future.
- **Reacting out of fear-** We are not going to allow fear to dictate our reaction. We are going to react in accordance to recommendations of those who know best and our authorities.
- **Stop caring for our neighbor-** As a church it is our duty to care for and have compassion for our neighbor. A time like this is a good time to be generous with the gift of love and compassion. Let them see God's love coming out, not fear, panic, or frustration. This is our time to shine.
- **Doing Extra Things Outside of Worship and Bible Study:** We will not be having snacks or Lenten dinners. Sharing food is a higher risk and is something we can easily pause for the time being. As more information becomes available and circumstances change Bible Study, Sunday School and Confirmation may pause as well.

Here are the things we **WILL** be doing:

- **Washing our Hands:** Pastor and the Elder's will be washing our hands before service and will sanitize before communion. I ask you to understand that I will not be shaking everyone's hand on the way out of or in to worship. I would hate to be the person that caused one of you to get sick and look for your support in this practice. Once again, Wash Your Hands!
- **Moving the Offering:** An Usher or Elder will collect the offering at the entrance of church so that the plate will not be passed from person to person. It will be brought up during the offering.
- **Streaming online:** We currently stream our service online and will continue to stream a service every week even if we determine that services will not happen in person. Here is the link: <https://www.oursaviormilford.com/live-audio-stream/> If you would like help getting setup to listen at your house let us know and we will assist.
- **Caring for the Sick:** We will continue to care for our community in whatever way possible. If in need of a medical visit please call the office and we will schedule a time to see you.

- **Staying home when we or anyone in our family feel ill:** Please do not come if you are sick, if a family member is sick or if you have a fever. Visit us online and listen to worship. Our goal is to minimize risk and any type of illness being spread.
- **Staying home if we are at high risk:** Please do not come if you are high risk. I understand that applies to a lot of our congregation. I will be happy to schedule times to deliver communion to those who cannot join us on Sunday. These will happen on Sundays and Wednesdays at this time. Who is at high risk? Elderly people over 70, People with respiratory issues and immunocompromised individuals. Please stay home for the time being. Check in with us, we want to connect with you and not have you be isolated, but we should be careful and cognizant of the reality of the world around us at this time.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and responding to what you have been asked to do. I do not do this lightly, but with a heavy heart as I have concerns for our community and everyones welfare in our congregation. We are all family, but don't need to share germs like one. Let's make the choice to do our part to stop this virus now and protect all those around us. As I am finishing up this message, President Matthew Harrison has posted a video that speaks to some of these choices we are dealing with at this time. Here is the link- <https://vimeo.com/397483968> Please take a moment to listen to his comforting and grace filled words.

Please call me or an Elder with any concerns or questions.

In Christ-

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc Cohen" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Pastor Marc Cohen

olemarc@mac.com

847.452.4191