

Dear Fircrest UMC Family,

Like many of you, we've been closely tracking the news of the coronavirus (COVID-19) both locally and globally. As you're likely aware, Governor Jay Inslee issued a mandatory order to close schools and limit large group meetings in response to the health emergency surrounding COVID-19. This morning we have been directed by Bishop Stanovsky to not hold church for the next couple of Sundays. Before we get into the details of what we will be doing, we want to speak first to our response as Christ-followers. For many, the spread of this virus has caused fear and anxiety. Scripture is clear that God has given us a spirit of power and love, not fear (2 *Timothy 1:7*). This does not mean we should be careless or reactionary; instead, we work together in a way that demonstrates trust in our God who is in control. After talking to several board members, we have decided to follow her direction by not gathering in-person for at least the next two Sunday mornings, but instead host a "Virtual Church" online. Admittedly, it saddens us to do so, however with today's technology we are seeking both to honor a way to gather but also help keep the risk of infection lower.

**At this time, our Sunday Worship Experience will only be held online, not in person.** We know that there is a spiritual and emotional need for faith gatherings during this time of uncertainty. That is why we are making an online recorded version that you can watch and share with your family, neighbors, or friends. This doesn't have to be a time of isolation, this can become a shared family experience! We want to combat stress and worry with praise and worship, knowing that no hour can be added to our life by worrying (*Matt 6:27*).

**You can experience "Virtual Church" with us Sunday morning through:**

- Email: grab a cup of coffee & check your inbox! You'll be able to view from your phone, tablet or computer.
- Our website: visit [fircrestumc.org/virtualchurch](https://fircrestumc.org/virtualchurch)
- Our Facebook: Join our Facebook watch party and comment with prayer requests and thoughts on the message.

For the time being, we will continue to hold our weekly small groups: Adult Sunday School, Tuesday Group, and Fast Track in person. Members of these groups are invited to come at their own discretion, taking into consideration some precautionary measures listed below.

Although we do not want to act in fear, we want to take precautionary measures to create a safe and healthy environment for us all to gather and worship.

**We are taking the following measures to reduce the spread of germs:**

- “Social distancing”– greetings like the foot tap, bows, waves, and air hugs rather than handshakes or hugs.
- Please use hand sanitizer or wash hands upon entering the church and after you cough, sneeze, or touch your face.
- We are sanitizing frequently touched surfaces in addition to our regular weekly cleaning.
- The Clothing Closet has closed and is being sanitized for precautionary care of our clients (could also say patrons) and volunteers

**Steps you can take:**

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Stay home if you are sick or have medical conditions that weaken your immune system (symptoms to be wary of include a dry cough, fever, and shortness of breath).
- PRAY! Continue to pray and worship the Lord through this trying time! God can and will use this season – nothing about this catches him off guard.

As we navigate these uncharted waters of COVID-19 we will keep you updated should we need to take any additional measures in response to the spread of the virus. Be on the lookout for more information in the weeks to come via our website, Facebook, and through our email list. For concerns, prayers, help for those who cannot acquire supplies, or if you do become sick, please call Pastor Dan or the office and we will assist you in any way we can! We ask that you be prayerful and bold in the confidence of the Lord’s protection.

God bless, and we will see you this weekend as we continue our journey through Lent.

*Fircrest United Methodist Church*

*John 14:27: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your heart be troubled and do not be afraid.”*