

No In-Person Worship – March 15 and 22

March 13, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

“From the earliest days of the Church, healing and caring for the sick and suffering have been an important dimension of the Christian way.” So begins the pastoral letter from Bishop David A. Bard to United Methodists of Michigan yesterday.

The health threat of the coronavirus and the disease COVID-19 continues to grow. The leadership of Chelsea First United Methodist Church takes seriously all concerns related to this virus and illness. We are paying attention to the counsel and recommendations of the CDC, our state and federal government, health professionals and public safety officials.

Our Administrative Council (the governing body for our congregation) met last evening, devoting extensive conversation to the appropriate actions needed from us at this time.

Our immediate decisions:

- 1) **Sunday worship -- March 15 and 22 – we will hold no “in-person” worship.**
Instead we will use Facebook Watch to stream Sunday worship those days.
Follow us and watch at 10 am.
- 2) The Monthly Community Breakfast, March 14, is canceled.
- 3) We are committed to continuing to provide space for AA Groups, and have already made additional times and spaces available for building use to groups that needed a temporary location in this time.
- 4) We are forming a response team to focus on questions and needs.
- 5) Decisions about small group gatherings, such as Lenten study groups, rehearsals, and committee meetings, will be made by those leaders and communicated with you in separate communications.

In his column today, Mitch Albom wrote, [things are being shut down]... “not because we are scared, but because we are smart...How much better can we make things by shutting it down now?”

Our decisions are driven through awareness and paying attention. They are not made to raise anxiety or fuel panic. Across the country events are being cancelled or postponed, as each in their best way seeks to serve the common good.

Please know that your church is not “closing down.” While the decisions to not hold certain events seem antithetical to our purpose as church - to care for the hurting and provide healing – it is precisely for those reasons that we have made these decisions.

We still will be engaged in ministry, in some different forms. The staff and church leaders are available to you. If you have specific needs, or know of persons who do, please contact us and let us know:

Church Office 734.475.8119;

Pastor Joy: jbarrett@chelseaumc.org.

This is a continually changing environment. We will communicate regularly with you. Please watch for frequent updates on our church website: www.chelseaumc.org

For information from experts about this virus and actions you can take, we recommend these websites for accurate and up-to-date information:

Centers for Disease Control (CDC): www.coronavirus.gov.

State of Michigan: <https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus>

United Methodist Church of Michigan: <https://michiganumc.org/bishop-bard-speaks-on-covid-19-response/>

Together we will rise up, help one another, and be the Church at its best. You are not alone. May each of us give extra attention to ways we can stay connected and be supportive to one another. Please give a call to your loved ones, friends or neighbors to stay in touch. We are the hands and feet of Christ at work in the midst of this challenging time. May God’s peace and power surround you and encourage you.

Joy Barrett
Pastor

Edie Wiarda
Administrative Council
Chairperson

Sandy Schmunk
Lay Leader