

March 18, 2020

Dear members and friends of GUMC,

It is with great reluctance that we have made the decision to cancel worship services and Sunday School for the next two weeks (March 22 and 29). We will reevaluate our decision at the end of March based on the situation at that time. Our decision is based on recommendations from national and state officials to control the spread of the corona virus, as well as the strong recommendation of our District Superintendent. Above all, we are concerned for the health and safety of our members, our neighbors, and our community.

It is our hope to provide a weekly devotional to our members until we are able to resume Sunday services. It will include a prayer, a scripture reading, a brief meditation by Pastor Rick, and perhaps a hymn. It will be posted to the church Facebook page, and may possibly be distributed by mail as well. We trust that it will be helpful in sustaining our faith during these difficult times.

I encourage you to continue to live in faith and in love. As we face this crisis together, we stand firm on the solid rock of God's love. Jesus is our Good Shepherd, and he will lead us through even the darkest valley. It's natural to respond to situations like this with worry or anxiety or even fear, but I've found that if we share our hearts with Jesus he gives us strength and hope. In Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus said, "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (NRSV) Give your concerns to him and he will give you a peace that passes understanding.

Please continue to pray for our world and all those affected by the corona virus, for America and our national leadership, for the leaders of our own communities, for doctors and nurses, and especially for those who are sick. Pray for your neighbors and friends and family, for we are all facing this together. Pray for our church, for we are still one family even if we can't gather together for a while. And take time to pray for yourselves, to lean on Jesus, and to grow in faith and trust in him.

I've always found great strength in Romans 8:37-39: "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord." (NRSV) Remember that God's amazing love never fails us.

We will do our best to keep you posted as the situation is constantly changing.

May God's blessings be with you and your family.

Pastor Rick