



March 16, 2020

Grace and truth,

I am writing on behalf of our Leadership Team, heeding recent guidance from the national Center for Disease Control, and from Clatsop County Department of Public Health.

As of today, Monday, March 16, 2020, we have prayerfully decided to suspend all gatherings at Cannon Beach Community Church at least until the end of March. There will be no Wednesday Worship this week or next, and no in-person Sunday morning worship services at Community Church on March 22 and 29. We encourage other ways to connect together, including weekly Immerse readings (we are now on Week 12 beginning 2 Samuel), praying for one another including through our prayer chain, and any other digital tools to help us stay in touch and be encouraged during this time. Each week, we will record Sunday messages and make them available on our church website on Sunday. Please feel free to contact your Pastors or Leadership Team members during this time if there is need for prayer or assistance. We are grateful for your faithful support of the ministry of Community Church through online giving available at our church website.

Our newly formed Community Church Health Taskforce will meet virtually this week to assess best ways we as a congregation can promote God's gift of health and wellness in our congregation and community. Please continue to pray for God's healing grace to be at work in our state, nation, and world, slowing the spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus), and bringing healing to the thousands of people who are suffering from this disease.

We encourage everyone to practice five health care practices to stay healthy and prevent the spread of disease.

1. Hands: Wash them often with soap and water for 20 seconds.
2. Elbow: Cough or sneeze into your elbow, or use a tissue and throw away.
3. Face: Don't touch your face, especially eyes, nose, mouth.
4. Feet: Keep physical distance from others who may be sick; 3-6 feet is recommended distance.
5. Feel sick? Stay home if you have a fever, sore throat, cough, or have shortness of breath.

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-10 a worldwide pandemic. As of March 16, 2020, there are 170,251 confirmed cases worldwide and 6,514 deaths worldwide. In Oregon, there are 39 confirmed cases and 1 person had died. As of March 15, 2020, the national Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) *"recommends that organizers cancel or postpone in-person events that consist of 50 or more throughout the United States."* As of Sunday, March 15th, there have been no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Clatsop County; but Clatsop County Department of Public Health recommends the following: *"Social distancing is a public health safety intervention used to reduce the likelihood of transmitting communicable disease. Social distancing involves minimizing exposure to infected individuals by avoiding large public gathering venues, adhering to spacing requirements in the workplace, and following proper personal hygiene practices"* (from Clatsop County Public Health Facebook page, accessed 3.16.20).

I love gathering together for prayer and worship, and it grieves me to announce this suspension of our gatherings at this time. We do so for the sake of Christ's compassion for the most vulnerable in our congregation and community in the face of a life-threatening disease that is spreading in our state and nation. Let's be in prayer together, asking God for Christ's saving grace for our community and world. The writer of Hebrews invites us, "Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). In Psalm 16, David reminds us, "You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand." As Pastor Nathan reminded us yesterday, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline" (2 Timothy 1:7).

May you know the power of God's love, be filled with joy in Christ's presence today, and in the weeks ahead, may we all prayerfully approach God's throne with confidence, asking for God's grace to help us in our time of need.

David Robinson, Lead Pastor