

March 12, 2020

Dear Members and Friends of Stone Church,

Last night, your Leadership Team met and had a vigorous, frank and prayerful discussion about how best to respond to the danger of a new and virulent health threat. The context for the discussion included the latest advice from the medical community - that keeping "social distance" is one of the most effective ways to slow the relentless advance of the COVID-19 coronavirus.

The conversation was prompted, not by any panic on the part of the Team, nor any perceived alarm from members, but by an abiding desire to take proactive steps to protect our vulnerable populations and to live responsibly alongside our neighbors.

To this end the Team agreed to the following resolution: ". . . Stone Church [will] observe the following practices during the period of March 16 through March 29: Suspend services, meetings, group events, and routine visits by pastors or deacons, but keep the sanctuary and office open to individuals."

After services this Sunday, life as we know it at Stone Church will be altered for the near future. Services will not be held in the sanctuary on the 22nd and 29th and routine meetings will be suspended. Plans are in process for alternative ways for us to remain connected as a community of faith during this time. We do encourage individuals to use the sanctuary for prayer, meditation and repose. The pastors and the deacons will continue to respond to emergencies but will not make routine visits.

Services will be held this Sunday, March 15. We do encourage worshipers to forego hugs and handshakes. At the same time, we celebrate the fact that we have a church where this will be a difficult rite to renounce. Please practice common sense as you decide about church attendance on March 15. Wash your hands often. And stay home if you are ill.

The Leadership Team will meet again, probably with the aid of technology, prior to the 29th, to assess the local, state and national situation and to think about how we should proceed. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Peacefully, Simply and Together (in spirit),

Pastors Ben and Cindy Lattimer
Jeff Decker, Leadership Team Chair
Brooke Meadows, Moderator