

March 16, 2020

Dear Federated Family and Friends,

Everyone is talking about the Coronavirus. The situation is changing hour by hour and everyone's anxiety is rising. I don't know how this will play out, but let me offer some thoughts, using Paul's words to his apprentice Timothy:

*For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. (2 Timothy 1:7)*

**We will not be timid.** We will not be easily frightened. We will not succumb to fear or anxiety; they only feed the problem. Instead, we will rely on God's Spirit to be with us and guide us through this health emergency. If you feel yourself getting panicky, remember that God is in control of this situation, and there are good people working to alleviate the suffering this virus is causing.

**We will practice what Christ taught us.** Jesus showed us how to love and support one another in difficult times. Find ways to (safely) minister to friends and neighbors until this virus passes. We will show the world that Christians are a people of hope (not fear) and of help (not panic).

**We will exercise healthy precautions.** Our God wants health and wholeness for us, but we need to do our part. Wash your hands with soap often. Cover your cough. If you feel ill, stay home and rest. Take vitamins, stay hydrated, get enough sleep. We will exercise good judgment and common sense.

**We will be the Church together.** We intend to conduct "business as usual" until circumstances dictate otherwise. We will worship on Sundays (9:30 AM) and Wednesdays (5:30 PM), and we will continue to meet for Lenten suppers and Bible studies. If that changes, we will notify you by mail, website, text, and social media. If we must suspend worship, we will offer alternative ways to sing our praises and hear God's Word.

Note: The closure of schools (effective March 18, 2020) means we will not have Kidz Club or youth group meetings on March 18<sup>th</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup>. Remember our rule: if school is closed, youth activities at church are cancelled.

**We will pray.** We will lift our hearts and voices in prayer to the God who is greater than the virus. We will ask God's healing for those who are ill. We will ask God's strength for first responders and medical personnel. We will ask God's wisdom for scientists who are working to control this virus. We will ask God's peace for our families and our community.

We will weather this crisis, together. God bless and stay safe.

Pastor Doug