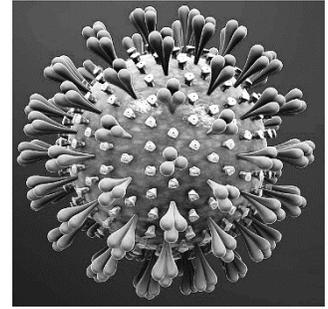


March 6, 2020 All Saints' Community,



As you may know, we find ourselves in the midst of dealing with a new coronavirus (*SARS-CoV-2*), which is causing the COVID-19 respiratory disease outbreak. As of March 6th, three cases have been confirmed in the state of Maryland. The three persons contracted the virus while traveling abroad, are currently in good condition, and are in isolation. Maryland Health Department officials are determining the contact history of the affected individuals. We understand information on this virus is shifting daily, but here is what seems to be generally known:

- For most people the illness is mild - similar to a bad cold or moderate case of the flu.
- The risk for severe symptoms is greatest for the elderly or those with compromised immune systems.
- The virus is likely containable, if we work together to practice certain public health measures to reduce exposure in our community.
- Frequent and proper hand washing and avoiding close contact are the most effective behaviors for prevention.

Last week we began practicing healthier habits around sharing communion, exchanging the peace, and greeting one another. Since then, we've had further discussion on best practices and are taking measures to minimize viral exposure in our facility and faith community.

Please know we will continue to hold worship and our Lenten small groups, as well as meetings and events as planned. Now more than ever we need to be together in ways that are safe and supportive.

What we are doing, and what we are asking *you* to do:

1. **If you have any cold or flu symptoms, please stay home.** This is the best way to make sure that you recuperate quickly and do not expose others to illness.
2. **Frequent proper hand washing.** Protect yourself and others by properly washing your hands with soap and warm water frequently. A hand sanitizer consisting of at least 60% alcohol is an adequate substitute when soap and water is not available. Be mindful of what your hands have touched and avoid touching your face.
3. **Our shared Eucharist will be restricted to bread.** While there is much scientific evidence to support claims that the shared cup is not an infection risk, we have decided to suspend the common cup for this season. The full benefit of the sacrament is available through the bread, and so that is how we will share communion. We will still bless a small amount of wine, but it will be consumed by only the presider. (This is not our ideal preference, but this is only temporary.)
4. **The clergy will be meticulous about hand washing and sanitizing before passing out the bread.** We will also do our best to not touch our hands to yours

when we give you the bread. We ask that you refrain from grasping the clergy's hand as well.

5. **We will ask you to refrain from touching other people at the Peace.** This can be a challenge for many, but let's be creative. Try a solemn bow (bowing to the Christ within each other), show the peace sign, or elbow tap (using your non-coughing-into elbow). Consider this part of our Lenten discipline, refraining from a joyful practice in order to experience it more fully at a later time.
6. **We have hand sanitizer available at worship space entrances.** If you have your own pocket version, bring it to use as well. As you may be aware, supplies are limited. We will also be extra vigilant about wiping down surfaces and sanitizing common areas.
7. **Small Groups & Gatherings—** We will still hold our Lenten Discovery Box small groups as scheduled. Please use proper hand washing, have a conversation about how to safely share food, and again, anyone who is not feeling well should stay home.

This is a new experience for many of us, and we will figure out how to support each other and stay in community together. If you find you are ill, please let the clergy know so we can pray for you, and we can stay informed and care for one another. These healthy behavioral changes allow us to better protect and care for the most vulnerable among us. Thank you for working together to protect and support our community.

Faithfully yours in Christ,
Mtr. Adrien and Rev. Jess

Helpful Resources:

Check the Center for Disease Control (CDC) or World Health Organization (WHO) websites for the most current information. Here are some useful links, including some helpful videos:

- [CDC](#)
- [WHO](#)
- [Understanding the COVID-19 virus](#)
- [Proper handwashing technique from World Health Organization](#)
- [Proper application of hand sanitizer from World Health Organization](#)
- [Stay connected to local happenings with CoVid-19 through the Frederick Health Department](#)



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