

Your elected Council and Pastor Amy met Tuesday, March 10. One of the topics of conversation was coronavirus and how it might affect us at Trinity. It was a good discussion. Several council members work or have worked in the medical field, and several council members received specific instructions from their employers. These insights were greatly appreciated. Congregation-specific changes noted on page 2

Here are some key points (many of which should be noted at all times):

- Awareness is good. Disease prevention practices should be taken by all.
 - Good hygiene should be practiced by all in the community, regardless of gender, age, or exposure. Wash your hands for 20 seconds or more. Cover your cough. Use a tissue or paper towel when touching door handles or similar. Stay home when you are sick.
- Panic is counterproductive. Fear can limit us, and limit the sharing of the Gospel, and inhibit clear thinking about things.
- Protecting the most vulnerable in our community is our Christian calling.
- COVID-19, or Coronavirus, is spread much like cold viruses and influenza viruses—by tiny droplets in the air from close contact person-to-person, or by touching surfaces on which the virus has landed and then touching your face, eyes, nose or mouth.
 - In about 80% of those who contract the disease, Coronavirus is generally mild and with good care, persons recover completely. But in about 15-20% of cases, it can be severe. Mortality rate is somewhere between 3-4% for the general population, and higher in the elderly or those with compromised immune systems.
 - The greatest risk for COVID-19 is in people over 50 years of age who have preexisting medical conditions, like diabetes, heart disease, lung disease.
 - There is currently there is no vaccine and no medicine specific to treat it, although both are being developed. No estimated date of availability.
- There are a growing number of COVID-19 cases in the US, and there will be more. As of March 11, about 38 persons have died. Most of their cases can be traced back to travel abroad, cruise ships, or having contact with someone exposed to it. In some cases, the source(s) is/are still under investigation.
 - In Europe, specifically in Italy, this kind of community spread of the virus has been common and now the country has instituted a country-wide quarantine.
- We are likely to see more cases in the US and it is possible that day-to-day life may be affected.
 - UPDATE: As of March 12, 2020, there are 9 confirmed cases in the state of Minnesota.

The Center for Disease Control ([cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)) has detailed recommendations, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Stay home when you are sick
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw out the tissue
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects using a regular household cleaner
- Face masks should be used by people who show symptoms to help prevent spread disease to others. They are also needed for healthcare workers and people caring for others who have been diagnosed with the illness. People who are well do not need a face mask.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (or more). Hand sanitizer can be used if soap and water are not available.
- It is logical to keep a 2-week supply of nonperishable food, fever reducing medicine, and prescription medicine at home in case you become ill (or are quarantined) and are unable to get out.
- There are travel restrictions and other recommendations on the CDC website <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/> and the World Health Organization website <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

How this will affect us at our church (Trinity):

1. All will be encouraged to practice prevention
 - a. wash hands regularly (and for 20+ seconds) and cover one's cough
 - b. frequently touched hard surfaces like backs of pews will be cleaned more often
 - c. Hand sanitizer (as available) will be provided by the ushers
2. If you are not feeling well, stay home—you can worship God at home.
 - a. If you have cough and fever, or difficulty breathing, stay home and call your doctor immediately.
 - b. If you do stay home, please notify the office 763-295-2092 or office@tlcmonticello.org so you can be added to the prayer list and/or we stay in contact with you. Trinity wants to walk alongside the sick, even if not physically present.
 - c. In order to keep each other safe, please be aware of each other's comings and goings, particularly in the case of older people living alone.
3. When entering and leaving the church, do greet one another and/or the pastor with a smile and wave, but we will not be shaking hands, giving hugs, or touching one another at this time.
 - a. Remember you might be comfortable with physical contact, but others may not be and may not wish to say "no thanks". We want all to feel comfortable being at Trinity.
 - b. Suggested: When opening doors, using handles or cabinet pulls, use a clean tissue or paper towel and discard it when finished.
4. Sharing of the peace will be suspended, as has been our practice for a number of months.
5. At Offering, a musical offering will be played and we may sing a transitional song. We will not be passing the plates. Offering baskets/plates will be at the entrance and the exit of the worship space for you to place your tithes and offerings. We hope this will not negatively affect giving.
 - a. We suggest that those who do not currently utilize Simply Giving (electronic giving) take this opportunity to sign up for it. Donations can be made on your schedule from your bank account. No paper. No paper *handling*. (Benefits the giver and benefits the volunteers processing deposits!)
6. At Holy Communion, we will use small individual disposable plastic cups for the wine and grape juice at worship services with communion. Cups will be placed in the tray in every other circle for ease of self-selection. Individual wafers will be used and the server will drop the host/wafer into cupped hands. We respect each individual's decision whether or not to commune.
7. Upon departing the worship space, we will nod, smile, bow, wave, or similar, but we will not be shaking hands or bumping fists.
8. At social or fellowship time following worship, we will use disposable plates, cups, and napkins.
9. For larger gatherings like funerals, pre-packaged or store-bought foods will be the only menu items available and served. We may suggest that only store-bought treats are served for social time/fellowship time also.
10. **UPDATE: Wednesday night suppers will be suspended** ~~For Wednesday night suppers, we suggest that only pre-packaged desserts be served.~~
11. We are looking into the feasibility of recording or broadcasting services for those at home.
 - a. **UPDATE: Facebook Live may be a free online alternative for broadcasting services – you do need to be a Facebook user to watch live, but it saves and you do not need to sign up for Facebook to watch the subsequent video recording**
 - b. A link will be made available as soon as it is known
12. Trinity will ask for and attempt to collect the emails of all members and worshippers for ease and speed of communication. The Trinity office will attempt to keep a phone list of those persons without email access. Calling trees may be necessary for quick communication. If you have NOT supplied the church office with your most current email or phone number, please do so now. office@tlcmonticello.org