



A Note to Emmanuel – Covid-19
Friday, March 13, 2020

Dear Emmanuel Family

By now, you are aware that there has been at least one confirmed case of the COVID-19 virus in Saskatoon. As staff and elders we have been reading and listening and praying and here's how we have determined to respond, thus far.

We believe that gathering for worship is an essential aspect of our life of faith and would like to continue doing so as long as possible, given the current level of risk for our community, with appropriate modifications to avoid as much physical contact as possible.

If you feel sick, with symptoms such as sniffles, fever, cough, shortness of breath, or breathing difficulties, we ask that you remain at home. If you are well and have reservations about gathering, we respect your decision without judgment or shame, and encourage you to remain at home.

Here are the modifications we are making, starting this Sunday:

1. We ask that we refrain from shaking hands, including on entering the building and during our time of greeting. One of the primary ways the virus is transmitted is by touch, so we would like to minimize interpersonal touching. As Rob mentioned last Sunday, please consider alternate ways of greeting, like a smile, a nod, or placing one hand on your chest and giving a slight bow. In addition, as much as possible, please consider sitting a metre away from others outside of your household during the service.
2. We will be suspending the coffee bar.
3. We will not be passing the offering plate. We will be providing baskets/boxes at the front and back of the sanctuary for us to place our offering envelopes. If you are not doing so, this would be a good opportunity to consider giving online. Please contact Jan (bookkeeper@ebap.ca) if you'd like more information on that.
4. We will be modifying how communion is served in each service. More directions will be provided during our services.
5. We have decided to suspend Scooters and postpone the Family Dance Party until further notice.

In all of our responses to this outbreak, I pray that we will be people of faith (not fear), hope (not despair) and love (not indifference or hate). We want to be rooted in our love for Jesus and for our neighbours.

We also want to be wise and prudent in our responses. Let's practice regular hand-washing (consider praying the Lord's Prayer as you scrub your hands). Let's minimize physical contact. Let's do all of this out of love for our neighbours.

And let us be available to love and serve those neighbours as they have need. If you have a sick neighbor, offer to get their groceries or medications or bring them a meal. If you are concerned about contact, arrange to leave it on the doorway. If you become sick and need someone to buy your groceries or medications, please contact us and we will help to facilitate that. May our love be evident in all of our responses to the current situation.

I was recently reminded of the opening question and answer to the Heidelberg Catechism, and I would like to offer it to us as a reminder for this season:

Q: What is your only hope in life and death?

A: That I am not my own, but belong with body and soul, both in life and in death, to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ...

May we know His comfort and peace today, and in the days ahead.

We recognize that this situation may raise all sorts of questions in your mind. Feel free to contact us and we will walk through them together.

Finally, let us be praying for our community, our country, and our world, for leaders as they make decisions and for health care workers and first responders as they serve in a time of heightened risk.

Your brother in Christ

Brendon