



Village Church

March 6, 2020

Dear Church,

I wanted to personally reach out to our community and address the current situation with the coronavirus or COVID-19. Each day brings new developments here in Oregon and in parts of the world where we are closely connected, such as China and South Korea.

Please be assured the church leadership is closely monitoring the situation. I've asked Ben Spotts, our Senior Director of Operations, to work with a team of staff and congregants to choose and implement changes as appropriate. He's communicating with medical and public health professionals, local business leaders, school leaders, and city authorities on a regular basis. Your pastors and staff are praying for you and working to ensure your safety.

The uncertainty of the situation is unsettling for many. As a pastor of a nearby church said this week, if Satan can introduce worry, anxiety, and fear into our lives, we can become overwhelmed and take our eyes off the fact that our Heavenly Father loves us and always has His best in mind for us. The Bible reminds us in Philippians 4:6-7, and other places, to put our faith in God, and His peace can carry us through the difficult times. Faith, hope, and love are always our best weapons against fear. We exhort you to bring peace and healing to your family, friends, and neighbors. Be a source of sound, correct information that is calming and unifying.

We encourage you to continue with your weekly meetings such as Life Groups, Bible studies, youth gatherings, and more. The Oregon Health Authority and county health authorities have not asked the community to cancel group meetings at this point.

If the outbreak spreads in Washington County, we'll be prepared to offer worship services through streaming on the internet. We'll use videoconferencing for our staff to safely continue with important ministry.

For now, we're already:

- Thoroughly disinfecting "high use" surfaces each Saturday night. As recommended by public health authorities, this includes doorknobs, counters, and toilets.

- Providing hand sanitizer near the sanctuary entrances and check-in station for children's ministry. We encourage you to use them or wash your hands before our gatherings!
- Encouraging people through posters and announcements to follow "best practices" for staying healthy during flu season. Please wash your hands frequently, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing, and stay home if you feel sick.

This week we'll remind people during the greeting time that there are other wonderful ways to welcome each other besides handshakes. We already see these in the diverse cultures that attend Village--from bowing to smiles and head nods. We're prepared for different ways to take communion. We'll also regularly pray in our services for those who are impacted by this virus.

Pastor Paul Choi challenged our staff at a retreat this past week. He urged us to love our people sincerely, love the community sacrificially, and remember in fervent prayer those being severely affected around the world.

We'll provide updates each week in our all-church emails about any needed changes. As always, we'd rather over communicate than under communicate. We know things might change, but I, Tamara, and our four girls plan to be at church on the coming Sundays and engage fully in ministry. There's nowhere we'd rather be!

We look forward to learning as a community about what God is teaching us through this situation. We understand that everyone is in a different place when it comes to what is best for you and your family. But hopefully we'll see you during the worship services this weekend.

In Christ,  
Pastor Ken