



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
God is still speaking,

Zion United Church of Christ

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“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” –Philippians 4:6-7

“Conduct yourselves wisely towards outsiders, making the most of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer everyone.” –Colossians 5:5-6

Friends,

The leadership of Zion United Church of Christ has been closely monitoring developments related to COVID-19. We are taking into consideration what has been advised at the federal, state, and local levels. It is our responsibility to do what we can to take care of one another and to let the wisdom of the Holy Spirit lead and guide us.

Yesterday, both Governor Holcomb and Mayor Hogsett came out with new guidelines to slow the spread of COVID-19. These announcements included the news that all 13 school townships of Marion County will close schools through April 5.¹ Governor Holcomb has recommended that “Individuals over 60 years of age or those with a known underlying health issue such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease should limit their public exposure. Whenever possible, friends and family should arrange to provide food and other essential items.” We recognize that this accounts for a significant portion of our church family at Zion, and we are committed to taking seriously these guidelines. This practice of “social distancing” can help protect those who are vulnerable and keep them safe. In the words of Governor Holcomb, “This is a time when we must do all we can to reduce the spread of COVID-19, protect our most vulnerable populations and reduce their potential to acquire or spread this virus.” He went on to say, “While some actions are drastic, now, not later, is the time to act.”²

As people of faith, we are asked to love our neighbors. One way we can love our neighbors is by being careful and cautious to make sure that we are protecting the most vulnerable in our community. **Therefore, we are suspending all in-person activities, including our Sunday and Wednesday services, through Saturday, March 28, at which point we will reassess the situation.** This is in line with what many surrounding churches

¹ <https://cbs4indy.com/news/indianapolis-mayor-announces-city-response-to-covid-19/>

² <https://calendar.in.gov/site/gov/event/gov-holcomb-announces-new-steps-to-protect-public-from-covid-19/>

in the Franklin Township Ministerial Association and the Southeast Association of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference, United Church of Christ, have already decided. **The Southeast Association has canceled the remainder of the Lenten breakfasts**, and our Association President, Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund, has asked that other congregations follow suit of hers by suspending in-person activities.

We will distribute our Sunday and Wednesday worship services digitally through email, Facebook, and our website so that you can worship from home. We will plan on finding a time later on when we can gather in person so that those who signed up to share their Faith Journey Stories for our Wednesday evening services can still share their witness. We will also reschedule our Laity Sunday for the same reason. You can continue to follow along with our Lenten Crosses Journey. Times such as these are precisely those moments when we ought to lift up more prayers, seek to help others, offer encouraging words to strangers, immerse ourselves in God's scriptures, and challenge ourselves to grow. Keep track of your crosses and bring those counts with you the next time we worship together so that we can continue to add to our journey.

Though we may not be able to be together in person, our ministry will go on and we must continue to be faithful stewards of our resources. If you are able, please mail in your offerings so that we can continue to take care of our facilities and employees. We will continue to have significant, regular expenses, and we welcome any and all support you can offer.

We encourage you to be in fellowship with one another at a distance during this time. Call each other, even if it is just to say "hi." Send cards. Text one another with encouragement. Pastor Sarah will be limiting her in-person visits but will continue to check-in. You are welcome to call her on her cell phone if you are in need of pastoral care. You are also welcome to reach out to any of our council members with any questions you might have during this time.

If you are on any of our ministry teams, please keep an eye on your email and phone as we continue our ministry in other formats. The Council will meet this month via conference call. This is a time when we must let the inspiration of the Holy Spirit move us into creative ways of doing ministry.

Our office will be open Mondays and Fridays from 9:00 am-1:00 pm for phone calls and to continue our daily operations.

This is not a time to panic but a time to use the wisdom that God has given us and to love our neighbors by engaging in practices that keep our community safe. These were not easy decisions to make but ones that were made prayerfully and with careful thought.

May the peace of Christ be with you,

Zion United Church of Christ Council and Pastor Sarah Frische-Mouri Hannigan