

North Park Covenant Church

March 13, 2020

Dear Church Family,

The information around COVID-19 is changing at a rapid pace, and with the growing list of restrictions, we feel it is important to be proactive. As your pastors, we are seeking to be wise and prudent as we make decisions about how we live together as a vibrant church in this moment of uncertainty. As we are digesting the news from the CDC, the state, and other trusted sources, our sense is that a strong response right now is the ideal move, particularly because so many of our church community are in the populations most threatened by the virus.

Already, we have taken some action to respond to the threat of the virus. These include:

- Canceling the Corned Beef and Cabbage lunch for this Sunday, March 15
- Changing to more aggressive cleaning practices
- Encouraging social distancing through changing some of our worship practices and social norms
- Encouraging congregants with symptoms to stay away from church until they are fully healthy
- Encouraging older congregants to stay away if they are at all concerned

Additionally, we are working right now to make two new resources available to help the congregation navigate this season. The first is that we will be able to provide audio streaming of all our services on the day following worship from this point forward. This means that anyone who needs to refrain from attending can still have a meaningful way to participate in the gathering of the body, even when they are unable to be physically present. A couple of historical services are currently available, and by the beginning of next week all services from February 16 forward will be available digitally at www.npcovenant.org/streaming.

The second is that by this weekend we will have a page on the website dedicated to communicating about adjustments and opportunities that are arising because of the coronavirus. North Park University, Bayside Church, and others are doing this, and we think it is an excellent and attainable way to keep as many members of the community in the loop as possible.

We have made some additional decisions about our activities together as a community. Unless otherwise noted, these changes will be in effect until Friday, March 27, at which time we will reassess the situation and discern what is best going forward.

1. **We will continue to have worship on Sunday morning at 10:30 am.** However, there will be no childcare provided. Further, Sunday School, Adult Formation, and Confirmation will be on hiatus, as will coffee hour. We strongly encourage those over the age of 70 to stay home.
2. There will be no choir rehearsal or choral participation in worship.
3. There will be no Sunday Evening Lenten Services.
4. There will be no Bible studies.
5. Wednesday night *gather* will take a break.
6. All youth programming on Wednesday and Sunday evenings is canceled.
7. The Executive Council will not meet in person this week but will hold a digital conversation.
8. All building rentals (with the exception of AA) will be suspended as well.

5250 NORTH CHRISTIANA AVENUE ♦ CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60625
NPCC@NPCOVENANT.ORG ♦ (773) 463-0055 ♦ WWW.NPCOVENANT.ORG

In some ways, these changes seem drastic, but we want to do everything we can to help “flatten the curve” of exposure for our people and for our community. If we can work together to do these things over the next few weeks, hopefully we can put an end to the virus. Additionally, it may become apparent in our neighborhood that the church could be a place to hand out sack lunches to kids, provide basic household necessities, or arrange for rides to the doctor for someone, etc. If you are noticing those needs and feel that the church could be helpful, please let us know.

As people of faith, we know that God is present and working.

Let us continue to pray for one another and the world!

Libby Piotrowski and Jeff Hunter, Co-pastors