

Dear Friends,

Covenant is taking some immediate steps to try to help diminish the spread of Covid-19 in our congregation and beyond. These steps include:

- **Postponement of all gatherings at the church**—that includes Sunday worship, Sunday School, Young at Heart Game Night, Cub Scouts, the Young at Heart Luncheon and Concert for this Saturday, outside groups, and all other meetings in our church facilities.
- Postponement of all Vital Congregations Bible studies, whether at the church or elsewhere.
- Efforts to livestream worship services (to an empty sanctuary) and Bible studies are underway. We hope to send out further information on this soon.

This is a challenging time, to say it mildly. The impacts of Covid-19 are multiplying each day. Infection rates and deaths are climbing. The economic impact of the virus is growing, and concerns are increasing as to what will happen next. As you are well aware, public gatherings are being cancelled nationwide. USAA and many companies across the country are urging or requiring employees who can work remotely to do so. Universities, colleges, and public schools in many places have switched to online learning. All of these activities are part of what is called “social isolation.”

Social Isolation during a pandemic needs not be a response taken out of fear. Instead, it can be a way we love our neighbors, particularly those who are at higher risk of severe symptoms or death. By limiting our exposure to crowds, even if we can't diminish the number of people who ultimately contract the disease, we can at least limit the stress this pandemic places on our healthcare system, improving the likelihood that all people can receive the medical care they need when they need it.

For detailed explanation of this, see the article by epidemiologist and biostatistician Dr. Matthew McQueen at <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-navy/2020/03/12/explainer-coronavirus-control-measures-arent-stupid/>.

To reduce our vulnerability to rumors, suggestions, and catastrophizing, we are recommending members of the Covenant family consider the following steps:

Pick Sources of Accurate Information

In facing the unknown, it is important to find reliable information and make decisions based more on facts than on fears, wishes, or rumors. Because things are changing too quickly for me or the session to be a primary (or even secondary) source of information for the congregation, I encourage you to consider the following sources for keeping up with this crisis:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov
- The World Health Organization: www.who.int
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: www.hhs.gov
- <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-51674743> (The BBC in general gets us a step away from the politicization that has arisen in the U.S. over the pandemic. This article in particular points toward the dramatically higher risk of death for people who are older or who have other health risk factors.)

Peace,

Dan