



Mount Gretna United Methodist Church

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Michael S. Remel, Pastor

All Members, Ministers

March 16, 2020

Dear Mt. Gretna UMC Members,

We are currently experiencing an unprecedented level of concern over a virus that most of us know nothing about. This virus is causing disruption of many services and institutions that we take for granted and it is quite possible that it will have very serious implications for our congregation, both in our ability to gather and economically. This is very concerning but there are things that we can do to continue on in faithful living, love of God, and love of our neighbors. We want to be sure to minimize risk but also respond as Christ followers who have what the Apostle Paul called “sincere faith” when he reminded Timothy that “God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.” (2 Timothy 1:7 ESV). We write to you to share our thoughts and current plans for the month of March.

Announcements:

Important announcements about our worship services, meetings, or other gatherings will be made via email and our Facebook page. If you have not provided a current email address to the church office, please take the time to do so by sending an email to mgumc@verizon.net and ask to be added to the general church list. If you are aware of a members or attendee who is unable to receive email or access Facebook, please think about making arrangements with them to keep them informed.

Worship:

At this time, we will be assessing whether to have worship services on a week-by-week basis. Please use your best discretion as to whether you should attend. Please do not feel obligated to be at church. If you are experiencing any flu or cold-like symptoms, have traveled to any high alert area, or have any reason to believe you may be infected we encourage you to be proactive in the protection others and remain home. We are certain that none of us want to be responsible for transmitting this virus to someone who is at increased vulnerability to it. I will

work on getting sermons and a modified worship posted to our Facebook page and webpage (www.mtgretnachurch.org) if worship is canceled again.

We are implementing the following safeguards:

- Please wash your hands thoroughly (for at least 30 seconds) with soap and warm water prior to leaving home. Hand sanitizers should not be relied upon.
- Instead of handshakes or fist bumps, we prefer that you practice verbal welcoming with a warm “glad to see you” or “love you.”
- The ushers will not be distributing bulletins please take one from the table in the church lobby as you enter.
- We will not be passing the offering plates during the offering. They will be located at the back of the sanctuary and you may place your gift in this basket upon your arrival.
- We will not be serving Holy Communion until the month of May.

Meetings:

All regularly scheduled meetings for the month of March are cancelled. This includes , Bible study, youth, Sunday school, Gathering Place, and choir.

Church Office:

The office will remain open for regular hours during the month of March. Pastor Mike will continue to be available for emergencies, but will not be doing any general visitation until the crisis has passed. You may continue to reach him by cell phone at 717-403-0659.

Offering:

The Apostle Paul instructed the Corinthian church: “Each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:7). This is a good opportunity for us to be reminded that we give in response to the faithfulness of God who meets our needs. The work of Mount Gretna UMC may only continue if our congregation is generous in their giving to God. If you are unable to be in worship, please remember to mail your gifts to the church office (P.O. Box 427, Mt Gretna Pa. 17064). You may also consider participating in our online giving program. A “give now” link may be found at the lower left corner of our website. This opens our secure giving platform where you give via credit card, debit card, or transfer.

Care for One Another:

Should you become infected with COVID-19 please notify Pastor Mike so that we may be in prayer for you. Also, please be checking on one another. Continue to pray for those affected by this illness, families who have lost loved ones, and the medical personnel who are seeing this virus firsthand.

Remembering Paul’s words to Timothy, our prayer is not to be fearful during this crisis. This means that we should not be reactionary; rather, may we work together to serve one another and our community in ways that demonstrate our trust in God who is ultimately in control. We

trust that no matter what may come God is with us, will never forsake us, and will never abandon us. We will address the month of April on Friday, April 3rd.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Mike Remel