

## **MESSIAH CHURCH: Coronavirus Response** (updated Thursday, March 26, 2020)

Updated as necessary at [www.MessiahChurch.org/news/coronavirus-response](http://www.MessiahChurch.org/news/coronavirus-response)

We take the health and well-being of our congregation, staff, and community very seriously. Please pray for those who are affected by this virus – those who are ill, the medical professionals treating them, the scientists working on vaccines and cures, those with mental health concerns, and the leaders making tough decisions to try and curb the spread of the virus and keep us safe, as well as those who are feeling lonely and isolated at this time. We are monitoring the updates from the Centers for Disease Control ([www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html)), the World Health Organization ([www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019](http://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019)), and the Minnesota Department of Health ([www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html)). We have implemented the following precautionary measures. We are developing additional action steps if necessitated by the severity of the outbreak.

### **Worship**

- Online worship ONLY will be offered through Sunday, April 26. This may be extended based on CDC and MDH recommendations. On Sunday, March 29 and April 5, to better abide by the Governor's "Stay at Home" order issued on Wednesday, March 25, only an 8:45 worship will be live streamed and available "on demand" throughout the week. Even if you are feeling fine, for the health and safety of our staff and worship leaders, please refrain from coming to worship in-person. To worship online, visit: [www.MessiahChurch.org/live](http://www.MessiahChurch.org/live). To see the Holy Week Online Worship Schedule, visit: [www.MessiahChurch.org/holy-week-services-2020](http://www.MessiahChurch.org/holy-week-services-2020). To watch a tutorial video on how to view Sunday services online, visit: [vimeo.com/399497365](https://vimeo.com/399497365).
- Please use our online registration, giving, and prayer request options during our online worship. You may also mail donations to Messiah Church, 17805 County Road 6, Plymouth, MN 55447. To make a prayer request online, visit: [www.MessiahChurch.org/community/care-support/submit-prayer-request](http://www.MessiahChurch.org/community/care-support/submit-prayer-request). To give online, visit: [www.MessiahChurch.org](http://www.MessiahChurch.org), then click "Give" from the drop-down menu.

### **Congregational Care**

- Our congregational care team remains committed to offering excellent care to our congregation, while taking precautions to protect everyone's health and prevent the spread of the virus.
- In healthcare facilities that are closed to visitors, we will remain connected with patients and residents by phone calls and notes.
- If you are in need of Congregational Care services, contact Pastor Dick Ellis at [RevDickEllis@yahoo.com](mailto:RevDickEllis@yahoo.com).

### **Faith Groups and Ministry Areas**

- All in-person group activities are canceled through April 30. This may be extended based on CDC and MDH recommendations. *Let's Talk Teens Part 2* on April 14, *Parents' Night Out* on April 17, and *Dinner & a Respectful Conversation* on April 28 will all be rescheduled, as well as many other April events. We will notify you when new dates are set.
- Volunteers, leaders and participants should take precautions appropriate for their own personal health situation.
- Stay connected throughout the week on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/MessiahChurchMN](https://www.facebook.com/MessiahChurchMN)

- Groups and ministry areas are making plans to remain connected with each other:

**Children:** Due to the need for social distancing, Messiah Kids is gathering and connecting virtually. One way Messiah Kids is supporting your children is by providing parents with weekly Sunday morning curriculum. Take time as a family to gather, read the lesson & Bible verse and work through some of the activities. You will receive K/1, 2/3, and 4/5 curriculum so there will be a way for all the children in your family to participate. This is a wonderful way for parents to explore our weekly curriculum and get your child(ren)'s perspective. We are also offering Facebook Live lessons a few times each week so that Karen will be able to connect with the children directly. This is an opportunity to offer something creative and fun during a time that seems strange and perhaps a bit lonely. Keep your eyes on Messiah Kids Facebook page ([www.Facebook.com/messiahskids](http://www.Facebook.com/messiahskids)) and your email for more details. For questions, concerns or additional ideas on ways to connect, please contact Karen Klekner, Director of Children & Family Ministry, at [kklekner@messiahchurch.org](mailto:kklekner@messiahchurch.org).

**Youth:** During this season of social distancing and canceled in-person events, Messiah Youth Ministries is increasing their digital presence. Youth Groups is gathering via Google Hangouts on Wednesday nights (Middle School from 7-7:30 pm and High School from 7:30-8 pm). Sunday School involves some learn-on-your-own lessons to be completed independently and youth are invited to watch Messiah Sunday worship services live or on-demand as a family. Our efforts to connect with youth via Instagram (@MessiahChurchYouth) and texting has increased. Parents will be updated through email and Facebook ([www.Facebook.com/MessiahChurchYouth](http://www.Facebook.com/MessiahChurchYouth)). Please know that Messiah Youth Ministry is making efforts to connect with youth via text messages, Instagram engagement, and other means during this time. To connect your youth with Messiah Youth Ministries please email contact information to Sami as soon as possible. For questions, concerns or additional ideas on ways to connect, please contact Sami Tierney, Director of Youth & Family Ministry, at [stierney@messiahchurch.org](mailto:stierney@messiahchurch.org).

**Adults:** Messiah Church is exploring many ways for adults to stay connected and engaged with each other and the community as we adjust to our new temporary normal. Some faith groups are learning how to gather on digital platforms, including Zoom and Google Hangouts. Other faith groups are staying connected via email and phone. There is a virtual seat for you! For more information on how to get connected to a group that is right for you, contact Kami Pohl, Director of Community Engagement, at [kpohl@messiahchurch.org](mailto:kpohl@messiahchurch.org). Would you enjoy calling, emailing or texting someone from our church family to check on them regularly? Would you like someone from church to call, email or text you regularly? Contact Kami to be connected.

### **Missions**

- We are in contact with our mission partners, food shelves, and schools to determine their needs and ways in which Messiah Church can help during this time. Opportunities to serve others during this time will be shared as our community's response develops. Visit [www.MessiahChurch.org/community/make-an-impact](http://www.MessiahChurch.org/community/make-an-impact) for a current list of ways to help.

### **Staff**

- Our staff will be working remotely until further notice, and those who cannot work remotely will be on staggered schedules in accordance with the latest health agency recommendations. All staff will continue to fulfill their roles and remain available to you, so do not hesitate to contact them via email or phone.

- To find contact information for any staff member, please visit:  
[www.MessiahChurch.org/about/staff-leadership](http://www.MessiahChurch.org/about/staff-leadership)

### **Building**

- Our church office and building is closed through April 30. This may be extended based on CDC and MDH recommendations. If you need access to the building for some reason, contact Phil Weiler, our Director of Operations, at (612) 750-4847 or [pweiler@messiahchurch.org](mailto:pweiler@messiahchurch.org).

### **What You Can Do**

- Pray for those who are affected by this virus – those who are ill, the medical professionals treating them, the scientists working on vaccines and cures, those with mental health concerns, and the leaders making tough decisions to try and curb the spread of the virus and keep us safe, as well as those who are feeling lonely at this time – please reach out to anyone you think might be feeling isolated over the next few weeks.
- Educate yourself about the Coronavirus from credible and reliable sources, such as from the World Health Organization, the CDC, and the Minnesota Department of Health. Know the symptoms and have a plan for what you would do if you or a family member were to become sick.
- Check on your friends and neighbors. If you know someone who may not have internet access, give them a call and share the information in this email. If the virus spreads through our community as predicted, we can continue to reach out and care for one another through phone calls, emails and social media.
- Take care of you. Uncertainty and confusion can have a harmful effect on your mental health. This article from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention giving you five ways to take care of your mental health in the face of uncertainty: [afsp.org/taking-care-of-your-mental-health-in-the-face-of-uncertainty](http://afsp.org/taking-care-of-your-mental-health-in-the-face-of-uncertainty)
- As the virus spreads, many doctors and nurses will be working long hours. Consider ways you can bless these medical professionals with acts of kindness and notes of appreciation.
- Remember this is temporary. Our church continues to serve our congregation and community. Continue to be a part of the ministry – the need for the support you give to this community and around the world continues despite the pandemic. Watch your email for opportunities to serve individually or in smaller groups. Please continue your financial support of the work of the church.

### **You can help prevent the spread of the virus**

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough/sneeze with a tissue (or into your elbow), then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using the restroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.