

March 12, 2020

Dear Newark Church Family,

The grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

I trust this letter finds you all well and in good spirits. As many of you already know the University of Delaware announced yesterday that a faculty member has tested positive for COVID-19. In the name of caution the University has closed for two days and Spring Break will now take place beginning Saturday, March 14th. Additional information about the University's response can be found by going to the University's webpage, a link for which is provided below.

I write to bring you up to date on how we here at Newark UMC are seeking to act in a proactive, yet grace-filled way to the very fluid, health environment. I have met with the Administrative Committee Chairpersons to begin to consider ways we might need to respond to the evolving situation in the days and weeks ahead. I have also met with several ministry chairpersons to do the same thing. The NUMC staff is working together to create and maintain a clean and healthy environment.

Our Preschool ministry is keeping a watchful eye on what's happening in the community and sending out to parents and families updates when something new arises. Our Sunday School Team is working together to adapt programming to keep things fun and healthy. We have already made changes in worship to the Passing of the Peace and receipt of Communion. This week, there will also be changes to how we make our offerings to the Lord and how we register our presence. In relation to Congregation Care, please cease home and nursing home visits. Instead, increase the number of phone calls/emails you might send. Persons who visit hospitals are asked to follow the hospital protocols for visiting.

When you come to church for program activities and worship there are hand sanitizer and surface wipes available throughout the building for your use. We ask that each ministry/program team wipe down areas that they have used prior to leaving the space.

If you notice someone missing from worship or a ministry activity, take a moment to make a "Heh, I missed you today" call. This is one way that we can remain connected in Christian fellowship with one another. A second is to worship via livestream should any feel the need to distance themselves from corporate worship for a time.

Let us be creative in how we might show love for one another in the days ahead. Take care of yourself. "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13)

Your Sibling in Christ,
Pastor Mary Catherine

Resources:

Coronavirus: What to know, how to help <https://www.pen-del.org/newsdetail/13421802>

University of Delaware <https://www.udel.edu/home/coronavirus/>

The Ten Commandments for Coronavirus Prevention in Faith Communities

<https://www.pen-del.org/newsdetail/13430647>