



Dear Friends:

We have been advised by a number of different sources that we should be taking precautions to prevent the spread of illness at our church. Although colds and flu are with us every season, the arrival of the COVID-19 virus (the new corona virus) is especially concerning because of the greater rate of serious illness associated with this disease. There are many among us whose health is vulnerable, and it is important that we are sensitive and work to protect all of the members of our community.

In order to decrease the likelihood of spreading illness this flu season, we are taking the following precautions in church and making the following recommendations:

- Please refrain from hugging other people or shaking hands, even during the Passing of the Peace
- If you are sick, even with only mild symptoms, please stay home. People with mild illness can still transmit disease to others. If you have traveled to mainland China, Japan, South Korea, Italy or Iran, you should skip church for two weeks. Obviously, if you are ill and need support, please let the church know!
- If hand sanitizer is available in the Meeting House or in the Emerson Center, please use it. (Donations of hand sanitizer for the Narthex and for the Fellowship Hall would be greatly appreciated.)

Additionally, and unrelated to church services:

- We are advised that infectious disease professionals are recommending that you refill important medications as there may be disruptions in supply chains.
- If you are eligible for the flu shot, please consider getting it. Flu is very prevalent this time of year, and getting the flu may make you more susceptible to other viruses, including COVID-19.

Finally, it would be a good idea to stock up on non-perishable food items in the event that you get sick and need to stay at home. Items like pasta, rice, beans, tuna, soup, toilet paper, and tissues are good to have on hand. Don't forget pet food! Additionally, pick up an alcohol-based or bleach-based disinfectant.

It is likely that we will see an increase in reported cases of COVID-19 in the coming weeks as our health professionals become more adept at diagnosing what is already occurring. We will make changes to our practices as indicated by the recommendations of experts.

Let's work together to keep everyone healthy!

Kristin Palace

Moderator