

March 16, 2020

Dear Selma, First Christian Church family:

Yesterday morning I stood up in front of the congregation at worship to tell them that beginning Monday (today) we would not be holding live, in person worship services, events or meetings for some weeks, probably through Easter. I said that I would be in the office my regular hours during that time, and that anyone could call or text me on my cell phone at any time. I said that we would have on-line worship services and daily devotionals posted on Facebook and our website. At that time, I firmly believed that this is what was going to happen.

Then I got home and read the news. Fresno has declared a state of emergency. The CDC has recommended cancelling all events of 50 or more for two months. Governor Newsom had announced new guidelines which included the self-isolation of everyone over the age of 65. I am over 65 and have asthma, which puts me in a high-risk group, so this is not good news. It means that I cannot be in the office as I said I would. It also means that on-line worship will look much different than I had anticipated, as sermons and prayers will now be delivered from the Parsonage instead of the sanctuary.

We'll work it out. Working together, we'll figure out a way to continue to be community even if we cannot be together physically.

Call each other. Send cards or notes. If you are still able to go out, see if there are errands you can run for the people who cannot get out.

Meanwhile - there will be daily devotionals on Facebook and our website. There will be on-line worship. There may even be on-line concerts. I will be available by cell phone (559.859.6375).

And please, if at all possible, continue to make your offerings so that the work of the church may go on. You can mail a check to the office, drop an envelope through the mail slot in the office door, or pay via PayPal on the church website (selmadisciples.com).

I do not know how long this will last. None of us do. I do know that we will get through it together. And when we come back together, we will celebrate the Resurrection as never before!

With love in Christ,
Pastor Maria

Dear Selma, First Christian Church family,

As you are probably aware, in response to the ever changing situation around the Covid19 outbreak, all the schools are closed, events and meetings are being cancelled, and people who are at risk for severe reactions to the coronavirus are being asked to self-quarantine. The Board and the Elders of Selma First Christian have been in close conversation about how we should go forward.

For now, we will continue to hold live worship on Sunday mornings and on the 2nd and 4th Thursday evenings. We will continue to post video of the sermon online. We will make changes in the way we offer communion and collect the offering, which will be described in detail Sunday morning. If in future it becomes necessary to cancel worship, we will advise you immediately.

Our greatest desire is to keep everyone safe and healthy. With that in mind,

- If you are sick, please stay home. The sermon will be posted on the church website and Facebook as usual.
- If you are in one of the high-risk groups, please stay home. We love you and want you to stay healthy. Missing a few Sundays is a minor sacrifice if it will keep you well.
- Feel free to call Pastor Maria any time. Her cell # is 559.859.6375
- If you do come to worship, please do not sit as close together as you usually do. Unless you share a home with someone, it is suggested you remain 6 feet apart.
- Please, do not hug each other. Wave, exchange fist bumps or elbow bumps, but do not hug.
- Use the hand sanitizer in the pew pockets before communion.

The offering. I know, we hate to talk about this. But, if you must stay home please consider mailing your offering or using PayPal so the work of the church may go forward in this troubling time.

The most important request we will make is simply this - please pray for each other and for all affected by this disease. We know that God has us in hand. And while we do not know how this disease will affect us, we do know that we can trust God to hold us close. We need not worry or fear the future. We simply move forward, one day at a time, confident in God's grace and love.

With love in Christ,

Pastor Maria Tafoya