

First Mennonite Church, Bluffton Ohio
RE: Worship as we manage COVID-19 (Coronavirus)
March 13, 2020

Dear Congregation,

As our lives continue to be impacted by the Coronavirus, we are navigating anxious times. We are all making difficult decisions in our personal and professional lives. Complicating our decision making is the difficulty of separating fact from fear. As a staff we are making our decisions based on information and recommendations from our state and local health authorities which are being updated daily. We appreciate your patience and the many ways you have expressed your care and support.

In light of Governor Dewine's announcement yesterday banning large gatherings of more than 100 people, we have decided not to gather as a congregation for Sunday school or worship for the time being. Although there is exemption from this ban for faith communities, our concern for those who make up a significant portion of our congregation who are at high risk in this environment leads us to exercise this caution.

Although the worship gathering is cancelled, you are invited and encouraged to worship by video on our church website, fmcbluffton.org . This service will be led as planned by members of the congregation, with some adjustments. The video will be available on Sunday, March 15 by 2:00 p.m.

We believe that the cancellation of our worship gatherings will be in effect for a number of weeks. Therefore we are taking steps to make it possible for us to worship together at the same time through livestreaming of a service beginning on March 22. More information on that will be available next week.

Again, we encourage you to stay in communication with each other and with us! This is a time for us to lean into our relationships as a congregation. We are indeed exercising creativity as we envision our life together in new ways. As noted in our previous correspondence cancellations of smaller gatherings and church activities will be posted on our website. Please contact the office if you have a cancellation to be shared.

With deep peace,

Pastor Wanda