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**Fwd: [MMC-L] MMC Updates re: coronavirus**

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Thu, Mar 12, 2020 at 9:07 PM

**From:** Pastor Valerie Showalter <[pastor@madison-mennonite.org](mailto:pastor@madison-mennonite.org)>  
**Subject:** [MMC-L] MMC Updates re: coronavirus  
**Date:** March 12, 2020 at 8:02:45 PM CDT  
**To:** MMC-L <[mmc-l@madison-mennonite.org](mailto:mmc-l@madison-mennonite.org)>

**Dear Madison Mennonite,**

As a faith community following in the way of Jesus, part of our mission is to care for one another in times of challenge. As our community and nation face the coronavirus pandemic, our intention at MMC is to express our love and compassion through helping one another and our neighbors stay as healthy as possible.

At this time, and in consultation with organizations such as Wisconsin Council of Churches and Central District Conference, **Core CLC and I have discerned that we will cancel our Sunday gatherings (CE, worship, and potluck) beginning this Sunday and continuing at least through and including April 5. During this time, we will continue to be a gathered community through virtual means.** More information on this will be sent on Saturday. Other MMC gatherings (such as committee meetings) will be postponed or moved to online methods.

In the coming days, you are encouraged to stay in communication with each other, the Care Team, and with me. This is a time for us to lean into our relationships as a congregation, even if that means being more creative about how we connect. To this effect, the Care Team will be checking in with folks in the coming days and weeks, and will invite you to consider if you would like having someone regularly check in with you (via phone, email, or video conferencing.)

If you are in need of any assistance due to the impact of the coronavirus, **please do not hesitate to be in touch with me or a member of Care Team.** We are here to help one another, offering support through such means as delivering groceries, financial aid, or other ways.

**Thinking of the community beyond MMC:** We recognize that people in our broader community will be -- and already are being -- affected by the way this pandemic is requiring the shutting of schools, businesses, and social services. While we expect the government to provide some safety nets for these neighbors, we also recognize that the church can play a significant role in responding to local needs. I am in conversation

with ORUCC, Good Shepherd, and Joining Forces for Families, and will be in touch if opportunities arise to support (in goods or financial donations) the broader community.

**To recap — This Sunday at MMC, there will be no in-person gatherings of the baptism class, CE, worship, or potluck. We will meet virtually, with more info to come.**

**Other events:** We are indefinitely postponing the **congregational photo** (scheduled for this Sunday). We are also indefinitely postponing the **congregational forum** on our Sunday gathering time (scheduled for Wednesday, March 25). When the threat of the virus has passed, we will reschedule these events.

We will continue to be in touch as the situation develops. If you have any questions regarding this decision, please contact Core CLC members (Denny Weaver, Jocelyn Milner, and Karen Rahmeier.) If you would like to process how you're doing in the midst of these events, please feel free to contact a member of Care Team (Allison Madison, Eileen Ahearn, Tim Wyse, Elizabeth Gokey, Sarah Sweitzer, and Mark Bauman) or myself. (Please note that my response may be delayed if you are in touch on a Friday, my day off.)

**In hope and love,**

Pastor Valerie

*A Prayer from Mennonite World Conference:*

*We pray for people in the U.S and around the world impacted by coronavirus. We pray for comfort for those who have lost loved ones, and for those who have been quarantined and are feeling alone. We pray for healing for those who are sick. We pray for safety, strength and compassion for medical workers who may be overwhelmed caring for those who are battling various illnesses, and workers who are exposed to greater risks. We pray that our public officials act with compassion and wisdom as they work to contain the virus. We pray for those without access to health care, and for those who don't know how they will make it if they get sick and can't go to work. We pray that your peace will guard our hearts and minds so that we are not overcome by anxiety and fear.*

*God, inspire in us ways to show your love to one another and to ourselves. Guide our hearts and our actions to greater care, kindness and generosity in the midst of these fears and uncertainties.*

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