

With the spreading of the Corona Covid19 virus local medical professionals indicate it is a matter of time before the virus shows up in our area. This week the first cases of infection have appeared in Indiana in the greater Indianapolis area, and one individual from Nobel County was diagnosed with the virus after returning from a trip to Florida. With this in mind, the Southside Fellowship MLT and Care Committee offer the following response.

The Center for Disease Control advises people who are over 50, or who have an underlying health issue that might compromise their ability to fight off the virus to avoid crowds. Please use your best judgement whether you are able to attend Southside Fellowship worship and other events where the community might be gathering. For more information visit the Center for Disease Control and Indiana Department of Health webpages.

Being in community with is a tremendous gift we give one another. Now is a time to be checking-in, staying in touch, and supporting one another by the many ways of communication available to us. Knowing your own health history, if you should decide it is best that you not attend worship for the time being it would be helpful if you let the pastor and the office know so we can be mindful of you.

If you are homebound and in need of pastoral care connecting with the pastor or a member of the Care Committee by video call or a phone call is an option.

When we Gather as a Community:

As we gather for worship be mindful of the following steps that can help keep one another healthy.

- Greeting one another we can offer a welcome with an elbow bump, or a simple gesture of greeting. (It may require thought to refrain from shaking hands or greeting someone you are close to with a hug.)
- There is a hand sanitizer dispenser hanging on the wall in the foyer. Additional hand sanitizer will be made available in the foyer and basement so we can easily and often clean our hands. Thoroughly scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds.
- At fellowship time please wash or sanitize your hands before coming to the food table and coffee pot. Please use the provided serving utensils, and adults can help small children get snacks. We want to avoid touching the food that is being served with our hands. It is best if one person who has washed their hands act as the server and pours drinks rather than have numerous people touching the coffee pot or juice bottles.
- There will also be additional boxes of Kleenex available for use. If you are not able to sneeze into a Kleenex and discard it immediately, it is suggested one sneeze into an elbow, or one's hand and then immediately wash.
- As this situation evolves the MLT and Care Committee will make decisions regarding

additional precautions we might need to take, or whether we need to cancel gathered worship and find alternative ways to connect with another. We will keep you informed.

We can help keep one another healthy. And by taking these measures of personal care we can hopefully play our part in slowing the spread of the virus, and help prevent the health care system from becoming overwhelmed so they can focus their resources on the most vulnerable.

This past Sunday during the Children's Time Erika Miller offered the children a lovely hand washing prayer adapted from a prayer written by Nina Lanctot. Nina's prayer was inspired by a Jewish hand washing prayer used in a washing ritual that precedes worship. Both the Jewish prayer and Nina Lanctot's prayer are offered below. You might want to adapt one of these prayers for your own use, or memorize one. May we become more mindful in this moment.

Jewish Hand Washing Prayer:

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Ruach ha'olam
asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav vitziiivanu al netflat yadayim.

Translation:

Blessed are You, Infinite One, Spirit/Breath, who makes us holy
through our actions and honors us as we raise our hands.

Hand Washing Prayer by Nina Lanctot

God, wash from us the disease.

Christ, cleanse us, amidst chaos,
of contamination, contagion, and callousness.

Spirit, strengthen in us the soul of sanity, sincerity, and service.

In Oneness, in Love, in Hope; may it be so.

Amen.