Dear MVPC Family,

Here’s our plan for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic as of Thursday, March 12!!

PLEASE READ THIS ENTIRE LETTER.

First, pray for wisdom. Guided by scripture like, “...may your love abound more and more with knowledge and depth of insight so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ” (Phil 1:9-10). We want to respond knowledgeably and blamelessly to guidance from our local health officials, CDC, and God.

Pray for Peace. Guided by Scripture like “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:6-7).

Second, WORSHIP SERVICES WILL ONLY BE ONLINE AT LEAST THROUGH MARCH 22.

On Monday, March 9, the Contra Costa Health Services [CCHS] declared a local emergency, issued guidelines for “social distancing,” and made a recommendation to “cancel large community events,” including religious services, where 50+ people are gathered. These recommendations are effective through March 22, 2020.

After weighing our options to these initial guidelines to protect people and promote peace in our community, your MVPC pastoral leadership team and Session have decided we will follow their recommendation and hold church services ONLY VIA VIDEO. We want to communicate that MVPC is committed to the health and prosperity of our whole community.

MAKE ‘ONLINE CHURCH’ YOUR MISSION OPPORTUNITY. Church is not canceled, just changed.

For these next two weekends, let’s all continue to gather - in our homes, with our community groups – by watching the worship services. Literally “home church”! Our services will be full of joy, encouragement and hope - what everyone needs in times of uncertainty.

We will be creating our services on Saturday morning to get them posted on the website for your use at our normal worship time on Sunday mornings at 9:30 am (or anytime you want!) This includes Sunday School videos, lessons and activities for children age 2 thru 5th grade!

Is this ideal? No. I can’t wait to get back to in-person, live services. But we are so grateful for the technology which allows us to provide this solution.
HOW DO WE ACCESS THE ONLINE SERVICES AND RESOURCES? Go to mvpctoday.org and click on “Watch Service Now”.

WILL ALL EVENTS AT MVPC BE CANCELED?
No. Only gatherings expecting 50+ people will be canceled, in accordance with health department guidelines.

Most community groups, support groups, prayer groups, and Nurtury classes are planning to meet as usual. The Contra Costa Health Services department is recommending that individuals in high-risk groups should consider staying home. Please stay flexible. Some of our groups may decide to cancel their meetings. If they do, they will let their group members know. We know the following groups are still planning to meet:

- Nurtury
- Stephen Ministry (3/16)
- WOW (3/17)
- Financial Peace (3/17)
- Session (3/17)

We know the following groups have canceled upcoming meetings:

- Men’s Bible Study (3/14)
- Quest (3/12)
- Moms’ Council (3/19)
- FaithBuilders (3/15 and 3/22)
- Intersections (3/15 and 3/22)
- Project Peace Day of Service (3/21)
- Kingdom Kids (3/17 postponed to 4/14 and 3/24 postponed to 4/21)

If you have any questions about whether your group is meeting, contact the group leader. Or call the church office (925-376-4800) during work hours (9 am-4 pm, Mon-Fri).

HOW YOU CAN HELP
Remember to support MVPC financially during this time. We encourage you to be an online giver, preferably a monthly recurring giver. Our staff is still working. Our local and global partners who rely on our support are still serving. We pray giving does not drop off during this season.

You can donate in the following simple ways:

To give a one-time donation, or to become a monthly recurring giver, go to mvpctoday.org/give. Click on “Give Online”. If this is your first time giving online, be sure to follow the instructions on the screen.

Or to text a donation simply text “MVPC” to 73256 and click on the link.

Mail or drop your gift by check to MVPC:

Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church
10 Moraga Valley Lane
Moraga, CA 94556

DO YOU NEED HELP?

If you are in need, please let us know! Whether you are ill or have been advised to stay home because you’re at a higher risk of illness, we are devising strategies to care for one another as God’s family. Please email Valerie Bigelow if you need help or call the church office 925-376-4800.

WHO IS IN A HIGH-RISK GROUP?

Current evidence indicates that the risk of severe illness increases with age. The highest risk group are those 80 years and older. People with underlying medical problems, including cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic lung disease, and immunosuppressive, are also likely at higher risk.

If you are in these high-risk groups, please consider staying home.

According to The Center for Disease Control, young children are among the least susceptible.


HOW CAN YOU STAY HEALTHY?

The best way to help stop the spread of this virus is to follow these common-sense guidelines:

1. STAY CLEAN - Wash hands. Elbow bump rather than shake hands. etc.
2. STAY HOME - if sick, except to get medical care.
3. **STAY CALM** - Constantly checking headlines and worrying can have the unintended effect of robbing you of sleep and driving up stress. That makes you more vulnerable to illness. Let go of “anticipatory anxiety.”

4. **STAY CONNECTED** - to MVPC. Worship with us online, keep connecting with your groups, find ways to serve others, give online.

This situation is changing rapidly! We will update you if we hear any new recommendations from the authorities.

**STAY PRAYERFUL**

I expect God will work through this pandemic in ways we can’t imagine now. He will sustain and strengthen us in these days and redeem this season for His glory and our good. As Christ-followers, we have been called “for such a time as this” to a season of “unwanted ministry”, to being a people who bring peace to a world full of panic.

Please pray for the global medical and political leaders. Pray for those who are deeply impacted by this disease. Pray that people all over the world will draw closer to God.

And though we are not meeting in person to worship for a couple weeks, please know that you may always ask for prayers. Please email your prayer requests to our Prayer Team and they will keep your prayers confidential while faithfully praying for you.

As always, please let us know if there is anything we can be doing to care for you and your family.

Prayerfully,

Scott Farmer
Transitional Pastor

(P.S. Thanks to Tyler Scott, Lead Pastor of Community Presbyterian Church of Danville who wrote to his congregation a day before you are receiving this and from whom I stole/borrowed shamelessly to guide us at MVPC.)