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# UNITED IN CHRIST'S LOVE WE SEEK A JUST WORLD FOR ALL.

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3 hrs ·

## No Sunday Services

3/8, 3/15, and 3/22

With the recommendation of our Conference Minister Rev. Mike Denton and with consultation with other clergy and church members we will be canceling church services for 3/8, 3/15, and 3/22 and all other group gatherings through 3/24.

Pastor Andrew will post sermons on our website for each of those Sundays we do not gather for worship, and will add Bible study reflections each week in lieu of in-person sessions.

We are sad to forego our sacred time together, and we know that we are participating in something greater than simply our worshipping body. Our Conference Minister Rev. Mike Denton said it best in a missive to our churches today:

The information about the COVID-19 virus is unfolding quickly and yesterday afternoon new guidance came from the King County Health Department recommending this: "If you can feasibly avoid bringing large groups of people together, consider postponing events and gatherings."

In the United Church of Christ, congregations have the autonomy to determine their own governance, process, and worship decisions. You might have heard me say before that I can make strong suggestions but I can't tell you what to do.

With that said, I suggest in the strongest way possible that our churches pay special attention to - and follow the guidance and recommendations from - local, regional, and state health departments. For any church in King County or any other region that has been or will be given similar recommendations, that means that I'm specifically suggesting to you that you not have in-person worship and cancel face-to-face church gatherings and meetings until given guidance that it's OK to so. I'm also suggesting that you have conversations with other groups that use your building about doing the same. I don't make this suggestion lightly have done it only after conversations with health professionals, colleagues, and many of you.

I recognize that this suggestion comes during a time of anxiety for many and I do it with the full knowledge and recognition of the secondary effects if you choose to follow this suggestion (relational, financial, etc.). We're feeling this in conference institutional life, too and I'll have more to share with you about that, soon.

However, this suggestion is truly about more than fear and anxiety. It is actually a suggestion full of optimism and gratitude. On Tuesday, Governor Inslee shared the current estimate that somewhere in the range of 500-3000 people are already carriers of or infected with the COVID-19 virus. If nothing's done, the current projections are that these numbers will double every seven days. However, our public health departments are making recommendations to help us get ahead of this possibility and to prevent others from becoming sick and dying. By working together and following the advice of our public health departments, we have a chance of ending this outbreak and helping save dozens of lives. That, my siblings in Christ, is holy, sacred work.

Yesterday, I ended my update to all of you with Micah 6:8; a scripture we've used frequently as part of our conference life in recent recent years. It's also worth taking a look at the words that come before it:

4.0

4.0 out of 5 · Based on the people

## Community

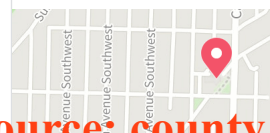
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Shall I come before God with burnt offerings,  
with calves a year old?  
Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,  
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?  
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,  
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"  
God has told you, O mortal, what is good;  
and what does the Lord require of you  
but to do justice, and to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly with your God?"

Being together for worship and ritual are vital parts of our life together but Micah suggests that it shouldn't get in the way of doing justice, doing acts of loving-kindness, and walking humbly with God. Heeding the recommendations of our public health departments and canceling in-person worship is ultimately an act of justice, kindness, and wisdom. It is a temporary step but an important one.

On the other side of this outbreak, I look forward to the celebration of worshipping with you in the same physical space, again. I look forward to celebrating those among us, in our communities, and our families who remained healthy because of our decisions. I look forward to celebrating all the creative ways we found to be present for each other even when we couldn't be present with each other. There will be some anxiety and grief in the coming days but there are also opportunities for hope.

With hope,

Rev. Mike Denton

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6 hrs ·

Curbing Church activities amid virus outbreak

Pastor Andrew Conley-Holcom and the leadership of Admiral Church, following the recommendations of the King County Public Health Department issued March 4 and the Rev. Mike Denton from the Pacific Northwest UCC Conference Office on March 5, have suspended all church group activities from March 5 through March 24. This includes Sunday worship, Bible studies, church meetings and Choir rehearsals. The church will be open during usual hours. See More

KINGCOUNTY.GOV

**Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Public Health  
recommendations to protect our community - King County**

Public Health – Seattle & King County is taking proactive steps to protect the health of our community by making recommendations that are meant to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in our community and...

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scripture: Micah 6:8

tone: celebration

tone: anxiety/grief  
vs. opportunity/hope

tone: limit

source: county & faith network  
logistics: suspension

tone: proactive, protect