



Notice from Morden Mennonite Church Leadership: March 17, 2020

All in-person worship services, events, and meetings are suspended until further notice as a precaution against the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). This takes effect immediately and will be re-evaluated weekly. These decisions are being made collaboratively by Lisa B. (Church Council Chair) and Michael P. (Lead Pastor), in consultation with Church Council and the Church Ministries Committee (including Associate Pastors). They are monitoring Manitoba Health guidelines on a daily basis, consulting with other local church leaders and church leaders at other Mennonite Church Manitoba churches, and paying attention to how other local groups are responding to this pandemic.

In lieu of Sunday morning services, we will be providing “virtual worship services” online at www.mordenmennonitechurch.com under “Blog/Sermons/Services.” These will not be live-streamed services but rather a combination of written and recorded prayers, songs, and meditations provided by members of our Morden Mennonite Church family. Those without internet access can get these on CD—please contact the church office to receive these. We encourage everyone to stay connected as a church through these “virtual worship services” as well as other personal connections between individuals and among small groups as is safe and appropriate.

The church office will remain open regular hours for now (Tues-Fri, 8am-1pm), and pastors will continue to work their normal hours. Please stop by, call, or email if you have questions or need help.

Church committees which need to communicate collaboratively are encouraged to use alternatives to in-person meetings. If an email conversation is not ideal, online platforms such as Zoom or Facebook Messenger can provide free video or audio communication for multiple persons.

If small groups do gather in person in homes, please take all necessary precautions: avoid these if you have flu-like symptoms or if you are considered higher risk of severe symptoms (elderly seniors, immune compromised persons), avoid direct physical contact with others from other households, and wash your hands regularly including right before and after these gatherings.

The Church Ministries Committee (including the pastors) has noted those among us who are most at risk of severe symptoms from this virus. They will be phoning these people periodically over the coming days to see how they are doing, what they might need, and so on. If you would like this regular contact from the church but are not receiving it, please contact the church office. Please also take it upon yourselves to check in with at-risk people you know. Care groups are encouraged to take this on for each other.

We encourage you to continue your regular giving to the church. Staff and bills still need to be paid, and many programs and services continue as always or are being adapted to changing needs. You can drop off your cash or cheque offering at the church office during office hours. Alternatively, you can contact the church office if you would like to have someone pick up your offering. There is also the option of giving electronically if you have an Access Credit Union account. Check the church website under “Online giving through Access Credit Union” or contact the church office for more information.

****Contact Health Links at 1-888-315-9257 if you have flu-like symptoms.****

****Check out www.gov.mb.ca/covid19 for updates from Manitoba Health.****

****Check out www.mordenmennonitechurch.com for updates from the church.****

Please see the following page for a pastoral letter from Michael. Thank you for your attention to these matters, and may you know God’s peace and protection during this time!

Dear Morden Mennonite Church family,

Grace and peace to you through our Lord Jesus Christ.

These are challenging times!

As the calendar turned to 2020, few if any of us could have guessed we would be facing a worldwide pandemic in March. This is a serious situation, and we are taking it seriously. I am grateful to God for our governments, health authorities, and medical professionals, along with our church leadership, who are working hard to respond to COVID-19 with competence and compassion. Please pray for them.

I am reminded that God's people have been through dire situations before. Jesus himself "took our infirmities and bore our diseases," Matthew 4:17 says, quoting the Prophet Isaiah, when Jesus walked in compassionate solidarity with the sick and disabled and brought comfort and healing. Since then, and even before, God has walked with humanity through even the worst of pandemics. Each time, God has called God's people to draw near to God, to trust in God wholeheartedly and to love one another courageously.

Although we are suspending church worship services and events, this does not mean "the church is closed." Remember, *we are the church*—all of us, you and me and every other MMCer, even "all who follow Jesus, all around the world." The building is not the church, and Sunday morning services are not all that the church is about.

We are still the church even when we are not worshipping together on a weekly basis. We can still share songs and prayers, Scripture and teaching, blessings and more—which we will do through our church website. *We can still love God through our worship, listening for God's voice together and responding in faith and hope and love.*

We are still the church even when we are not gathering together regularly. We can still communicate with each other by phone or electronically. We can still lift each other up in prayer and offer encouragement to each other. We can still be attentive to each other's needs, especially those who are most vulnerable at this time. *We can still love one another.*

We are still the church even when we are not rubbing shoulders with others. We can still keep an eye out for our neighbour next door, especially if they are elderly or are already facing health challenges. We can still pray for our neighbours, for our community, for our world. *We can still love our neighbours as ourselves.*

We are still the church. May we continue to walk together on this journey with Jesus, whatever may come, in faith (not fear) and hope (not despair) and love (especially for our most vulnerable neighbours).

Pastor Michael
March 17, 2020

Let's walk in **faith** (not fear)
and **hope** (not despair)
and **love** (especially for our
most vulnerable neighbours)!



Morden Mennonite Church