

**March 10, 2020**

**Doing Our Part to Prevent the Spread of Covid-19**

Dear Sevenoaks Family,

As you will all be aware, the news headlines these days are dominated by the worldwide spread of the Covid-19 virus. So far we have not had a significant outbreak of the virus here in the Fraser Valley, but every indication is that the number of cases in Canada will grow. We just don't know yet how many people in Canada will become infected. What we do know, however, is that we can all have an influence on how quickly and how widely the virus spreads, by making good decisions about some of our everyday practices.

Although the medical experts are still striving to learn more and more about this virus, there are a lot of things that we DO know about how it operates. We know that it is passed from person to person through close social contact, and we know that there are certain categories of us to whom it poses particularly serious health risks. Those who are elderly, those who already have underlying health conditions, those whose respiratory systems are already compromised ... these are the people among us to whom this virus offers the greatest danger of harm. Many of us can say that since we don't fall into any of these categories, the virus does not really threaten our own safety very much. But very few of us can say that we do not ever have contact with other people for whom the virus presents a much greater level of risk. So, as members of a community of people who all live together, we all have a responsibility to do whatever we reasonably can to protect ourselves from becoming infected, so that we can protect the people around us from becoming infected as well.

As a church, it is core to our understanding of what it means to be a community of followers of Jesus Christ - core to our identity as the Body of Christ - that we are called to love and care for each other and love and care for the community around us in which we live. It therefore follows that because we are a Christian church, we have a responsibility to take whatever reasonable measures we can take to "do our part" in slowing down the potential spread of Covid-19.

For this reason, starting immediately, and until further notice, we at Sevenoaks Alliance Church will be implementing the following measures:

1. **We will be discontinuing** the practice of greeting each other with greeting practices/rituals that involve **direct physical contact**. We are asking everyone who comes to our Sunday worship services, as well as to other events at the church, to **avoid shaking hands, fist-bumping, elbow-bumping, hugging, kissing, etc.** Our Pastors and our Greeters and our Ushers have all been asked to demonstrate leadership and set a good example in this area by greeting everyone with a smile, with warm eye contact, and with a friendly verbal greeting, but NOT with a physical greeting.
2. **We will be suspending all of the food and beverage services** that we ordinarily offer in conjunction with our public worship services. Until further notice, the Coffee Cart will be closed, we will not be providing coffee and tea in the lobby before our services, and we will not be serving coffee and cookies in the gym following the service on the first Sunday of each month.

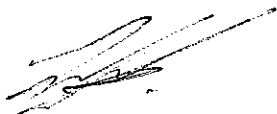
In addition to announcing that we are going to be taking these two unusual measures, we would also like to reiterate the advice that we have all been given by our public health authorities:

- Stay at home if you feel sick.
- Wash your hands frequently, avoid touching your face, use hand sanitizer where appropriate, cough into your elbow, and throw away your used tissues.

We appreciate your cooperation and patience as we all work together to do what we can to fight this virus. It will no doubt feel strange and sad to us to not be able to greet each other with a handshake or a hug. We'll miss the simple comfort of being able to come into the lobby and get a cup of coffee. But the love and the warmth and the friendship and the fellowship will still all be here. And there will be satisfaction in knowing that by adapting our practices for a few short months, we have been offered another way to love and care for each other, for those in our community, and for those among us who are most vulnerable.

Thank you.

Blessings,



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Jamie Fox, Lead Pastor