

Messiah Family:

As we continue to respond to the evolving information we have about the COVID-19 pandemic, our worship and gathering practices will inevitably shift as additional “best practices” guidance is provided by the South Carolina Synod and South Carolina DHEC.

Beginning tomorrow, March 15, the following Sunday morning practices will be in place:

1. Baptismal fonts will be emptied until further noticed. If so inclined, please make the Sign of the Cross as you enter the sanctuary as a remembrance of baptism.
2. We will share the peace with the words “Peace be with you” and nods of affirmation.
3. “Passing the plate” during the offering is suspended. During the offertory anthem, you are invited to place your offering in the basket provided near the altar. You may also place offerings in the designated basket following worship.
4. The congregation will commune at the “head of the aisle” until further notice. All communion ministrants will sanitize their hands prior to the distribution of communion. The pastor will place a wafer in each parishioner’s hands. Please cup your hands to receive the wafer; do not reach for the wafer. The communion assistant will hand individual cups to parishioners; wine and juice will be available. Parishioners will discard their cups in the lined basket held by the worship assistant.

Additional Sunday morning and gathering practices include the following:

1. Effective immediately, coffee and cookie fellowship will be suspended until further notice.
2. Beginning Wednesday, March 18, Midweek Lenten lunches and suppers are suspended. Unless otherwise posted, Midweek Lenten services at noon and 6:30 pm will continue as scheduled.
3. Beginning next Sunday, March 22, a livestreamed worship service will be available. More details to come.

As always, our Altar Guild volunteers will continue to disinfect pews, door handles, and communion ware after each service. For those of you who will not be in worship until the “all clear” is given, please know that you are still connected to your church family through the work of the Spirit.

Friends, amid this anxious season Paul’s words to the Church in Rome seem apropos: *Nothing shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Let’s continue to care for each other, pray for those receiving treatment for disease, support all those on the frontlines of COVID-19 response, and mitigate risk by staying home if we feel unwell. Above all, let’s continue to be the Church.

Peace,

Pastor Michael Sherman