

Dear Church,

Just like you, I have been keeping a close eye on the coronavirus (COVID-19) that is currently on everyone's minds. I want to express my care and concern for you and our community. We are facing a challenging situation, and we need to stand in solidarity with humanity around the world. As leaders, we cannot stand by and ignore the prevention guidelines and warnings from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). We are facing an unknown virus and need to pull together in different ways to live as a community.

I had the opportunity to join 155 faith leaders in Wyoming today to hear the Governor and public health officials share recommendations and solicit help for our vulnerable population. What makes this illness different from most is the fourteen-day incubation period. It is highly contagious, and you can be carrying it for fourteen days before you have any symptoms, with the possibility of infecting others during that time. The best way to slow this virus is by social distancing.

As quoted by Dr. Wes Wallace "For social distancing to be effective, it must begin early—so early that it may feel unneeded and silly. If we wait until its need is obvious, it is too late. The faith community has an important role to play in slowing the speed of disease transmission. Large gatherings of people are a petri dish for spreading the infection. For a period of time, I strongly urge our religious communities to suspend traditional services and gatherings and find other ways to practice and sustain our faith. Our witness and our example may save many lives, especially the lives of those at risk in our own congregations." Dr. Wes Wallace is an adjunct professor of emergency medicine at the School of Medicine at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He is the medical director of State Medical Assistance Team 2, based at the University of North Carolina and a medical officer in NC-1, the federal Disaster Medical Assistance Team based in North Carolina. He is a member of University United Methodist Church in Chapel Hill.

As your pastor, it is my responsibility to take action as we move forward through all of this. I am suspending public worship, church events, and other congregational activities. I encourage you to worship digitally through our live-stream and attend meetings and book studies remotely. The information for this is below.

Please call and connect to those you are in relationship with to make sure that their needs are being met. Be in community with each other utilizing the technology that we are so blessed to have at our fingertips. If there are any needs, you can call the office and together we can work to fill that need. We will continue to live out God's love by helping our neighbor and intentionally spreading peace to those around us.

Grace and Peace,
Rev. James P. Barth

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

(2 Timothy 1:7)

Worship Link: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHmZC_MDaj7OHUhf4uwaddw

Online Giving: <https://fumcsheridanwy.org/give/>

Church Council Meeting: <https://meet.google.com/bsz-bggf-fsd> or call +1 (845) 605-9924 PIN: 531465382#

“The Walk” Book Study: <https://meet.google.com/bdo-pvmi-yvx> or call +1 (347) 871-9700
PIN: 699873602#