



**First United Methodist Church of Des Plaines**  
**668 Graceland Avenue, Des Plaines, IL 60016**  
**847-827-5561 • [www.fumcdp.org](http://www.fumcdp.org)**

March 12, 2020

Dear Members,

I know many of us are concerned about staying safe during this COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, we must make some changes as to how we worship together. Below are directions from our Bishop. All are encouraged to follow these directions for our wellbeing.

### **Worship**

- Hold worship services until/unless public health authorities say to do otherwise.
- Give clear direction to the congregation at the time of passing the peace so it's not awkward and people know what to do—a wave, a bow, smile or whatever. (Health officials don't recommend the elbow bump since people may cough or sneeze into their sleeve.)
- Be very careful with communion, making sure that there are individual cups and that someone with surgical gloves has cut up the bread as well as just one or two people who sanitize their hands (and maybe wear gloves) pass it out.
- Elderly or physically compromised people should assess whether or not they should be in crowds at church, including Easter. And if they come, be sensitive to their concerns.
- It's even recommended in affected areas that people come forward down the aisle in an "African style" of placing the offering in a basket at the front rather than passing (and touching) the offering plate.
- Regularly clean the toys and other objects in Sunday School rooms.
- Always provide and use tongs/spoons for picking up food after services or at potlucks.
- Wash your hands at every opportunity. Soap and water are still preferred but hand sanitizer is good, too. Wash your hands after being on any form of public transportation (like when you get to church or work), after you get home, and throughout the day. This remains the number one preventive measure.
- Consider livestreaming, Facebook live and online giving to reach those who are homebound. Idea: Supply self-addressed offering envelopes for those who may be uncomfortable with online giving.

At First UMC – Des Plaines, I am putting these precautions in place:

- You will notice some changes in our worship services:

- We will forgo our Preparation for Song selection and will only read the Gospel Lesson during service.
- For the time being, I am suspending our “Passing of the Peace” during our worship.
- I also ask that you complete your prayer card requests and deposit them in the prayer box in the foyer. Our prayer ministry will pray for these specific needs. Please feel free to contact me with specific prayer needs or to meet individually to pray.
- During offertory, we will invite people to bring their offering up front as suggested in the Bishop’s statement. If this makes you uncomfortable, remember that we do have an on-line giving option, or you may mail your offering gifts to the church.
- Our Sanctuary is large enough that we have appropriate space between ourselves and others. Family and close friends may continue to sit together. This is your choice, but please respect the personal space of others sharing a pew with you.
- We have ordered pre-packaged communion packs that have individual servings of juice and a wafer. We are still working out details, so we will have more information to come.
- Parents, please have your youth and children sit with you during the service.
- The benediction will be given from the pulpit for the ease of exiting the sanctuary.
- For the time being we will discontinue fellowship time in the parlor.
- I would ask that we limit our in-person meetings for only critical decisions. We need to consider conducting meetings, Bible Study, etc. using on-line programs such as Zoom.
- Decisions regarding other ministries of the church such as Mother’s Day Out, Bessie’s Table and Hovland Piano Lessons Company will be made by the leaders of those programs or by the direction of The Board of Trustees.
- Please stay in touch with each other via phone or email. Do not hesitate to let the church know if you or someone you know needs assistance.
- Please help us stay safe by adhering to these instructions.

During this time of uncertainty, let us remember *“It is the Lord who goes before us; he will be with us, he will not fail us or forsake us; do not fear or be dismayed.”* Deuteronomy 31:8

*Rev. Dr. Irene Taylor*

Rev. Dr. Irene Taylor  
 First United Methodist Church, Senior Pastor