

Hi Friends,

I have a big announcement. For the rest of March, we are cancelling mid-to-large size gatherings at Reservoir Church. This includes our regular worship services and related programs for the next three Sundays. Instead, we will be hosting worship gathering online - virtual church, or as one of my children suggested, Virch!

This Sunday, a few minutes before 10:00, log on to our church's zoom account for virtual gatherings. We'll be hosting a virtual worship service that is shorter than our regular service and more suitable to this format. Lydia, Ivy, Matt and I will each lead parts of the time. We will hold just one service, but we'll try to post it on our website. We'll start it on Sunday at 10:00 a.m. and end by 10:45 a.m. You can click the link below to log in; you'll have a choice of having a video screen on so others can see you, or leaving that off. You also can call in and listen without any video.

Topic: Reservoir Church Online Sunday Service

Time: Mar 15, 2020 10:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/615961799>

Meeting ID: 615 961 799

Dial in: +1 646 876 9923 US, Meeting ID: 615 961 799

Additionally, if you have children in our preschool or elementary kids church programs, Kim Messenger is video recording Godly Play stories with instructions on leading them with your children. And Dan Archibald is making the stories and discussion questions he shares with the elementary kids available to you too. [You can access that material here.](#)

Why are we doing this?

To support public health and limit virus spread, our governor has asked that we limit larger gatherings. I've also consulted public health experts within and outside of our congregation that support this decision and have met with several clergy of larger congregations in our city who are similarly suspending their in-person worship gatherings. Lastly, there is a great opportunity for us to practice love in public - to do our small parts to limit the spread of coronavirus and so to protect ourselves or others who are most at risk.

Announcing similar changes, the president of Haverford College put this beautifully:

“If humankind is going to defeat this virus, we must do all we can to avoid becoming its carriers. And so our obligation means more than keeping ourselves healthy; it includes minimizing the possibilities for us each to become a carrier and, with that, a vector for later transmission to others, particularly those at risk for serious complications or death due to COVID-19.... Being a responsible citizen routinely means thinking beyond one’s own welfare; at this challenging moment, I ask that we embrace a broader definition of community, one that aligns with our mission and extends our values of trust, concern, and respect to include doing our individual part for the benefit of all humanity.”

Amen. I’m excited for us to continue life together as a faith community that invites many people - ourselves included - to discover the love of Jesus, the gift of community, and the joy of living, and to do so in this moment in a way that supports our public health and well-being.

How do we stay connected?

- Please make sure you’ve signed up for our email list. There is a stay connected tab on the bottom of [our website](#) where you can sign up. Follow us on [instagram](#) and [facebook](#) as well, where we will be posting over the next three weeks.
- We’ll try our best to host meaningful, Spirit-filled worship services online the next three Sundays - learning as we go!
- We will continue to host and update our Lenten Bible studies, writing, and other content at <https://www.reservoirchurch.org/lent> - there is plenty there to explore!
- Small gatherings, such as our community groups, are not closed. Community groups can decide to meet virtually or are welcome to continue meeting in person. We encourage you to respect the preferences and needs of your group, but we do strongly encourage community groups to stay connected with one another. Stay in touch, ask how people and those they care about are facing illness or anxiety or challenge, and pray for one another. If you are at all ill, have been exposed to someone who is ill, or have your own health risk factors, stay home, but stay connected to your group. Ivy is sending community group leaders suggestions for how to stay in touch more virtually with one another.
- If you’re not part of a community group and have needs, or if you are under self-quarantine or facing significant challenges, [contact one of your pastors](#). We want to know if you are struggling and be of support as best as we can. Our pastors will do our best to reach out to people we know are vulnerable, and we invite you all to do the same.

What’s happening at the Reservoir Church property?

Our campus is not closed, and our staff are working to serve our congregation and community. We share our campus with the Banneker School, which is still very much in

session. And our staff will be working on campus and remotely, but we will not be hosting any services or programs on Sundays for the remainder of March. All of these decisions have been made in consultation with and with the full support of our pastoral team and Board at Reservoir.

Loving Our Neighbors, Welcoming This Moment

We are hoping that there are opportunities for our church in this inconvenience:

- Opportunities to practice public love of neighbor by doing what we can to protect our communities' health.
- Opportunities to be here for each other, even when we can't always be there in person for each other. Again, I emphasize, reach out with your needs and reach out to others to ask how they are doing. We are in this together - do not isolate. Or to use the language of the moment, practice "social distancing" without being socially distant!
- Opportunities to learn some things about how to do and be church that isn't centered around in-person Sunday worship gatherings.
- And opportunities to lean into faith in the God who has become one of us, to bear our burdens and anxieties, to be with us in our joys and sorrows and all of our weakness.

If you know of any college or university students who have immediate practical needs for storage or housing, or if you are willing to help with those needs, contact Matt Henderson at matt@reservoirchurch.org, who has offered to coordinate this.

If you have practical needs you need help with during this season (e.g. you are at health risk and can't go buy your groceries), or if you are willing to help people with needs like that, contact Lydia Shiu at lydia@reservoirchurch.org, who has offered to match up willingness to help with needs for help.

May our good and present God gift us by God's Spirit with increasing faith, hope, and love, and fill us all with courage as well.

Much peace and love,
Steve

P.S. If you're not sure where to find updated news and preparedness information, both the national [Center for Disease Control](#) and the [Massachusetts state Department of Public Health](#) are maintaining regularly updated Coronavirus pages, which you can consult.

P.P.S. Find ongoing [coronavirus communication including related needs for help](#), here on our website news page.