

United Church of Christ of California
101 N. Oak Street
California, MO 65018-1744



Rev. Russell Cobb, Pastor

March 31, 2020

United Church of Christ of California Family,

Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

We continue to monitor the latest guidelines from the state as well as from the federal government concerning the sizes of groups that can meet during this time. On Sunday the President extended these guidelines till April 30th. That makes it very unlikely we will meet in person for worship until early May. That is disappointing of course but I'm so thankful for the adjustments we have made these last two weeks that have allowed us to still worship online together. I've heard so many encouraging words from people that have been blessed by this. Thank you to everyone that has made this possible.

We have been able to make DVD copies of the services for those that can't view online. We have distributed copies to all nursing homes as well as a few individuals in town. If you would like a copy or know someone that would like a copy, please contact our office and we will get one to you. We can mail it, drop it off in your mailbox, or you can pick it up here at the office.

We want to make sure to stay in contact with everyone. I know some of our Sunday School teachers have been reaching out to their students. Others have been using Facebook to check the well-being of our fellow members. I encourage you to contact each other by phone, text, facebook, or other means. I'd love to hear from everyone via letter, text, call, or Facebook. I know we are missing the fellowship of believers right now so use every mode of communication to help us stay connected. I have distributed most of the new church directories. If you would like a copy please let me know and we will get one to you one way or the other.

Some of you might not be part of our church group e-mail list. If you would like to be part of that group, please contact me or the office to get added to the list. I have added a few people to that list in the last few weeks. I'm trying to communicate via Facebook and mass e-mail each week. I want to make sure everyone is getting the latest info.

Since we will be unable to meet in person for Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday, we are making arrangements for everyone to participate in communion. The church has purchased individual communion packets that contain juice and a wafer. We are going to make these packets available the week of April 6-12 for pick up in the parking lot in front of the office. We can also deliver them to you or you can choose to provide your own juice and wafer (cracker). We plan to include communion in those online services so we all can take communion together. I will post specific details about picking up your communion packets next week as well as Easter lilies. We will be sure to handle those packets and lilies in the safest manner possible.

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The Consistory and I want everyone to know we are praying for our church family and want to assist in any way possible. I've had various people ask how they can help. I have posted various opportunities to help in our community as I become aware of them. The church has a benevolence fund that is there to assist our own church family in their times of need. Please make us aware of those needs. Together with God's help we will make it through this very difficult time.

I want to conclude with this passage from Psalm 62:5-8:

"Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken. My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is mighty rock, my refuge. Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge."

I encourage you to rest in God, depend on him, and pour out your hearts to him. He is our refuge. He was there before this all happened. He is here now and he will be there when this all ends. My prayer is of course for healing of this virus, protection for our people, but also that our faith grows deeper and stronger during this painful time.

May God bless you all with his strength and his provision.

Pastor Russ & the Consistory