



Dear OCC,

As I am sure you are aware of, the COVID19 outbreak has now been labelled as a pandemic by the World Health Organization. You've heard that many sporting, entertainment and other gatherings have been cancelled. Currently (13 March), there is only one presumptive case of COVID-19 in Simcoe County. We have many talented and dedicated people working in our health care system. While the risk in our area is currently very low, we want to be wise and do what we can to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (and other illness) when we gather for worship and other events. Here are some "best practices" that should help to flatten the curve of infection:

- Please stay home if you are feeling sick or your children are feeling sick (and let us know so we can pray for you). The audio of Sunday morning will be posted later in the day on Sunday.
- Please wash your hands frequently and vigorously.
- When you greet people, please respect anyone's decision not to shake hands. Bumping elbows, waving or even a wide smile and firm nod will do very nicely in the interim.
- Please keep in frequent contact with older congregants and neighbours by text, phone, email or social media to ensure their safety and well being. Some nursing homes are suspending visits until the outbreak has calmed down.

Additionally, out of caution, here's what we plan to do for the next few weeks, or until the public health concern has passed:

- We will be wiping down the door handles with antiseptic wipes before and after services.
- We have removed the cloth hand towels from the women's washroom.
- We have decided to cancel the Men's (14 March) and Women's (28 March) Breakfasts for this month. As well we will not be serving coffee before the morning service.
- Instead of passing the baskets for the offering, we will place baskets at the doors of the auditorium for you to place your offerings in on your way out of the auditorium. There is also the possibility of giving your offering online at <https://occweb.org/online-giving/>

We believe these measures are appropriately cautious in this time of uncertainty. Anxiety about these developments in the world is natural and human. We love our community and want to ensure its thriving for the sake of our life together and for all our neighbours in our spread-out-all-over-Orillia-and-area church. We live in a fallen world and all creation is groaning and we ourselves are groaning as we wait for the adoption of the children of God and for the redemption that is ours through Christ.

Christians have generally been at their best when everyone else around them is consumed with panic. We are faith people and love people and serve others even when it costs us people. Let's be those people now when it counts.

Our prayer is that this disease will run out of steam soon and become nothing more than a trivia question, like several other diseases in the past.

If you have any questions or concerns about our preparations or changes in practice, please let us know.

In Christ,
pastor Mike

For up-to-date information follow the Government of Canada public health site:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>

Simcoe Muskoka Public Health site:

<http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Promos/Novel-Coronavirus>

orilliacommunitychurch

Pastor Michael Bells
info@occweb.org

Pastor Brent Hargreaves
64 Colborne St. E., Orillia L3V 1T6

705.329.2139
www.occweb.org