



Our mission:
To **be** and
to **make**
disciples of
Jesus Christ.

Dear UALC family,

Coronavirus is in the news, and the global spread of this new virus is a reality. I'd like to address this situation pastorally and share with you how we can respond as a church. We can be a church following Jesus with soft hearts, engaged minds, open (clean!) hands, and whole spirits.

In our responses, **we will be guided by wisdom and love, not fear or panic.** My social media feeds are populated by two extremes: those who dismiss and minimize the threat and those who are whipping others into a frenzy. These extremes are neither wise nor loving, nor helpful.

Here are some facts for engaged minds:

1. Public health officials now project that many or most people will be infected eventually and develop the disease called COVID-19.
2. The overwhelming majority of people will recover safely, as is also true for other similar viruses.
3. Some people are more vulnerable than others to serious health risks resulting from this virus, particularly older adults and those with underlying health conditions. Health officials are recommending "social distancing" for those with chronic health conditions and for adults over 70.
4. Slowing the spread of the disease to these more vulnerable groups is the wisest and most loving priority for us to embrace.

Please allow me to address this fourth idea and how we can **prioritize loving our neighbors as our ourselves.** Jesus has made us whole, and we are free to respond to one another in faith and love. As Christians we "look not to our own interests but to the interests of others." Here's what that means practically:

1. I ask that you please pray for one another, especially for those at higher risk.
2. I ask those of you in lower-risk groups to soften your hearts toward our higher-risk neighbors and take precautions to "bear one another's burdens and thus fulfill the law of Christ." This means that you are not just washing your hands for yourself but for the person you're about to meet. Or if you have symptoms, you may be able to power through your day and get a few things accomplished, but you might also be putting someone else at serious risk. Please love your neighbor and keep your germs to yourself.
3. Perhaps you could also take open-handed steps of love and sacrifice for those who are vulnerable. Some of you could offer to pick up groceries or medications for others who need to limit their public exposure. This is an opportunity to be creative and thoughtful with our intentional acts of kindness to one another.
4. Finally, I'd recommend engaging your mind with news from www.cdc.gov and more locally from www.coronavirus.ohio.gov. You might consider taking a break from Facebook and cable news for a while.

It's so important that we practice love and wisdom as a church community. As a result, we have made the decision to suspend activities in our building effective immediately. Although it breaks my heart to say so, this applies even to worship on Sunday mornings. Worship is central to the life of our Christian community, and it is only through prayer and with much counsel that we have come to this decision. I hope and pray that actions like these, together with many others, lead to outcomes that will make the precautions seem to have been unnecessary. God make it so. None of these decisions are reached in a spirit of panic but rather love for those at greatest risk. This is how we "bear one another's burdens and thus fulfill the law of Christ." At present we intend for the suspension of activities, including worship, to be in effect for the remainder of the month of March. We all realize that this is a rapidly developing situation, and we will update you as new information becomes available. Please visit www.ualc.org/coronavirus for the most accurate communication.

During the time that we do not gather on Sunday mornings for worship, we will do our best to stay connected and support the faith and life of our community.

1. Our worship and technical teams are already working to develop the best mechanisms to help us connect in prayer, in worship, and in the sharing of the Gospel. I will send out further information in the coming days. This would be a great time for you to download the UALC mobile app. You can find it on the Apple App Store or Google Play Store or get a link by texting "UALC App" to 77977.
2. You can still participate in giving your tithes and offerings at www.ualc.org/give. I have done my giving as a recurring transaction for many years now. It helps me remain faithful in my giving, provides for the church's needs, and even brings a bit of worship to my otherwise less joyful bill paying and record keeping! Of course, you may also mail your gifts to the church office at 2300 Lytham Road, Columbus, Ohio 43220.
3. We are developing strategies to continue to care for one another during this season. Your small groups are a great community to stay in communication with. We are also providing additional support to our care department to check on and care for our members.
4. Please be intentional to reach out, communicate with, and care for one another during this season.

As Christians, we can walk by faith and live in love. We trust that Jesus is Lord, no matter what. And we follow His example in loving one another. Thank you for being the church of Jesus Christ and for sharing in His life for the world, especially now.

Following Jesus with you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Steve". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of "Pastor" and "Steve" being capitalized and prominent.

Pastor Steve