Dear Friends,

I greet you in the name of Christ, who accompanies us through this Season of Lent, and who promises to be a source of New Life for us as we journey together towards the celebration of Easter.

I am writing to share with you what changes we have made at Ebenezer in response to the coronavirus outbreak.

In 1527, Martin Luther wrote a treatise for the people of his time who were experiencing a deadly outbreak of the plague. Our Presiding Bishop, the Rev. Elizabeth Eaton, reminds us that his counsel, based on Scripture, is still sound: “Respect the disease. Do not take unnecessary risks. Provide for the spiritual and physical needs of the neighbor. Make use of medical aid. Care for one another, especially the most vulnerable.” Here at Ebenezer, we hope to follow his advice to the best of our ability, and continue to offer a genuine and loving welcome for all to experience God’s love.

**Changes We Have Made**

As you know, this is a quickly evolving situation, and we are receiving new information every day. Below you will find what we believe is the best course of action at this time, in response to current information about the coronavirus.

**Worship**

After much consideration, and with the understanding that we will continue to review the situation, we have taken the following steps: In-person church activities, including worship, will be suspended until further notice. We wish it weren’t so. Gathering together on Sunday and meeting throughout the week are central to who we are. As difficult as this time away may be, we will discover new ways to Be the Church for one another and for the wider community. We are looking into how to be the church on-line and will let you know how we will do this by the end of the week.

**Congregational Care**

Let’s keep reaching out to one another by phone and email in the coming days. If someone is on your mind, give them a call. Our FAST teams are in place and are a valuable tool to get the word out quickly. Thank you to everyone who reached out to one another last Friday when we had to make the hard decision to cancel last Sunday’s Worship.
Pastoral Care
For now, I will call more, email more, try to stay in touch and, when necessary, will visit in person. Of course, if at any point, you or someone you know needs assistance securing basic necessities, like grocery shopping or picking up medications please call the church office. I have already had many people reach out letting me know that they are available to go grocery shopping or do other errands for any of our members who are unable to do this on their own. Also call the church office with your prayer concerns or other needs which require pastoral care.

Church Building
The doors of the church are locked but the office is open. If you need to enter the building and you have a key, please come in through the front door and lock the door behind you. That way we will know who is in the building. If you do not have a key and need admittance, please contact the church office by telephone 425-334-0421.

Finally
Please count yourself among those for whom you care. Do more of what helps. Walking outside if you are able and can keep social distancing of at least 6 feet. Pray. Read our Five Minute Devotions or another Devotion. Listen to music. Sit still. Cook. Play games with your family or on your computer. Call a friend. … Be sure to do what fills your heart and please take time to rest.

I am grateful for our Executive Team and Church Council who has done so much in a short period of time. We will get through this. In the meantime, let’s love one another like never before and remember to give each other a little Grace during this trying time.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Benson