



GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

OPEN HEARTS. OPEN MINDS. OPEN DOORS.

March 16, 2020

Greetings, Friends of Grace.

I pray that you are finding peace in the midst of a very challenging time. There are new developments every day.

On Friday, March 13, Bishop Karen Oliveto recommended that churches suspend all worship services and meetings through the end of March. On Sunday, March 15, the CDC recommended cancelling all gatherings over 50 persons, and the Laramie County School District #1 has cancelled school until April 3. Yet, in a conference call with faith leaders, Governor Mark Gordon encouraged us to reach out and care for one another, especially the most vulnerable.

The Grace UMC Church Council met on Sunday, March 15, to discuss this rapidly changing situation. Out of an abundance of caution, especially to care for our church the best we can, they made the following recommendations:

- There will not be any in-person worship services on Sundays in March.
- No groups will meet at the church at this time. Only employees will come into the building (or those who have official work such as the Treasurer).
- We ask that church members stay out of the building. If you need something sent to you, please contact the church office.
- Each of these decisions will be reevaluated by the Church Council on March 29 at 1 pm.

The Church Council did not make these decisions lightly. They believe these steps to limit contact with one another will help reduce the spread of the virus in our midst. However, these steps provide a challenge: *How do we stay connected with, support and care for one another?*

Grace church leaders commit to the following:

- The church office will continue to send out periodic emails. If you know of someone who does not receive these emails, please consider sharing information with them.
- The church Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/CheyenneGraceUMC/>) will also be updated on a regular basis.
- Each Sunday, a worship devotion will be posted (either Facebook Live or a video) on the Facebook page.
- We are creating a phone tree. This will help to share information as quickly as possible. But this is also an opportunity to check in with one another. Bishop Karen Oliveto

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encourages churches to stay connected. Care for one another. We are not alone, even if we are not meeting in person. This phone tree will be available soon.

- We have an updated membership directory. We will email it to all persons who are in the directory. If you need a paper copy mailed to you, please contact the church office.
- Church leaders soon will mail a packet of devotional material in order to provide a spiritual focus during this season of Lent.
- The church office will be open with limited hours. However, please email the office (gumc@outlook.com) or call the office (307-634-7472) for any concerns or information you wish to share.
- **If you or someone you know is in need because of this crisis, please contact the church office.** You may need someone to get supplies while you stay at home for your own health needs. You may have financial needs because your job is no longer providing income. The church does have a fund to help church members. Please contact me (gumcpastor@outlook.com or 307-287-7417) if you have any questions about this.

This is not a time to be afraid. However, it is a time to take care of ourselves and one another.

As tomorrow is March 17, a date we normally celebrate Irish culture, I share this Celtic Prayer to remember that Christ is with us, especially these uncertain days.

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit, Christ when I stand, Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me, Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me, Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that hears me. Amen.

God's peace be with you,

Rev. Laura Rainwater