

Dear UPC Family,

Aside from the most senior among us who remember WW2 and its impact on the home front, these days are unprecedented. These times will stretch us and present difficulties. For some these times feel very threatening. They will also make us more creative, more compassionate, kinder, and more appreciative of many things – perhaps mostly the gift of being in community we were created for.

The church is made up of people with a remarkable track record of helping one another and helping the stranger. Likely, the church's impact will be less through official programs and more through Christians who are expressing the heart of Jesus to others in their circles of relationship. This may be via sharing something with a neighbor, caring for an elderly friend, providing a bit of financial help – and countless other ways to spread God's love. **This Sunday we will announce a way that UPC can help facilitate this very thing.**

Hard times usually leave gifts behind for those who have faith to see them. I can't help but think that one gift of this hardship is that it is creating more unity for us as Americans. In times that have been so fractured and divisive, this hardship is unifying. It reminds us that we are all human beings who matter to one another - regardless of our politics, social views, money, or skin color. There is great beauty in this. I pray that Christ's Church will lead the charge in brotherly unity and Christian charity. As we looked at last Sunday, Paul began Ephesians chapter 4 with; "I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, **bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**"

Let's be praying for one another; particularly for those who work in health care. Also, those who find that their job and income is particularly affected and for those whose businesses are severely stretched.

We will be looking at each week and evaluating the best way to worship together. Stay tuned for our communications. Further, we are looking at how we can assist in reducing the spread of this virus. We will have limited office hours and we will continue to clean all surfaces, especially high touch surfaces, regularly. **As you may already know, we have cancelled all ministry gatherings until April 4 as well.**

We realize that some individuals/families are financially stretched in this time and may be in a different position than normal regarding any giving to UPC. With that understanding, if you are able, your giving is needed and important. It's not going to be easy to pass the plate! That's kind of the point though. We don't collect an offering at the Church as a fundraising function or as a fee for service. Our offerings are an act of worship, a demonstration of dependence, and an opportunity to care for each other and our community by combining our resources. Our need to give is greater than the church's need for your money, so we would encourage you to not sit this part out just because we aren't in proximity together this weekend. We would encourage you to use our text-to-give option (that is, text the amount and designation — for example, 25 GENERAL — to 407-984-4880) or go to our website and click the "give online" button at the top of the homepage. If you prefer, you can always mail a check to the church office.

In all that we feel, think and do, I pray that it is for God's glory and our joy.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Steve