Dear Gateway family,

I am certain you are aware of the health concerns regarding the covid-19 virus, especially with confirmed cases in southern B.C. As a result we, the Gateway Council, are already thinking about immediate and long-term precautions and possibilities.

In all things, we trust in God’s providential care. Additionally, we are grateful to God for the capable men and women who provide specific expertise to help guide the broader community, especially medical professionals who are most affected by the rising health needs. Please pray for them. Our hope is that, as a community of faith, we can love one another and our neighbors well at a time of heightened anxiety and concern.

There has been some discussion on protocols for Sunday morning worship. We have decided that we will strictly follow the lead of the B.C. Ministry of Health. If they lay out instructions for large gatherings, we will abide by all of them. At this time, B.C. health has repeatedly stated “Yes. It is safe to go out in public,” including work, rides on the bus, rec center use, public worship, etc. In fact, [Fraser Health](https://www.fraserhealth.ca/health-topics-a-to-z/coronavirus/coronavirus-questions-general-public#.Xmpp7ahKiUk) has specifically stated that “there is no need to take special precautions” at the time of this writing [March 12 at Noon].

That said, we want to take extra precautions so that all members of Gateway, including more vulnerable members who have health concerns, feel safe and secure during corporate worship. Allow me to share a few updates with you regarding how we plan to take extra precautions:

* If you are sick, particularly with flu and cold symptoms or if you are aware that you may have been exposed to someone who is sick (remembering that we are often infectious before we are symptomatic) please consider staying home from church. Also, if you have recently travelled abroad to destinations that are considered higher risk, please take extra precautions. Remember that we live stream all of our services at: [www.gatewaycrc.org/livestream](http://www.gatewaycrc.org/livestream).
* We will provide extra hand sanitizer and, as always, encourage you to maintain basic health protocols (thorough hand-washing, etc.).
* We will postpone our “mutual greeting” time during the service for the time being. While we love and enjoy this practice and feel it to be a worthy part of worship, this practice may cause more anxiety and concern at this time.
* The Youth Mexico Missions Trip has been postponed.
* The offering bag will not be “passed” on Sunday. Instead, bags will be strategically placed in the back of the auditorium for an offering to be given after the service. You also have the option of [tithing online](http://www.gatewaycrc.org/donate).
* Ushers and hospitality team members will not shake hands by the entrance doors on Sunday. Instead, they will greet you by opening the door for you with a “Good Morning!” and a warm smile.
* Coffee and juice will not be served on Sunday. As always, please feel free to bring your own coffee from home provided it is in a sealed container so that there are no spills in the auditorium.
* Nursery and Kids Church (ages 3 and 4) are open. As always, please keep your children home if they have any sickness symptoms (fever, runny nose, sore throat, diarrhea, unknown rash, and discharge from eyes) or if your child has been healthy for less than 24 hours.

In times of uncertainty, the church has a unique opportunity to shine the love of Jesus. By the grace of God, the church is equipped with wisdom, with love of neighbor, and with a stubborn resistance to fear on account of the sure and certain hope that we have in Christ. We hope you and your family will continue to join us in worship this Sunday as we finish our series on PI2.

God’s richest blessings,
Pastor Justin [Lead Pastor] & Jason Maarhuis [Chair of Governing Council]

P.S. If you have a loved one who is elderly or shut-in and doesn’t have email, please share this message with them.

Want to learn more? We recommend the following links for current, accurate updates on the extent of the COVID-19 situation in the province:

[www.bccdc.ca](http://www.bccdc.ca) – BC Center for Disease Control
[www.news.gov.bc.ca](http://www.news.gov.bc.ca) – BC Ministry of Health Updates
<https://www.fraserhealth.ca/coronavirus#.XmgX8qipGUn> – Fraser Health Authority Coronavirus Information