



April 21, 2020

Dear Church,

We are now well over a month into a societal shutdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. The toll is staggering. Thousands have gotten sick and thousands have died. Our economy has suffered greatly resulting in what is now over 20 million Americans without employment. Anxiety, depression, and other effects of isolation have already resulted as well.

How can I help?

Thankfully, many of you are not facing unemployment or a loss of income at this time. So, you may be wondering if there is any way your family can help those who are, financially.

When you give your **regular tithe and offering** to the church, it is deposited into our **general fund**. The general fund covers various operation costs in addition to paying the salary of our paid ministry staff. Other things include but are not limited to ten percent of our budget which is committed to local and international ministries such as numerous missionaries who serve with Mission to the World (MTW), Derek Bates who is a pastor with Reformed University Fellowship (RUF) at Pitt, Jim Weidenaar who is the director of Harvest USA in Pittsburgh, and Lucas Poole who is the Director of Young Life (YL) reaching students with the gospel at Franklin Regional High School. Our general fund also contributes to other ministries serving many people in the local area.

So, please do **continue to give** your regular tithe and offering to our **general fund** at MCC.

However, in **addition** to your regular tithe and offering, if you are interested in making a financial donation to help others, the Session would like to encourage you to give to our **Diaconate Fund**. The monies held in this fund are used at the discretion of our **Deacons** to help in the area of **mercy ministry** to not only members of our **congregation**, but also **members** of our surrounding communities.

Such donations can be made as directed on the give page of our church website:

<https://www.murrysvillechurch.com/give>

If giving online, please designate separate gifts to the general fund and diaconate fund through the appropriate selection using the drop-down menu.

If mailing in a check or checks, please designate which fund you are donating to by writing either “General Fund” or “Diaconate Fund” on the memo line of the check.

Do you need help? Do you know of anyone else?

While the deacons are already providing assistance to a few families, they are and will continue to be looking to help more families in the days, weeks, and months to come.

So please, if you and your family have any need at this time or in the future, especially due to mitigated or a total loss of income due to the COVID-19 crisis or otherwise, please email the deacons at deacons@murrysvillechurch.com.

Also, if you know of any families in the area, including your extended family, neighbors, close friends, or others, please notify the deacons so they can contact those persons and see if MCC can help them out. Our deacons also intend to contribute from the diaconate fund to help support local food banks and other organizations that are meeting needs on the local level at this time.

Donations given to our diaconate fund are **eligible** for a **tax deduction**.

As always, thank you MCC family for your generosity and faithful commitment to give of your time, energy, and treasure, to advance the gospel in word and deed to the glory of our Savior Jesus. I’m so proud to be your pastor.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to email me at jason@murrysvillechurch.com.

When will we meet together again?

Not soon enough, but sooner than later I pray and hope.

Yesterday, Governor Tom Wolf extended the stay at home order until May 8th, 2020 at midnight. So, there will be no gatherings at the church building of any size for worship or otherwise until further notice.

Please pray for our Session as we consider contingency plans for when and how we will reintroduce corporate worship gatherings and other gatherings at the church building.

Love One Another

Lastly, without question, there are various opinions among us as brothers and sisters in Christ about this entire situation. Those differing views include whether stay at home orders are legitimate or necessary to abide by. The concerns from a health and safety standpoint as well as the economic consequences surrounding such mitigation efforts, are both real and have far reaching and tragic implications. Certainly, there are varied opinions about how others are responding to this crisis in a way that is different than ourselves.

For this reason, I want to remind and exhort all of us with these words:

From **Philippians 2:1-8**:

So, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

From **1 John 4:7-12** :

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

And from **John 13:34-35** :

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

So, please commit with me, to show grace, love, and mercy to one another, especially those you disagree with during this time. We must remain united together if we are not

only to survive this historical moment as a church, but more importantly, if we are going to be faithful to the great commission and gospel of our Savior.

Let us fight against this disease for the most vulnerable among us together. Let us fight for the financially afflicted together. Above all else, let us fight for our unity in Christ Jesus together.

Sincerely,

Rev. Jason Leist
Pastor at Murrysville Community Church