Dear West Shore Members & Friends,

Events and circumstances related to the Coronavirus are moving fast. Where things stood Wednesday are very different from where they stand now. Gov. Mike DeWine on Thursday, announced a statewide ban on gatherings of 100 or more people, and while this is not a directive that necessarily applies to faith communities, still, this is very sobering.

We must do our part to reduce the rate of infection, and prevent our healthcare systems from being overburdened. We must act now to preserve the health of the community and especially of the most vulnerable among us. I must therefore call for West Shore to cease face-to-face gatherings starting this Sunday, March 15, to extend through the month of March. Instead, we will livestream our worship service - for the first time ever at West Shore! - to people’s homes Sunday, March 15, March 22, and March 29. After that, we will see where things stand with the pandemic situation.

So this coming Sunday, March 15, please do not come to the church building. Worship will start at 10:15am as usual, but online. David Blazer, our music director, and I will lead worship. David will play and I will have something to say about the changes happening in our lives. You can worship with us at https://www.facebook.com/WestShoreUU/. Again, do NOT come to the building. Stay at home and watch online.

We will always consider the safety and well-being of our faith community as well as our staff. Therefore, starting Saturday, March 14, we are closing the building. West Shore committees and groups may still choose to meet face-to-face, but at their own discretion and off-site. We cannot reasonably ask our staff to risk an encounter with someone who may not know they are infected by the virus.

Know that your ministers and staff will continue to be hard at work, despite the building closure. Among other things, we’ll be working on creative ways for West Shore people to stay connected in this time. Stay tuned for more on this!

As we get closer to Monday, March 30, we will gauge our readiness to re-open to the public. Decisions will be made from Sunday to Sunday, using the most updated information we have available to us.

My friends, I love you all so much. I know that we are all concerned in our own ways. We worry about each other. We love each other. Now is the time to show that love with care, mercy, and compassion. This is not a time to withdraw from our beloved community but to reach out to each other. Make a telephone call or send a text to a friend in the church. Reach out. Contact information for your staff is available here: https://wsuuc.org/our-staff/. If you, yourself, are in need of Pastoral Care, contact Kathy Strawser, Chair of the Pastoral Care Team, at kkstrawser@gmail.com.

One more thing. During this Sunday’s service, when I light our West Shore chalice, I will at the same time invite you to light something in your home—anything resembling a chalice will work. Will you do this with me? This will symbolize our solidarity. The physical distance does not matter, if our spirits come close together.

Love and Courage,

Rev. Anthony Makar, Senior Minister
West Shore Unitarian Universalist Church