

Bethel

MENNONITECHURCH

August 11, 2020

Good afternoon Bethel family!

I was so encouraged yesterday as I saw so many of your smiling faces on our campus (I know many others joined us online and I'm certain you were smiling too)! It felt good to be together.

As we sang together, prayed together, and studied God's Word together, I was reminded that, even in the midst of pandemic, the church continues to fulfill her "essential" service of proclaiming God's truth to His people and to the world.

I regularly receive notes of encouragement from those inside the church as well as those who watch and participate with us from around the country. Thank you for helping make that possible! Your prayer support and financial support is invaluable!

Some items of note for this coming Sunday, August 16:

1. Sunday School will resume at 9:00am for all ages, 2-year-olds through adults. Come join us as we study God's Word in these small group settings. These times provide a great opportunity to ask questions, understand the Word together, and pray for one another!
2. Due to the number of people who are returning to in-person services, we are going to set up clusters of chairs in the new foyer each Sunday for the Worship Service. While we do encourage social distancing inside the sanctuary, this added space in the foyer will provide even more places for you to spread out, particularly if you want to stay on the more cautious side of things.
3. If you want to sit in the sanctuary and would prefer to have a few extra seats between you and the next worshiper, feel free to pick up a "seat marker" on the table as you enter the building. Simply lay this marker down on the seat next to you to say, "Hey friend, this space is reserved for social distancing!" Hopefully this will provide a less-awkward encounter with that person who is so excited to see you that they forget to space out a bit! Haha!

Thank you again for being so cooperative as we navigate these times. Your patience and kindness toward others is commendable and I look forward to seeing you again this Sunday. God bless you this week!

Pastor Shawn

Bethel

MENNONITECHURCH

July 29, 2020

Good afternoon friends and family of Bethel!

The sun is shining in my office and the Son is shining in my heart - it's a good day!

Just an update on things happening around here:

1. We continue to meet in-person (socially distanced) and online (www.bethelsarasota.com) at 10:00am on Sundays. I am excited to announce that we plan to resume 9:00am Sunday School classes on August 16! I know many are eager to study God's Word in a small-group setting, so please make plans to attend. Classes will be offered for children, youth and adults. We will make attempts to spread out the best we can.
2. Grief Share (<https://www.griefshare.org>) begins this Sunday evening, August 2, 6:00pm. This class is designed to come alongside those who have experienced the loss of a loved one in their lives. To register for the class, please contact Pastor Jason (jason@bethelsarasota.com) or register here: <https://www.griefshare.org/groups/123201>
3. Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University begins Wednesday, August 12, 7:00pm. Learn how to manage your finances in a way that pleases God. Register for the class here: fpu.com/1121249
4. Children's programming will also resume on Wednesday, August 12, so drop off your kids and take the FPU class! Additionally, there is an ongoing Bible Study class that meets at the same time. Join either one!
5. Thank you for continuing to give your tithes and offerings! Your gracious donations are helping Bethel's ministries continue!

If you need anything, please feel free to reach out to us! We look forward to hearing what God is doing in your lives!

Pastor Shawn

Bethel

MENNONITECHURCH

July 22, 2020

Good afternoon Bethel family!

I trust you've built your house on the Rock and that you're standing firm as the storms of life blow in these unprecedented days (Mt. 7:24-27). Never has there been a greater opportunity to live for the Lord!

Just a few updates as we head into the weekend:

1. Sunday Worship

We are still meeting online (www.bethelsarasota.com) and in-person at 10:00am Sundays. Some are choosing to gather at our campus while others are taking their time, waiting for the pandemic to lessen before they return.

For those who are choosing to view online, we're with you and love you! We look forward to when you return, but in the meantime, if you need anything, please let us know.

For those who are gathering, please remember to practice social distancing while you're here. I know it's not convenient (and frankly, it's getting a little old, I get it), but there are some who come on Sunday's with the expectation that we will provide a safe space to gather. We want to honor that! If that trust is lost, they may not return. So please continue to be respectful, allowing 2-3 empty seats between family groups.

2. UV Lights

We are in the process of installing UV lights in all of the air conditioning units in the building. It is our understanding that these lights do help in slowing the spread of germs in indoor spaces. Thank you to our Council and installers for that kind gift for such a time as this!

3. Giving

As always, THANK YOU for continuing to give. Our ministries continue as strong as ever! We provide worship opportunities, we're gearing up for the return of elective classes starting with the school year, we're counseling, running Youth groups, teaching children, caring for the elderly, supporting missionaries and all the other multitudes of things we can do to spread the kingdom of Jesus!

If you're able, we would appreciate your ongoing tithes and offerings. You can either mail them to the church office (2985 Bethel Lane, Sarasota, FL 34240), or give online here: https://www.continuetogive.com/4852310/show_donation_prompt Thank you from the bottom of our heart!

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4. Please pray!

Our Elder Board meets again next week and will be talking through upcoming services, ministries, spiritual needs, etc. Please keep them in your prayers as they often make tough decisions. Pray that honoring Christ would be at the top of the priority list!

God bless you, and have a great rest of the week! See you in-person or "see" you online Sunday!

Pastor Shawn

Bethel

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June 30, 2020

Good Bethel family-

Psalm 96:1 says, "Oh sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth!" I hope that we all start today with a new song to God.

A few announcements for you all this week.

1. Due to some of the rising of cases of Sarasota and the lower attendance over the last few weeks, the elders have decided to not move forward with starting Sunday school this week. We will keep you updated as to when we will be bringing Sunday school back.
2. Members: You may have received an email yesterday from the church requesting that you fill out the Pastoral evaluations for Pastor Shawn and Pastor Jason. Please return those either to the ballot box or email a copy back to Pastor Ryan at ryanmayerbethel@gmail.com by July 31st. If you did not receive either of the evaluations please contact the church office to receive a copy.
3. Reminder to join Pastor Jason this Wednesday, July 1st at 9am on Facebook for a morning devotional. You can also join him this Wednesday night at 6:30pm either in person or on Facebook for a time of prayer.
4. Friday, July 3rd the Elders are calling on the congregation to take a time of prayer and fasting for our nation. We ask that you join in wherever you are. Pastor Jason will also be leading a time of prayer that morning at 6:30am on Facebook so please plan to join him.

Pastor Ryan, on behalf of the Board of Elders

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June 17, 2020

Good morning Bethel family-

We have been so thankful for all of you and what you mean to Bethel. The last few Sundays meeting indoors have gone well and we are thankful for your cooperation during this time. For the next two Sundays (June 21 & 28) our services will look very similar to what we have been doing over the last few weeks.

Here are a few details for you to note:

1. We are excited to announce that starting Sunday, July 5th we will be bringing back all Sunday school classes at 9am. This includes all ages from 2 years old through our adult classes.
2. We will continue to collect the offering via collection containers located near the sanctuary. We have had some questions about how to give to Change For a Dollar, so be aware that any change or one dollar bills placed in the offering container will go towards our Change For a Dollar Fund.
3. We also want to let you know that any child showing symptoms of sickness in the nursery or children's area will have their temperature taken and if they are running a fever will be taken back to their parents to be taken home.
4. 1 Peter 3:12 tells us that the Lord's ears are attentive to the prayers of the righteous, and in these uncertain times in our country we want to lift our prayers to Him. In light of that the Elder Board is calling on the church to give Friday July 3rd as a day of prayer and fasting for America. Please mark your calendar and plan to join us wherever you will be on that day.
5. We also want to remind you that each Wednesday evening we will be having a brief Prayer Time at 6:30pm at the church. Come join in as we pray for each other, our community, and our world during this time. If you have any questions you can contact our Pastor of Care at jason@bethelsarasota.com.

Thank you again for your prayers and encouragement during this time of transition, we are blessed to serve you as a church.

Pastor Ryan, on behalf of the Board of Elders

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June 4, 2020

Good morning Bethel family -

One of my favorite verses during times like this is Lamentations 3:23, "[His mercies] are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." Some of you may remember the old praise song built on those precious words of God.

We are thankful that Florida continues to re-open and understand that further lessening of restrictions will go into effect tomorrow. For this Sunday and the next (June 7 & 14), however, our services will look very similar to this past Sunday. The elders are scheduled to meet again on June 16 and will make any necessary adjustments to our current format in light of Florida's Phases at that time.

Overall, this past Sunday went quite well. We were very excited to see so many of you anxious to return and worship with your brothers and sisters in-person! God has used this time to strengthen our faith and fuel the flame of desire to worship in corporate unity.

So, a few reminders for this coming weekend:

1. We will continue meeting indoors this Sunday at 10:00am! We believe we can safely accommodate everyone in one service if we adhere to the following social distancing guidelines.
2. Rows of chairs have been removed to provide proper spacing. Please leave two to three empty chairs between household groups in individual rows in order to fully adhere to the guidelines. Ushers will be available to assist you if you have questions.
3. Because the sanctuary was at capacity last week, we will begin setting up spaced rows of chairs in the new foyer and Conference Room where you will be able to hear the service and watch on the TV screens. We encourage you to arrive early to find an available seat in the sanctuary as we realize worshipping in other places is not ideal. We can move to two morning services if necessary, but would prefer to remain at one if possible.
4. The livestream will be broadcast Sunday at 10am as well. Tune in at www.bethelsarasota.com and watch the live service along with those who were able to attend in-person.
5. Nursery (0-2 year olds) and Junior Church (3 year olds-PreK) will continue to be available. Children's Church (K-4th grade) will not be available. If you do not feel comfortable placing your child in one of the available programs, you are more than welcome to keep them with you in the main Worship service. If you have any questions about these services, you may contact our Children's Coordinator at cheryl@bethelsarasota.com.

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6. Children, Youth, and adult Sunday School classes will not be meeting just yet. We will be reviewing group classes at our next elders' meeting.
7. The front doors will be opened for you to reduce the number of door handles you have to touch. Additionally, ushers will assist you with doors through the foyer and into the sanctuary to provide as much of a hands-free experience as possible for you.
8. No bulletins will be distributed this Sunday. Please view online via the weekly email or our church website. If someone you know cannot access the bulletin electronically, please contact the Church Office at 941-371-9647.
9. The offering will be collected via collection containers placed near the sanctuary. We will not be passing offering plates during the service. If you cannot locate the collection containers, please find an usher or place your offering through the slot on the locked Church Office door.
10. Hand sanitizer and face masks will be available when you enter the building. You are not required to wear a face mask, but they are there for anyone who prefers to use them.
11. The Coffee Bar will not be open. Bring your caffeine with you!
12. Give a smile and wave instead of hand-shaking and hugging during this time. While you may be comfortable with contact forms of greeting, the person you're encountering may not be. Show lots of grace toward those with differing opinions!
13. Each Wednesday evening we will be having a brief Prayer Time at 6:30pm at the church. Come join in as we pray for each other, our community, and our world during this time. If you have any questions you can contact our Pastor of Care at jason@bethelsarasota.com.

You all have been amazing and we are so pleased to serve you as you share Christ with those around you! Paul's words from 2 Corinthians 3:2 come to mind, "You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all." God bless you abundantly!

Pastor Shawn, on behalf of the Board of Elders



MENNONITECHURCH

May 27, 2020

Good morning dear Bethel family -

Thank you again for the grace you've extended to us during these last several weeks. Your patience has made the process easier and we appreciate your kindness and support. Several announcements are below:

1. Beginning this Sunday, May 31, we will be having our Worship Service indoors in the sanctuary beginning at 10:00am! Between the sanctuary and overflow areas in the foyer and Conference Room, we believe we can safely accommodate everyone in one service.
2. Rows of chairs will be removed to meet the CDC guidelines for proper social distancing during this Phase. Two to three empty chairs should be left between household groups in individual rows in order to fully adhere to the guidelines. Ushers will be available to assist you if you have questions.
3. The service will be similar to what you've come to experience in our outdoors services, and will last approximately one hour.
4. The livestream will be broadcast Sunday at 10am as well. Tune in at www.bethelsarasota.com and watch the live service along with those who were able to attend in-person.
5. Nursery (0-2 year olds) and Junior Church (3 year olds-PreK) will be available. Children's Church (K-4th grade) will not be available. If you do not feel comfortable placing your child in one of the available programs, you are more than welcome to keep them with you in the main Worship service. If you have any questions about these services, you may contact our Children's Coordinator at cheryl@bethelsarasota.com.
6. No children's, youth, or adult Sunday School classes will be meeting.
7. The front doors will be opened for you to reduce the number of door handles you have to touch. Additionally, ushers will assist you with doors through the foyer and into the sanctuary to provide as much of a hands-free experience as possible for you.
8. No bulletins will be distributed this Sunday. Please view online via the weekly email or our church website.
9. The offering will be collected via collection containers placed in the sanctuary. We will not be passing offering plates during the service.

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10. Hand sanitizer and face masks will be available when you enter the building. You are not required to wear a face mask, but they are there for anyone who prefers to use them.

11. The Coffee Bar will not be open. Bring a cup of Joe with you!

12. We discourage hand-shaking and hugging during this time. While you may be comfortable with this, the person you're encountering may not be. Show lots of grace toward those with differing opinions and we'll all make it through fine! Give a smile and wave instead!

13. This evening, Wednesday, May 27 (and each Wednesday evening for a while), we will be having a brief Prayer Time at 6:30pm at the church. Come join in as we pray for each other, our community, and our world during this time. If you have any questions you can contact our Pastor of Care at jason@bethelsarasota.com.

14. We are saddened to announce that Vacation Bible School has been canceled for this summer. While this has been a highlight of our ministry for many years, the pieces just weren't able to come together this year. We anticipate a joyful time when we can restart it next year.

Thank you again for all your expressions of support! We look forward to continuing to worship our God together with you this weekend! If you have any questions, contact our Church Office and we will try to help you!

Pastor Shawn, on behalf of the Board of Elders

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May 20, 2020

Good afternoon Bethel family! If you are reading this, then God has a plan for your life today: "make disciples" (Mt. 28:19). How might you be able to carry out that plan yet today?

A few announcements:

1. We will continue to meet outdoors at the pavilion this Sunday morning, May 24, 9:00am. You all have been doing great at adhering to the social distancing protocols our government has recommended! Keep up the great work and I look forward to seeing you again! If you are unable to attend or would prefer to wait until a later date to rejoin, a pre-recorded version of the service will be broadcast at 10:00am on our website: www.bethelsarasota.com.
2. Our elders meet again on Tuesday, May 26, to discuss future plans for meeting. Please keep us in your prayers. And THANK YOU so incredibly much for the grace you've shown us so far. Every decision we make these days is tough but you have demonstrated your patience, even when you might have decided something different. We appreciate that!
3. On Wednesday evening, May 27, 7:00pm we will be having our Spring Business Meeting. This meeting will be held in the sanctuary of the main building. Unless something changes, we will be practicing the same social distancing guidelines we have in place outdoors. A business meeting packet will be emailed to you by Sunday. Please bring a paper or electronic copy with you since we will have paper copies only for those without email addresses.
4. Our Trustees and Janitorial Staff have been working hard at a cleaning policy for when we return indoors. Rest assured we're trying our best to think of everything to keep you safe. Things might be different, but we don't have to give into fear.

As always, if you need anything, please contact us by phone, text, or email. We would be happy to help however we can!

Pastor Shawn



MENNONITECHURCH

May 12, 2020

Good morning friends! A few announcements to start off your Tuesday:

1. For those who were able to join us outdoors this past Sunday morning, you all did great!! It was so good to see familiar faces and worship together, and you were careful to adhere to the guidelines we asked of you. Thank you for making it a success!

Our Elders have decided to meet outdoors at the pavilion for the next two Sunday's, May 17 & 24. We will keep the start time at 9:00am so it's hopefully a bit cooler. We have plenty of room to accommodate more, but until we move into another reopening Phase in Florida, we ask that you continue to abide by the current CDC social distancing guidelines if you choose to come.

2. For those unable to attend in-person services, a pre-recorded livestream will be available on our webpage at 10:00am each Sunday. One change: the livestream will only include the sermon, so be sure to log on promptly at 10:00! (By the way, the intent is that the livestream will continue indefinitely, even when we resume full reopening. Be sure to thank our Tech Team when you see them for their hard work to serve you each and every week in that way!)

3. In lieu of the Facebook Live Prayer Night this Thursday, our Worship Team has recorded some favorite worship songs that will be broadcast on our Vimeo channel on Thursday, 7:00pm. Watch for the link here and join in to worship our Lord and Savior!

As always, if you need help spiritually, emotionally, or financially, we're only a phone call or text message away. We would be happy to help in any way we can! May God bless you today as you faithfully walk with Him!

Pastor Shawn

Bethel

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May 5, 2020

Dear Bethel family –

“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, ‘My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust’” (Ps. 91:1-2). What a delight to know that God provides all that we need during this time. In Him alone do we put our trust! Praise Him today for His great strength!

The long-awaited time has come! As we’ve entered into Phase 1 of Florida’s ReOpen plan, our Elders have made the decision to meet in-person this Sunday, May 10, 9:00am at the pavilion (note the time!). We are excited about this outdoor event and are trusting God to make it both memorable and safe.

We want to do our part though, so this gathering will be unlike others we’ve had before at the pavilion. We are putting the stipulations below in place to ensure proper social distancing so those attending will be informed and feel safe. Please, please understand that in order for us to host this event Sunday or at future times, you must be willing to adhere, even if you may have other personal opinions. We don’t want to risk anyone’s health, so we’ll take this slowly and intentionally.

If you are elderly or in a vulnerable population as defined by the CDC, we encourage you to stay home and watch a pre-recorded, “essentially identical” service at our normal 10:00am time on our webpage: www.bethelsarasota.com. Even if you’re not in an at-risk group, if you don’t feel comfortable gathering just yet, we get it – you don’t have to! Don’t feel any shame in enjoying the livestream for a time longer. We would rather you worship without fear!

No children’s services (including the Zoom Sunday School class) will be available Sunday. We hope your children sit with you and enjoy the worship service as a family!

1. Please park in the grass on the north side of the pavilion, along the east side of the lane, or in the parking areas around the main campus building. Avoid parking in the grassy area immediately next to the pavilion basketball court since this will be a large foot traffic area. Also, a couple canopy tents will be set up in that area.

2. You may sit with members of your own household, but family groups should be separated by at least 6 feet distance. You might be surprised at how far 6 feet really is, so please do your best to sit only in the designated areas. Ushers will be available to guide you. We trust you and we really don’t want to be the “distance police!”

3. Black folding chairs will be available for the concreted areas, and the floor will be marked where it is appropriate to place chairs.

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4. Please bring a lawn chair just in case you need to sit in the grassy areas. We don't know how many will attend, so we will be setting up two canopy tents to provide more seating in case the concrete area fills up. We will do our best to get everyone under a roof, but even if you're in the sun, hopefully the earlier start time will make for cooler temps!
5. Masks will be available if you do not have one and would like to use one during the service.
6. We request that you do not shake hands or hug, but rather give a big smile and wave to your neighbors and friends. While you might feel comfortable being more physical, the folks next to you might not!
7. We will not be distributing bulletins, so please read ahead online, or you can view it anytime on your smart phone or device.
8. Tithes and offerings will be collected in a drop-off container. We will not be passing offering plates during this service.
9. In the case of inclement weather, we will put out updated instructions via Facebook and our PhoneTree by Saturday evening.

We anticipate that the service will last no longer than an hour. Expect a style and elements similar to what you've come to experience on the livestream.

Prior to and after the service, it will be tempting to strike up conversations with friends you haven't seen in some time (that's what Christians do, right?). To the degree possible, maintain strict social distancing while enjoying these catch-ups!

Again (and I cannot stress this enough), please do all you can to help us adhere with CDC guidelines even as we slowly come back together. Even though we are overjoyed to see everyone again, we don't want anything to set us or our Sarasota community back from the hard work they've already put in to get to this point!

We will be deciding on the location of our meeting week-by-week, so be sure to watch for weekly updates here or on our webpage!

We love you! God bless you as you anticipate re-gathering again with your Bethel family!

Pastor Shawn

Bethel

MENNONITECHURCH

April 30, 2020

Dear Bethel family -

Good morning! If you saw Pastor Ryan's devotion this week, you'll recall that he used Psalm 34. Psalm 34:1 says, "I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth." I hope that is true for you on this day that the Lord hath made!

Like us, many of you no doubt watched Governor DeSantis' press briefing yesterday as he rolled out his plan to slowly reopen Florida. While many questions still remain unanswered, our elders have decided the following:

1. Since "Phase 1" does not begin until Monday, May 4, we will remain closed for in-person services this Sunday, May 3. As always, you can watch our livestream at www.bethelsarasota.com beginning at 10am.
2. Once we enter into Phase 1, we will make week-by-week decisions for our services. We will continue livestreaming every Sunday, but in-person services, if scheduled, will be communicated sometime during that week. We are trying to keep a pulse on the latest news coming from state and local officials. Further, we have been and will continue to work closely with other local pastors as we move forward.

As you are aware, things change by the day, sometimes by the hour, even by the minute. So while we make plans, we hold them loosely. James 4:15, "Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.'" So these are the plans for now, Lord willing.

We have not yet made final decisions regarding Vacation Bible School but are still planning to host our July Day4Hope event in some capacity. Watch for details on those events later.

We very much appreciate your continued prayers as we navigate these uncharted waters. Please have grace with us and others as opinions differ, of course. And please continue to reach out to neighbors and friends who might need your financial, emotional, and spiritual support during this time. You have been doing great with this! Keep it up!

Finally, if you need cloth face masks, you may contact our church office. We have a number that have been donated for our free distribution. Thank you ladies for your hard work in making them!

Love and prayers for you!

Pastor Shawn, on behalf of the Elders

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April 23, 2020

Bethel Church family -

As we near the end of April, many questions are swirling about:

Will "Safer-At-Home" orders be extended?

When will Florida re-open? What is the process?

When will life get back to "normal?"

When will we be able to return to church?

Like you, I am very anxious to resume in-person worship services as soon as possible. To that end, we are monitoring the governor's press releases and orders closely. I am hopeful that the "Re-Open Florida Task Force" will result in clear directives for individuals and houses of worship and that those directives will be released over the weekend or early next week.

Our elders are planning to meet again next Tuesday, April 28, and consider whatever guidance has hopefully been issued. At that point we will attempt to make wise decisions about meeting together again.

So hang in there, keep praying, and stay tuned for more information to come out from us next week!

Pastor Shawn

Bethel

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April 1, 2020

Bethel Church Family –

Good morning! As the sun rises today, we should be reminded of the faithfulness of God. His purposes are good and His provisions are timely. While we do not know the future, we can rest in the certainty that God does and that He promises never to leave us nor forsake us (Heb. 13:5), especially in times like these. We can trust Him and not fear!

Thank you for your prayers as our Elder Board met last night to discuss our approach to church services during this COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak. We will continue to follow the CDC recommendations to limit group sizes to less than 10. Therefore, we will not be having corporate gatherings on Sunday mornings for the month of April but will continue to provide online services to gather around God's Word together.

We are disappointed that we cannot gather for Good Friday and Easter, highlights of our Christian calendar. However, we do plan to incorporate communion into the livestream service Easter Sunday morning (April 12), so we need you to make some preparations: Purchase some bread and grape juice for your own family in the next couple weeks so you can participate with us! More details later!

Most of our midweek services, including Life Groups and Wednesday evening on-campus classes, will keep the same schedule as they have the last couple weeks. The Youth Group will no longer be meeting live; Pastor Ryan will be publishing details to the Youth in the next few days about online interactions. If you have any questions about your mid-week class, please contact your Class Leader and they can help you!

Starting next Wednesday, April 8, watch our Bethel Facebook page for a Facebook Live devotion from one of our pastors! The start time for that Live Event is yet to be determined, but details will be published in advance so you can join in if you'd like.

Thank you for continuing to financially support the ongoing ministry of Bethel during this time! We are encouraging you to mail your offering to our office (2985 Bethel Lane, Sarasota, FL 34240) or give online here: https://www.continuetogive.com/4852310/show_donation_prompt

Along with our normal operating expenses, we have been in contact with many families in our church and offer financial or other resources as needed. Your giving has made this possible! Thank you!

While we long to return together as a body of believers, we trust that you have been encouraged by God's Word during this time. We have been refreshed by the many Thank You's and other words of support as we navigate these new waters together. May God bless you richly as we continue to depend on Him!

Bethel Elders

Bethel

MENNONITECHURCH

March 18, 2020

Bethel Church Family -

As our world faces fear and anxiety with these unprecedented changes, there is not a better place to be than in church with God's people - reflecting on God's good purposes for His people, encouraging one another personally through prayer and fellowship, and spurring one another on toward love and good deeds.

However, our government has recommended that we limit group sizes to 10 or less for the next 15 days to decrease the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus. Our elders have made the difficult decision to honor this request which means we are unable to meet together for the next two Sundays. We are hopeful we can regather on the first Sunday of April (Palm Sunday), but will continue to monitor the situation and make appropriate decisions as we draw closer to that time.

Though we can't personally be together, we can still gather around the Word of God. Pastor Shawn will be speaking to us via live stream at 10:00am for the next two Sundays. (More details for accessing the live stream will be made available later this week. If you do not have live stream capabilities, audio CD's may be requested by contacting Pastor Jason at jason@bethelsarasota.com) Regarding midweek services: if you are in a Life Group, you will be contacted by your Life Group leader about your group. Otherwise, Wednesday evening classes will continue on the church campus as scheduled. The elders will reassess the situation following these two weeks and will inform you about upcoming services.

Since many are prone to anxiety during a time like this, it is important to remember the sovereignty of our God. Pastor Shawn will explore Psalm 46 this coming Sunday, a wonderful psalm of assurance in such a troubled time. Our pastors and elders remain committed to serving you, so please contact us (<http://bethelsarasota.com/site/cs/staff.asp>) if you have any spiritual need. If you have financial needs, please submit requests here: <http://bethelsarasota.com/site/cs/editorial.asp?page=9> In the next couple days we will be distributing some methods you can use personally to assist those in need right around you.

Since giving is an important part of our worship and ongoing ministry, we are encouraging you to mail your offering to our office (2985 Bethel Lane, Sarasota, FL 34240) or give online here: http://www.continuetogive.com/4852310/show_donation_prompt

Join us for the next two Sundays via live stream in your homes along with your family, friends, and neighbors as we continue to be encouraged and equipped from the Word of God.

Bethel Elders