Dear Second Congregational Church Family and Friends:

No doubt everyone has been following updates related to Covid-19, the new strain of the Coronavirus. Time will tell, the extent to which this will impact our region and church. Of course, the common cold and seasonal influenza remain most prominent locally. Yet there is no question that the Coronavirus has caught the world’s attention. Non-anxious conversation and thoughtful precautions and planning are in order.

Second Church will continue to model clean hands and clean house practices. We encourage you to suspend shaking hands as we greet one another. With a wave and a smile, we can share greetings without sharing germs. For the creative among us, a bow of the head, arms crossed over the heart, a thumbs up, or Mr. Spock’s “live long and prosper” hand sign are also acceptable alternatives. I will be following this advice at the end of each service so please don’t feel slighted as I greet you on your way into or out of worship. I’m always glad to see you! If at any time you feel it is best to stay home, we remind you that listening to the scripture lesson and sermon from home is possible via our website: https://secondcongo.org/.

You can do your part by washing your hands regularly with soap and hot water. Remember, 20-30 seconds with your hands under the tap is best practice! There is also hand sanitizer at the entrance to the Sanctuary, church office and Fellowship Hall. It is a good idea to keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth. We also remind you to cover up your coughs and sneezes, into the elbow pit is best. We can also practice Christian care by checking in on our neighbors and homebound members, even if with a call or email.

Our sexton David will spend additional time disinfecting high contact areas – doorknobs, handles, handrails, countertops, bathrooms and sinks. Pastor Char and Lucy have also spoken with leaders of the food pantry, AA meetings and the Wednesday community meals, asking them to practice our guidelines for cleanup. It’s very important to keep our community spaces clean and open for our community ministries and those who rely on them. Unless otherwise communicated by our Assembly and Moderator, team meetings will continue to gather at their designated meeting times. Please self-monitor your health and hand-washing.

I reached out to Maine’s Center for Disease Control and Prevention for updates and I and the Deacons are monitoring other knowledgeable resources for specific recommendations for houses of worship. We are also researching best practices for our sacraments and future planning needs. In the meantime, these are simple steps that can help to keep us all healthy. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Let us pray that this global health concern is resolved soon. Please also pray for all those living in and around impacted areas, for all those working to control the spread of this new virus, for those working to care for the sick and for the most vulnerable in our communities and around the globe. In this time of concern and trouble, may we remain calm, be practical, and trust that God is our assurance that all will be well.

With love, support, care and prayers,

Pastor Char