

Partnering in Mission and Ministry



To our West Side Ministry Team,

You may be wondering, “Am I supposed to be receiving this communication?” If West Side is your church home, whether you are a member or just beginning to attend services, then the answer is “Yes!”

The church is not a building, it is the people. The people are not consumers, we are a community. The community is not a business, we are a family. The leader of our family says, “As the Father sent me, so I send you” (Mission). Jesus also says, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another” (Ministry).

Yes, you and I, every one of us are partnering together in the Mission and Ministry of Jesus Christ. This will always be my great concern for us as a church family, that we are following Jesus in the call and purpose He has for us. What else is the church but the community of people who are following Jesus?

In the face of COVID-19, all of us are having to adjust. As the church, I believe Jesus calls us to be both leaders and witnesses in our spheres of influence. It isn’t because the government instructed us not to gather for worship that we are choosing to shift our worship online. We are doing it because we believe it is what Jesus wants us to do. We are not just going along, we are prayerfully asking Jesus, “What is the loving thing to do? How can we serve one another and our community?” As the leaders (Session) have met, prayed, and discussed, physical distancing seems a wise and prudent action at this time.

As the church, let’s own it. Let’s choose to do it because we are willing to make sacrifices for the welfare of others. Notice, we are really encouraging “physical-distancing” not “social-distancing”. I joined Facebook, although I am not very excited about it. However, I am excited about staying connected with my church family. I am excited to offer Facebook Live Bible studies, post video updates on what is happening, launch a daily-devotional series by the pastoral staff starting on Monday, being able to worship online on Sundays, and I love that we are praying for one another on Sunday mornings through this medium.

All of us need community. Physical-distancing isn’t ideal, but we can and, I believe, should be doing this. The deacons, pastors, and other leaders are going to be making a lot more phone calls, trying to make sure that we stay connected.

If you are sick, have been laid-off, or if you are just feeling isolated or afraid, call your deacon or one the pastors. The greatest mark of the church is the way we love one another. In times of crisis, we are going to stand-up to the challenge and live into His call. I don’t know what the response will be like, but I know West Side. We function like a family, and we have a whole host of people who like to serve. If you need help—physical, emotional, or spiritual—then reach out and ask for help from our church family.

Let me encourage all of you, take up the ministry of social-connecting. Look at your church directory. [Don’t have one? Email Wendy at wpuz@westside1.org and she will email you one.] Pray for people, people you know and people you don’t know. Consider making a few more phone calls than normal and reaching out to others in our church family. If you’re an extrovert, call somebody you don’t know very well:

“Hey, this is Ralph, and I’m listening to my own advice, and thought I would reach-out and see how you and your family are doing? Did you get the email I sent out? You didn’t? Have you signed up for emails? The church is really encouraging us to stay connected. Have you been engaging with the worship services on Facebook? You didn’t know about them? Are you on Facebook? It’s really easy to sign-up. Once you sign up, just look for West Side Church Richland WA. If you subscribe to that page, you will get notices when something from the church goes live. You can also look at the website later on in the day or another day and choose your time for worship. So how are you and your family doing right now?... That’s sounds rough, you might want to call your

deacon. I have their number right here in the church directory. If you are comfortable, can I pray for you right now?..."

While we are limited in how we can respond to the needs of our community, we are continuing the Bite2Go program, providing food for people. We are also building a list of people who, if healthy, would be willing to deliver food for people who are or become shut-in. You may want to sign up to be on this list. If you never get a call, thank God there are just not that many who need this sort of assistance.

The church buildings are basically closed until Session decides to open them again. We are planning to hold worship services for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Resurrection (Easter) Sunday online. The Bite2Go is still going, so this ministry team will have access to the building. Church staff will do some work from their offices, but we are practicing physical-distancing and doing most of our work from home. Hourly employees' work hours are being cut back because of this closure. For this month, those hourly employees who have regularly scheduled work hours will not receive a reduction in pay. Pastors are squeezing in study leave and vacation during this time of reduced activities. Though for some of our pastors, ramping up our online presence has really just shifted the workload. These decisions all have financial implications; one of the tasks of Session is to monitor and Steward the resources God provides.

As we have shifted to online gatherings and worship, the finance office has asked me to provide updated information on how to support the mission and ministry of West Side.

- **Mail** - Please make your checks payable to West Side Church and mail them to West Side Church, 615 Wright Ave, Richland, WA 99352. Although the church building will be closed, staff will be checking mail regularly.
- **Bank Bill-Pay** - Most financial institutions offer a free bill-paying service. You can use this service to send a donation to the church. For more information, contact your financial institution or the church Finance Office at info@westside1.org
- **Online Giving** - Go to the West Side Church website at www.westsidechurchrichland.org. Click on the GIVE tab and then select Online Giving. You will be instructed to create an account or log in as a guest. We would encourage regular givers to create an account which will give you access to your historical giving records. Currently, all gifts received through Online Giving will support the Operating Fund. Two payment methods are available: 1. Electronic transfer (ACH) from your financial institution or 2. A debit/credit card. These methods of giving will incur fees which will decrease your donation to the church. However, the electronic bank transfer will only cost thirty cents per transaction.

Blessings in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ralph', written in a cursive style.

Ralph