



---

*"What does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and walk humbly with our God" Micah 6: 8*

---

March 16, 2020

Corona virus, covid 19 has become a major concern for all of us. For many, the response has been one of FEAR. Did you know that three hundred and sixty-five times in the Bible we are instructed 'Fear not.' The prophet Isaiah 12.2 reshapes this thought by writing, "I will trust, and not be afraid." Instead of responding to adversity and trouble with FEAR we can respond with TRUST. Positively and proactively, we trust instead of being afraid. We do not trust in what we see around us, we trust in the Lord.

This past weekend was one of prayer, reflection and seeking the Lord – accompanied by counsel from physicians, mentors and staff, as well as directives from Ottawa Public Health.

Today a decision has been made to suspend all OIM services until April 6. This applies to our day programs, street outreach and Innerscity Arts program. While these programs have been stopped for now, we will continue to monitor and adapt as time progresses.

The question pivots around one issue: Is the good service delivered to our street friends by so many faithful volunteers and staff outweighed by the possible risks and long term consequences that might follow if we continue to provide services? The answer is no.

For reasons of personal safety for staff, volunteers and our community, and the concern that we comply with directives and recommendations from professionals, this decision has been made. It has not been an easy one. Physical health and well-being is one component of the equation to consider, and we recognize we are not health care professionals. Mental health and well-being is an equally significant factor in people's lives, and although we are not professional counselors and clinical experts in this area, we do provide stability, community and support for those who suffer from mental health issues. Not providing this critical care through our caring volunteers and services has not been an easy decision.

Please pray for our community and friends on the street; for our youth and their friends, all in need; and for our marginalized Veterans.

Going forward, we will replace fear with faith – faith in the One who died in our place. We put our trust in Him, and believe and receive the help that He is able to give in our time of need.

*Ken Matheson*