

A Message to the FPC Congregation Regarding the Coronavirus

Dear Friends,

In the 48 hours since I first drafted a letter to you regarding FPC's actions in response to the COVID-19 virus - set to go out today - the situation has changed dramatically in our nation. Every hour information about COVID-19 is new or changing and we are closely in step with these developments

While we trust that you have your own ways of staying healthy and helpful in this crisis, we want you to know the posture First Presbyterian Church leaders are taking in our present moment. In addition to assuring you of our diligence in this crucial moment, our hope is to also suggest ways that we can unite our minds and hearts in common efforts.

Out of an abundance of caution, First Presbyterian Church will not hold worship services this Sunday (March 15) and next Sunday (March 22) and all activities and events scheduled to happen at the church during this time period are canceled or postponed.

- Our Session is establishing a Pandemic Safety Team (Dan Snyder - lead pastor, Chuck Manners - information elder, Susan Moedinger - hospitality elder, Heather Halstead - safety trustee, Scott Albright - building staff) to make decisions promptly.
- A 4-tier Pandemic Action Plan has been developed to guide decisions as the Pandemic necessitates increased levels of response
- Our facilities staff is performing deep cleaning action throughout our building

Please watch for communication in email or posted on the website over the weekend. Plans are being developed for an online way to bring our congregation together in worship this Sunday. And there will be ways for you to connect by sharing prayer concerns and praises with one another. Decisions are being made daily regarding future scheduled programming and updates will be posted as soon as those decisions are official.

The world counts on faith-filled people to pray on their behalf and this is our primary work in times like these. We can be in prayer for those who are suffering with the virus, for their caregivers and medical attendees, and for those working tirelessly on treatment. This calls for the strength and wisdom of God.

Be reminded of the good word preached by Rev. Dr. Michael Wilson on Sunday: the command we hear more often than any other in Scripture is "Do not be afraid." Fearful responses, no matter how they manifest themselves, will crowd out the ability to act with compassion. Fear can paralyze; fear can isolate; fear can become selfish. While those who fear will never love completely, full-hearted love casts out fear. May we all find wise and courageous ways to serve our neighbors. And may we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus Christ in this time that has grabbed the attention of the world.

With Hope and Grace,
Pastor Dan Snyder, lead pastor
Chuck Manners, communications elder
Susan Moedinger, hospitality elder
Heather Halstead, safety trustee