

Dear First Presbyterian Church Family,

I continue to be grateful for the remarkable service of worship put together and led by Rev. Dr. Tom Currie, Penny Leone, Philip Smith, Susan Isenhour, Monica Koenig, Tim Smith, Jeff Pratt, Joy Bedford, and Thomas Isenhour. It was such a joy, as well, to see how interactive so many of you were with that unique service.

I am writing to provide the latest update and plans that the session has for the church. We have taken into account guidance from the CDC, and we are mindful of the eight-week ban that Williamson County has placed on gatherings of more than 50 (which began on Monday, March 16 and ends on Monday, May 11). Most centrally, we seek to love one another and our community in the best way possible. In light of all of this, **the session has voted to suspend all in-person activities at the church until Monday, May 11**. These activities include worship services, Sunday school, circles, Bible studies, Stephen Minister continuing education, senior seminar, session and deacon meetings, committee meetings, choir and bell rehearsals, and LOGOS. Be assured, however, that we are still active with staff, session, and practicing our worship continuously in albeit different ways.

We will assess these plans weekly and let you know if or when anything shifts from it. We want to remain flexible and adaptable as the situation evolves, and certainly it would bring us great joy if we could meet again in-person before May.

Know, however, that as things stand right now this is a painful and difficult decision for the session. We readily recognize how foundational and formational our time together is. However, we also know that the best way we can love our neighbors in this unique time is to do our part in slowing the spread and diminishing the impact of the COVID-19 virus, a virus which is proving particularly detrimental to older adults but is readily carried and spread by folks of any age.

The staff and session have worked hard to come up with some provisional plans to help us continue and follow Jesus together in this unique time. Below are some of the initial plans, and these will be updated and improved as we move through the coming days.

1. **Worship** - Like this past Sunday, worship will be live-streamed. We have already worked on improvements to the audio so that that will come through more clearly this time around. The link for worship will be sent via email on the Friday before worship. The link will also be posted to Facebook and on the church website. The email will also include a worship bulletin and discussion questions that your household can work through after the service of worship. Hard copies of the sermon will be sent to members who do not have or use computers, and those hard copies will also be made available on the church's website.

A Note on Memorial Services:

If we have a death in the congregation during this time, close family may choose to have a service at the church or graveside. However, public memorial services will be scheduled after May 11.

2. **Congregational Care** - Each week, the officers of the church will be calling all of the members of the church to check in and inquire ways the church can be helping in this time. When you receive your call, please take the opportunity to express any needs you have or ways the church can be helpful. Throughout this season, we will pay special attention to those who are most isolated or already homebound and now cannot receive visitors due to new visiting restrictions in place at a number of our resident communities. We will also do twice-a-week mailings to those members who do not have or use a computer. Those mailings will include things like the printed copies of the sermon, the bulletin for Sunday's upcoming service, and devotionals.

A Note on Transportation:

Medical Appointments - For any members who need assistance getting to and from medical appointments, Penny Leone (penny@fpcgeorgetown.org) is the point of contact. She can assist in coordinating those, and anyone interested in helping provide rides may let her know of your willingness to do that.

Grocery Store Runs - For members who cannot shop for groceries themselves or need to be especially mindful about avoiding crowds right now, please do not hesitate to contact Kathy Kerr Kubatzky (kathy_kerr2001@yahoo.com or 512-705-7696). She is the point of contact who will ensure a congregant will do that for you. If you would like to help shop for and deliver groceries for members, please contact Kathy so she has your information.

3. **Education and Nurture** - Joy Bedford, Jaime Cowan, David Lee and Sarah Hulsey, and the Education and Nurture Committee are pulling together various ideas to facilitate in-home discipleship opportunities for individuals and families. More will be communicated as those plans unfold. For now, know that minimally we plan to email a devotional each morning during this extended time of social distancing. The devotional is entitled "**Closing the Distance: A Daily Devotional.**" We hope it proves a source of encouragement in this time.
4. **Mission** - The Mission Committee has been reaching out to our ministry partners to inquire about best ways we can be supporting them in this time. We will update you as opportunities present themselves.
5. **Website** - In the next twenty-four hours, we will have a new banner on the front page of our website related to all of our plans being made in light of the COVID-19 virus. Simply click on that banner, and you will be taken to a page with the latest information and resources.
6. **Financial Stewardship** - We hope you will continue to financially support FPC and our ministries through this difficult time. You can do this in a few ways:
 1. **Checks** - you can mail your checks into the church office (703 S. Church St Georgetown, TX 78626)
 2. **Direct Deposit** - you can set up direct deposit with the church. Contact Sue Bell if you would like to do this (fpcfinance@fpcgeorgetown.org).
 3. **Online Giving** - You can give one time or set up recurring donations via online giving. Go to fpcgeorgetown.org and click on the "Give" button in the upper right hand corner

7. **Church Office** - We will remain open, but some staff will be working remotely more frequently - both as we attempt to keep a measure of social distance and because some of the staff are also doing more childcare given that many schools and daycares are closed for the time being.
8. **Summer Plans** - If your committee has ministry plans for the summer, continue forward with those. It is difficult to know where we will be at that point, but for now it makes sense to continue making your plans and meeting (virtually) as needed.

This hardly covers every detail that has been discussed among the staff and session, but we do hope it gives you a solid picture of the current plan and some of the ways we sense God calling us to step forward in faith for such a time as this. Know, again, it grieves us deeply that we are not gathering as usual, but we do give thanks for God's abundant faithfulness and we are deeply encouraged by the continued love and support that all have been offering one another in this time.

Certainly, we commend you to continue in that great work - feel free to make phone calls and write letters to one another. Connect over social media. Create digital small groups. Reach out to folks who sit in the pews around you each week - if nothing else, let them know you are thinking of them and praying for them in this time. Undoubtedly, the gifts of God will be made known all the more fully in the coming days as we connect with one another in these simple ways.

Grace and Peace in the Lord Jesus Christ,

Bobby Hulme-Lippert and the FPC Session