

March 17, 2020

Greetings, dear members and friends of First Presbyterian Church!

Grace and peace to you, in the name of the God who is always watching over us. I am so grateful of that reminder in this very surreal time. Driving into the office this morning, there were noticeably fewer cars on the road, fewer people out walking, and many businesses closed.

Based on conversations I have had with church members, leaders and staff, ***we have decided to suspend all FPCP meetings and worship services on our campus through March.*** Decisions like these are never made lightly, but the Session and Staff feel like it's the best path forward to try to minimize the chances of spreading the coronavirus in our church and the communities in which we live. Again, when Jesus said, "Love your neighbor," he asked us to consider how altering our actions might benefit others, particularly the most vulnerable in our midst.

So, looking ahead, here are some of the things we are working on to stay connected as a community and care for one another...

- 1. The Office** – The office will remain (somewhat) open. Roger will be working mostly from home, and Pastor John will be in and out as needed. If you call the church office (707-762-8269) your call will be automatically forwarded to Roger's phone at home. If you do need to come to the office, it's best to give us a call to make sure someone is there to let you in, and please do *so only if you are not feeling sick.*
- 2. Staying Connected** – The Deacons and other church leaders have started to coordinate and plan ways to reach out to folks at home. I've also started a Pastor's Blog on the church website and will be partnering with Roger Johnson and Phoebe Antonio to continue our church communication through email and other social media platforms.
- 3. Video Conferencing** – We will soon have a Zoom account set up for video conference calls. That will enable us to livestream our worship on Sunday mornings. Small groups will also be able to use it if they choose to meet on-line. We'll keep you posted when this is set up.
- 4. Home Deliveries** – We have volunteers available to run errands for folks who are unable to get out (for things like groceries, etc.). If you could use some assistance, don't hesitate to call the church office or Pastor John directly.
- 5. Livestream Sunday Worship** – Beginning this Sunday, we are going to try to livestream our worship service and you can be a part of it! More to come on that.
- 6. Godly Play** – Prior to Sunday morning, Grete Hansen will be reaching out to families with a Godly Play video and some activities for the kids. We'll also get these on our social media sites.

7. **Finances** -- FPCP will continue to incur expenses, and there are undoubtedly challenging economic times ahead for many in our church and local community. Tithes and offerings can be mailed to the church office or slipped through the mail slot in the office door (939 B Street, Petaluma CA, 94952).

As you think of other things we need to consider, please let me know. And please keep our congregation, family and friends, and our Sonoma County community in your prayers.

Stay connected, stay safe, and stay attentive This may just be a season in which Jesus appears to us in some very new and unexpected ways. We'll get through this, and we'll do it together!

Blessings,

Pastor John

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