



Dear Members and Friends of First Presbyterian St. Petersburg:

As you know, the Coronavirus situation, both locally and globally, has been changing by the day. Earlier advice to minimize the spread of the virus focused on hand-washing, disinfecting high-traffic areas, and staying home when ill. Emphasis is now also being placed on the **importance of creating social distance.**

Our life together as God's church at FPC-St. Petersburg does exactly the opposite. That is, when we worship, sing, study, and fellowship together at 701 Beach Drive, we naturally, are in close proximity to one another, which puts our church family at risk for spreading and contracting the virus.

Because the health and welfare of FPC members and friends is always of greatest concern, the session has made the difficult decision to suspend worship for all three worship services this Sunday, March 15, 2020, at FPC. In the interest of protecting those most at risk, we will live-stream a message and prayers from the Sanctuary at 11 a.m. on Sunday morning. To view the service online, cut and paste the following URL into your browser:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYcYHUzgbUrt_w04s4Vb5_g.

We will make decisions about **future worship services on a week-by-week basis** and keep you informed.

Please remember that church is not the building; the church is the people and, although we will not be physically worshipping together this week, we will be together in spirit, united by our worship and love of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Here are a few additional changes made in the church calendar taken as precautionary measures to keep everyone healthy:

1. **Youth** – All youth activities during Spring Break (next week) have been cancelled.
2. **The College of Elders Dessert Reception**, scheduled for 3/22/20, has, regrettably, been cancelled.
3. **The Presbyterian Women's Gathering**, scheduled for March

28 has been cancelled.

4. **The Senior Lunch**, organized by the Deacons, and scheduled for April 28, has been cancelled and will be rescheduled for sometime in the Fall.

Additionally, **Grief Share**, scheduled for Tuesday, March 17 at 10 a.m. is cancelled. Please pray for Lon Summers, (Ruth's husband) who will be having a procedure done on Monday.

During this season of uncertainty, we are concerned about the ministries of our church, and about the welfare of our employees and their families. The financial viability of the church remains dependent on your generosity. Please continue to give generously to the work of Jesus Christ through the ministries of FPC-St Petersburg throughout the duration of this season in the life of the church. You may give online through the church website at: www.fpcstpete.com. Then click on the "Resources" tab, then on "Give." You may also mail God's tithes and your gifts via check to 701 Beach Dr. NE, St. Petersburg, FL 33701.

Again, I ask you to:

1. **Please pray.** Prayer settles hearts, gives direction, creates empathy, and can even help outcomes be changed. Pray for those who are sick. Pray for those who are afraid. Pray for those who live in places with no access to health care. Pray for public health officials who are so very strained.
2. **Be not afraid.** Fear muddles everything. A virus which is a clear cause for concern and response is not automatically a cause for panic. We need caution and preparation, but there is no need for fear.
3. **Be a good neighbor.** If you know people who are especially prone or susceptible, or if people that you know self-isolate or are quarantined in the weeks to come, be a friend and reach out to them with whatever technology you may be able to use. The support of friends and loved ones is crucial to any recovery. If you know of members and friends who are ill and may need assistance in any way (shopping, picking up prescriptions etc.), please let the office know (727- 822-2031) if you cannot help.
4. As always, **please communicate with us** if you are sick or choose to self-isolate. We want to care for you in whatever way we can. You can email Ruth Elswood, Parish Associate for Congregational Care, at relswood@fpc-stpete.org or call the church office.

May the peace of God guard our hearts and minds as we care for one another and our community.

Dawn M. Conti

Pastor, First Presbyterian Church – St. Petersburg

First Presbyterian Church St. Petersburg, FL

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A Stephen Ministry Congregation of the PC (USA) - Christ empowering people to care for people.



First Presbyterian Church
St. Petersburg, Florida

