

# Faith Presbyterian Church

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March 13, 2020

Dear Faith Family,

After a lot of thought the session has decided to cancel our gathering for worship this coming Lord's Day, March 15<sup>th</sup>. We have also decided to cancel all mid-week church events from March 16<sup>th</sup> through the 21<sup>st</sup>.

As an alternative to gathering together for worship, we will offer a streaming service available at 11:00 [on our website](#).

Under the video there will be a link to a PDF with the order of service. We'd encourage you to join us at 11:00 through the streaming video, with the PDF open before you either in another window, or on another device. The PDF will include scans of the hymns that we will be singing from the hymnal.

This is, of course, not ideal. It's *not* the same as being together, in any number of ways. This was a difficult decision for the session to make for that very reason. We rightly value the gathering with God's people, on the Lord's Day, to worship. We can worship God individually and with our families of course – and that is very good. But it is not the same as being together with the gathered congregation. Nonetheless, we are still united as God's people by his Spirit, and the technology of the livestream allows us to worship at the same time, even while in separate places. We are thankful for that.

The session made this decision while wrestling with the complexities of the situation and our callings to love God and love our neighbors – including those most physically vulnerable in our congregation and in our community. We came to the conclusion that this was the best way to proceed. I realize that some may be relieved by this decision, while others may disagree with it. My prayer and my exhortation to you is that even if we disagree, we can do it in Christian love, trusting that each of us is striving to be faithful to the Lord's callings on us – even if we come to different conclusions on what that should look like in this particular situation.

Some of you will be aware of Governor Inslee's proclamation regarding group gatherings. We have been told by legal counsel that that decree does not apply to us, but we have made the judgment ourselves that the best way for us to love each other and our neighbors is to refrain from gathering this Sunday. Going forward, the session will be taking this one week at a time. For ongoing updates, please stay tuned to the bulletin and announcement page on [our website](#), our [Facebook page](#), and your email.

Many of you are dealing with frustration over what is happening. Many of you are struggling with fear over what may happen next. We all tend to live our day-to-day lives as if we are in control of so many things that we are not. Then, parts of society grind to a halt, and we are forced to recognize how little control we have over the world around us. Illnesses threaten us and we are forced to recognize how

little control we have over our own bodies. Our plans are cast aside and we don't know what will happen next, and we are forced to recognize how little control we have over the future.

Our lack of control over these things has always been a fact, but we don't usually see it – we don't usually feel it.

And yet ... regardless of what we see and regardless of what we feel, Jesus Christ, our Loving Savior, our Good Shepherd, sits on the throne of the universe. Our God is sovereign. And he loves his children. Whether we see this now, or whether we feel this now, our calling is to turn our attention to him and trust that it is true. We do not know what God is doing in all of this. But we know we can trust him. As the Heidelberg Catechism reminds us, God our Father “will turn to [our] good whatever adversity he sends [us] in this sad world. He is able to do this because he is almighty God, he desires to do this because he is a faithful Father.” This is the truth we must live out before God, one another, and a watching world.

We will be tempted to turn to many things in this time of uncertainty: to grasp more desperately at control, or to dive more deeply into distraction. Instead, let us turn our eyes more earnestly to God, coming to him in prayer, clinging to his Word, and seeking to love him and one another more and more faithfully.

I will be saddened not to see you all on Sunday. But I am thankful that we will still be able to pray together, worship together, and come to God's Word together, even while we are apart.

If you have any questions, please [contact us in the church office](#).

Your servant in Christ,  
Pastor Nicoletti