

Faith Presbyterian Church

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Dear FPC Family,

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

It has been an eventful week since my last letter to you on March 13th. It has been a time of adjustment and change for everyone, with shifting practices regarding work, new homeschooling tasks and responsibilities for students and parents, disconnection from our church and communities for all, and anxiety and uncertainty for many. This is a challenging experience for everyone.

And yet, as we remind ourselves again and again, Christ is Lord. He loves us and is sovereign.

At the church, our leadership has been working on how we can best continue to minister to you all under these challenging and unusual circumstances, continuing to do the work of the Church as best we can, while loving our neighbors through best practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

I'd like to update you all on what to expect from the church in the weeks ahead:

All Gatherings Cancelled Through Saturday, April 4th

The session has decided to cancel all gatherings (including gatherings for worship) through Saturday April 4th. Sadly, this will include two more Sundays where our gathering in-person will be replaced through our online video stream (see below for more on that). It will also unfortunately mean cancelling the prayer retreat which was scheduled for April 3-5.

Sunday Morning Worship

I am so thankful to the musicians, the staff, and our tech support here at the church, all of whom made the livestream of our worship possible last Lord's Day morning.

I know some experienced technical difficulties, and we are sorry for that, and appreciate your patience as we adjust to this new setup. The root problem was with the host of our website, and we have been working with them to increase our capacity for this coming Lord's Day.

We will stream our service again on Sunday at 11:00 am. The primary place we would urge you to go for that service would be [our website](#), but we will also work to have some redundancies in place. In addition to being on the streaming page, the written order of service will also be sent out via email beforehand (in case the site has problems again). And in addition to streaming to our website, an identical video stream will be sent to our Facebook page via Facebook Live (Last Lord's Day the Facebook Live broadcast was an on-the-fly feed from a cell phone. This time we will aim to have it be the same feed as goes to the website. You do not need a Facebook account to access our Facebook Live video stream.)

As with last Lord's Day, please let us know about any issues that come up, so that we can work to continue to improve our service.

Sunday Evening Worship

Some have expressed their disappointment that we did not offer a streaming service of evening worship on 3/15. We appreciate your patience for us as we make adjustments to everything, including this aspect of our church life. So much changed so quickly last week that it was hard to get everything up and running for an additional evening service as well.

This coming Lord's Day (3/22) we will begin offering a live-stream-only service at 6:00 pm. It will be an abbreviated service, with a shorter sermon (and possibly a more topical one), but it will still be a time for us to join together in turning our eyes to the Lord in worship and hearing from God's word.

Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting

Starting next Wednesday (3/25) we will begin holding Wednesday night prayer meeting over a conference call through Microsoft Teams. The meeting will begin at 7:00 pm, and may be somewhat abbreviated. You can join by phone or video conference.

Instructions for joining the call have gone out via email. If you have not received those instructions and would like to, please contact the church office (fpc@faithtacoma.org) for more information.

This format will introduce some challenges, but we hope it will be a time for many of us to connect and to pray for one another. If we have technical or logistical difficulties, we will continue to work on ways to refine the process and format in the future.

In order to add some more structure (made necessary by this format), we are asking two things:

- If you have a prayer request that you would like prayed for at prayer meeting, if possible, please [e-mail the church office](#) by noon on Tuesday.
- If you would be willing to be assigned something to pray for on the conference call, please [e-mail the church office](#) by noon on Tuesday.

There will still be opportunities to share new prayer requests, and to pray on the call even if you did not email us beforehand. But the more we can organize before the call, the more orderly the call can be.

Communicating with Church Leaders

I want to urge you all once again, if you have any needs (material or spiritual), please do not hesitate to contact us: whether the pastors, the elders, the deacons, or the staff. We want to serve you, and we urge you to let us know if there are specific ways we can do that.

In the meantime, we will also be working to reach out to many of you as best we can over the phone – and so please do not be surprised if you see a call from a pastor, elder, or deacon!

Mid-Week Morning Devotionals

In a time where people feel isolated and where we are all facing unique challenges in keeping our focus, Pastor Gutierrez and I have decided to begin offering brief morning devotionals via Facebook Live on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, starting on Wednesday 3/25. The devotionals will be 5-15 minutes long, and will include Scripture and prayer. They won't get into deep exegesis, but will aim to help us all focus together on the Lord as we start our day. We will broadcast at 7:30 am, though once the broadcast is over, it will be archived on our Facebook page. Live videos and the archived videos can be accessed on [our video archive](#).

You do not need a Facebook account to access these videos. If you tune in for the livestream and don't see it on the screen yet, just reload the page until you do.

Of course, circumstances may change and we don't know how long we will offer this or how the frequency might need to be altered. But for now, we look forward to being able to provide this time for us to join together.

Speculations

There have been some speculations going around about members of our congregation being diagnosed with COVID-19. As far as I am aware no one in our congregation has been tested and confirmed to have the new virus. People have been sick, and many are (rightly) exercising an abundance of caution if they have any symptoms that overlap with COVID-19. In any case, as we care for one another, I encourage everyone to act with an abundance of caution, while also avoiding speculation and gossip.

Focus

Brothers and sisters, we will come back to this theme in the days ahead, but in the midst of all that is happening, let's be intentional about turning to the Lord.

Periods of unique trial can be times when we lose our focus: where our hearts and minds become consumed with concerns and anxieties and frustrations. But they can also be times where we repent all the more sincerely, and cling to the Lord all the more fervently.

It is my prayer for us all that this would be a time where our focus on the Lord is renewed and strengthened.

As we considered last Sunday, the Lord holds on to his people, and nothing – nothing at all – can snatch them from his hand.

And so, in this time of uncertainty and anxiety, let us entrust ourselves – all that we are and all that we have – to our faithful Good Shepherd Jesus Christ.

Your servant in Christ,
Pastor Nicoletti