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Dear Church Family and Friends,

We, the Elders of Session, talked at length this week about how to lead FPCB during the Coronavirus pandemic. We'll start with the simplest statement about our direction.

Starting immediately and until further notice, on-site programming and meetings will be suspended through May 10th. This includes the Sunday schedule. Our worship and life together will be directed through email, Facebook, and the church website. For active members who do not have email, regular phone contact will be made.

(The Preschool is a separate entity from the church. It mirrors the status of Pine-Richland Schools which issued a notice of closing through March 27th. This notice was given last week.)

So, why commit to 8 weeks? As of Monday, various levels of government have issued different advisements as follows:

- The CDC has advised that gatherings larger than 50 not convene for the next 8 weeks.
- The White House has requested that gatherings larger than 10 not convene for the next 15 days.
- Allegheny County has requested that gatherings larger than 20 not convene. The county affirmed the value of churches serving the community.
- The State of Pennsylvania has not issued clear state-wide guidance.

In the spirit of submitting to governing authorities according to Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2:13-15, the Session has chosen to follow the CDC guideline as of the beginning of the week. We concede that this standard may shift due to a change in virus infections or to political behavior. As of today, there is not a common voice saying that the tide is turning. That said, we profess to have one constant: Our submission to the unchanging Christ who is the Lord of our life together.

Three main questions on the table are:

- How do we maintain worship as a key mark of discipleship?
- How do we care for one another?
- How do we shine the light of Jesus in our community?

Maintenance of Sunday Worship and Holy Week: Video worship content will be prepared by staff and elders. It will be delivered to your email, posted on Facebook, and on the website prior to 10 AM each Sunday. The Session invites you to worship where you are each Sunday at 10 AM. You may choose to invite selected family, friends, or neighbors to join with you. This Sunday, be looking for an email through Constant Contact or visit Facebook or the website (fpcb.org). Maundy Thursday and Good Friday will have similar support.

If you do not receive Constant Contact emails, subscribe with the link on our homepage. If you did that and still don't receive emails, call the church office at 724-443-1555.

Caring for One Another: We can never stop growing in our practice of Member-to-Member care. If you have a ministry of care with someone, maintain it in a way that doesn't compromise their health. Here are some specific thoughts for the next 8 weeks:

- Homebound and Nursing Home members will continue to receive care from Member Care Deacons through phone calls and cards.
- Staff will make regular phone calls to Active Member households, over the age of 65, for whom we do not have an email address.
- We have 13 residents from The Village at St Barnabas who worship with us. In a future email, you will be invited to participate in a special ministry of care with these residents.
- If your household is affected by a Coronavirus infection or quarantine, please call the church office. We will work with you to meet your needs.
- If you are part of an existing church group, please find ways to check in on each other.

Shining the light of Jesus in our community: This is a wide topic that knows no bounds. Here are some thoughts:

- Use your social media accounts to convey messages of concern and care for people.
- Talk to cashiers and small business owners in a way that shows gratitude for their services and concern for their well-being.
- Make contact with neighbors who are elderly, recovering from surgery, or have immune system deficits. If you become aware of a need that exceeds your capacity to help, please call the church office.
- If you know of a specific way that our church can shine the light of Jesus into our community, share your idea by calling the church office at 724-443-1555.

Last Sunday, it was said that Church can never be canceled. The Church is the people of God and we are not bound by walls. And though we won't be gathered in the sanctuary in the coming weeks, we call for mutual prayer and submission to be a demonstration of the body of Christ, no matter the limitations. We are charged with these words from the Apostle Paul:

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy,
to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice,
holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. (Romans 12:1)*

Grace and peace,

The Session

(Remember, if you need assistance, call the church office at 724-443-1555.)