

SESSION HIGHLIGHT – PART 2 THROUGH APRIL 2020

- On March 12 and March 22, Session held the first of several special meetings in response to the COVID-19 crisis. In keeping with government guidelines, numerous actions were approved including closing the building, holding all church services through a streaming format, ceasing all in-house activities including Sunday School, and canceling all outside activities and rentals.
- Building access remains severely restricted allowing the facilities staff to provide a “deep cleaning” of the entire facility.
- The Deacons, under the guidance of Rev. Sue Bennetch, activated a “phone ministry” to contact all members, in part to assess the needs of individual members during this difficult time; this remains ongoing. The Deacons also started an ongoing Meal Ministry to provide meals for members in need.
- All existing ministries are suspended or have been moved online.
- There are no funerals or memorial services at this time, but small interment services for families are being provided in keeping with state guidelines. Most families have indicated their intention to have memorial services when possible.
- There are several new ministries begun or supported, including the building serving as a drop off/pick up location for MaskForce2020, a community-wide initiative to recruit sewers to make masks. Several members are involved in this effort.
- Kate Arrington and daughter Lizzie are continuing the card ministry. Lizzie is making origami figures to accompany the cards (*right*). *If you know of anyone who would benefit from a card, including those who are struggling or are alone at this time, please contact us at info@fpc-bethlehem.org with names and addresses.*
- Under the Discipleship Committee’s leadership, numerous educational and/or discussion groups have been offerd, including the continuation of the “Constructive Conversations” series, “The Kingdom of God in Song and Symbol” series led by the Rev. Dr. Steve Simmons, and an FPCB book club.
- On Tuesdays and Thursdays the Pastors are leading online mid-day reflections.
- Under the leadership of the Sunday School teachers, Sunday School is continuing as “Driveway Sunday School” (pre-recorded video stories and songs) and “Zoom Sunday School”; these will continue throughout the summer.
- **Note: see the weekly Friday newsletter for directions for participating in all activities.**



- Session approved modifying the previously scheduled Holy Week services to accommodate the need for streaming all services. Maundy Thursday communion was celebrated with participants providing their own communion elements at home. On Palm Sunday, the Congregational Life Committee “hosted” a hospitality hour at noon.
- The Preschool Task Force continues meeting and with the approval of Session is considering an infant/toddler program.
- Beginning in April, Session meetings are being held every two weeks.
- The Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC) began meeting weekly. Kristen Benway is chair, Rich Gorton is recording secretary and Blaine Sheppard is corresponding secretary. Marsha Heiman will serve as the Presbytery representative.
- Session approved a distribution to the Bethlehem Emergency Shelter of \$1500 from the St. Andrew’s Fund, including a \$500 gift from an anonymous donor. This distribution is being use for meal vouchers for homeless individuals and is intended for use at local diners/restaurants.
- Earlier this year, Session also approved supporting the Harrars, who are currently serving as missionaries in Nigeria. They will be receiving \$200 per month through 2020 from the Dimmick Fund.