

First Presbyterian Church of Taymouth

The Rev. J. Scott Kroener, Pastor



March 20, 2020

Dear Members and Friends of the First Presbyterian Church of Taymouth,

I hope this pastoral letter finds you in good health and in good spirits despite what is happening in our world. Yes, I am saddened by what we are experiencing as a society and church. The coronavirus known as COVID-19 is wreaking havoc in our world. We are faced with a pandemic virus which our government is diligently trying to cope with at this time. We too, here at First Presbyterian Church of Taymouth, have a very important part to play in mitigating the spread of COVID-19. The Session met Saturday, March 14th, to take action in ways the church can curtail the spread of COVID19.

The Session decided to suspend all worship services until Easter morning (April 12th) where we will gather for our regular worship hour at 9:30 a.m. All church events, activities, and meetings have been cancelled between March 14th—April 11th. This year's annual Fish Fry has been cancelled. The Session will meet on Tuesday, April 7th, 7:00 p.m., to assess and evaluate the situation at hand to determine whether we will have an Easter service, or to suspend worship services again, and to cancel the remaining events, activities, and meetings in April.

The church will continue to hold office hours during the week on Tuesday (9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.), Thursday (9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.), and Friday (9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.) in order to conduct the business aspects of ministry. Dawn Patrick (Financial Secretary), Sarah Schriber (Church Secretary), and I will be in the office. Although worship has been suspended on Sunday mornings, and all church functions have been cancelled, the ministry of our church continues. Bills need to be paid, pastoral telephone calls need to be made, and the April newsletter needs to be published, along with short-term and long-term planning decisions in how to cope effectively with COVID-19.

Right now, we are actively exploring new ways to communicate with one another as a group. We can conduct worship by using electronic social media such as Facebook, Live-streaming, Zoom, YouTube, and establish an electronic giving/offering/donation system through our denomination's Presbyterian Foundation where we can accept credit and debit cards on-line. Meanwhile, please mail your weekly offering to the church, or you can drop it off inside the church during normal office hours in the offering box (a.k.a. pastor's wooden prayer box) located at the top of the stairs of the church's south entrance right before you walk into the sanctuary.

Expect a telephone call on Sunday mornings between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. In the absence of us worshipping together on Sundays, I want to maintain a sense of connection with one another as a church family. A list of names has been provided to each Elder serving on Session, and I have asked them to telephone you on Sunday mornings to inquire how you are coping with this pandemic crisis, and to minister to you by saying a prayer, reading a Scripture passage, and sharing a brief devotion. Dawn Patrick and I will also be making contact with those people on our lists. Now there may be a time when one of our Elders, Dawn, or myself cannot contact you on Sunday morning as planned due to an unforeseen circumstance, please bear with us and expect a telephone call later in the afternoon or evening.

This is a very difficult time for all of us. None of us have ever faced such a destructive world-wide event. We must be vigilant in following our federal government's Center of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and our state government's Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) policies, procedures, and protocols. The CDC website is www.cdc.gov. The MDHHS website is www.michigan.gov/coronavirus. Please follow the CDC's and the MDHHS's recommendations to mitigate and slow the spread of this killing virus. I encourage everyone to continue practicing good personal hygiene such as deep, clean hand washing, and social distancing. By practicing these habits, we can mitigate the effects of this pandemic disease and ease the suffering. God bless you.

Shalom,

Pastor Scott Kroener

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