

March 13, 2020

Friends –

Given the rapidly changing details around the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), I am writing to provide an update on FPC's steps to promote a virus-free environment and communicate changes to our campus schedule.

In the coming days, we all recognize that adjustments will be needed to help minimize both the spread and risks associated with COVID-19. FPC is committed to honoring the recommendations of the medical community and government guidelines to encourage the health and wellness of all who visit, serve, learn, and work on our campus. To help guide us in this process, we have formed an **FPC COVID-19 Advisory Team** comprised of doctors within our congregation who are evaluating the progression of this disease and helping to make ongoing recommendations about how FPC can best protect and serve during this time.

New Protection Measures and Schedule Changes

Due to the progression of this disease, our leadership team, in conjunction with our COVID-19 Advisory Team, has been working to determine the necessity for additional protective measures across our campus. As a part of this process, FPC participated in a conference call with over 80 city and county health officials, medical professionals, and faith leaders. In view of the latest developments associated with the Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) and disease (COVID-19) here in Houston, the city expressed a desire to work together—city, county, faith communities, and the business community—to do what we can together to reduce the rate of transmission of the virus to one that will not overwhelm our health care system. To that end, the city asked that the faith community take significant steps to minimize large gatherings and other activities that might facilitate the spread of COVID-19. This included a request that faith communities consider suspending in-person worship services as early as this weekend and for the foreseeable future.

In an effort to ensure that we are doing the loving and responsible thing to protect the most vulnerable, both within our church family as well as those in our larger community, the following changes are effective immediately:

- **Building hours:** Temporary reduction of daily building hours from 6 AM to 10 PM to 6 AM to 6 PM.
- **Sunday Worship Services:** A single worship service will be offered on Sunday as a broadcast via live stream at 10:45 AM. There will be no on-campus worship services, Sunday School classes, or childcare.
- **Weekly Events and Meetings:** Only activities and events the size of a small group (12 people or less) will be permitted on campus. Ministry departments will communicate specific schedule changes.
- **FPC's Kids Day Out (KDO):** KDO has extended its spring break schedule and will be closed from March 13 through March 27. If additional changes to the schedule are needed, they will be communicated by the KDO staff and posted on the [FPC Facility Updates](#) page.

Also, please be aware that Presbyterian School has proactively decided to close its campus March 13 through March 27. Ongoing information regarding the Presbyterian School can be found on their [Monitoring Corona Virus COVID-19](#) page.

What Can You Do?

For the safety of all, our COVID-19 Advisory Team strongly suggests that individuals who fall into one of the categories below utilize opportunities for remote access when participating in meetings and activities:

- Individuals who are immunocompromised, elderly, have diabetes, have heart or lung disease, or other serious chronic diseases
- Individuals who have traveled in the past 14 days to countries with widespread transmission (e.g., China, Iran, Italy, Japan, and South Korea) or to areas in the US with known community transmission of COVID-19
- Individuals who have had confirmed contact in the past 14 days with someone who has COVID-19
- Individuals who have any symptoms of respiratory illness

For additional information about COVID-19 and steps you can take to help prevent illness, visit the [Corona Virus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#) page on the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website.

Staying Connected Remotely

During this season, we hope you will also assist in helping FPC remain a place that welcomes all, shows the love of Christ as a community *Here to Serve*, and remains faithful in sharing the Gospel.

Please join us for weekly worship via our 10:45 AM live stream at fpchouston.org/live or on our Facebook page ([@firstpresbyterian](#)). An additional email will be sent in advance of Sunday worship with details and options for accessing our live stream. Please share it with a friend or loved one in need of community during this time. We also encourage you to take advantage of this unplanned departure from your regular schedule to draw closer to God through our daily [Lenten devotional series](#).

We recognize this is a time of quickly changing circumstances. To assist, we will continue to provide updates regarding COVID-19 resources, ways to stay connected, and options for requesting assistance during this season of social distancing. You may also visit fpchouston.org/facilityupdates for the latest campus information.

It is in times like these that we are reminded that we belong to a loving and faithful Savior, and our trust and hope are in Him. As one of our Elders described the current situation, "This is a distressing time given the uncertainty, but our God is certain and sovereign over life, death, and disease." The Apostle Paul reminds us in Philippians 4: 4-7, *"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* As we seek this peace that passes all understanding from our heavenly Father, let us also join in prayer for wisdom for our national and local leaders, as well as all our medical professionals who are working tirelessly to serve our communities.

Yours in Christ,

Andrew Stepp
Executive Pastor

Share this email:



[Manage](#) your preferences | [Opt out](#) using TrueRemove™

Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.

View this email [online](#).

5300 Main Street
Houston, TX | 77004 US

This email was sent to .
To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.

emma