



March 19, 2020

Dear Friends,

As the realities of the Coronavirus pandemic continue to evolve, we are faced with difficult decisions about how we continue the life and ministry of the church. We are also presented with new opportunities to be the church together in different and creative ways. Our in-person gatherings will cease for the coming weeks but know that this vibrant community of faith remains connected and engaged.

You certainly have many questions, both about our response in general, as well as specific concerns about those areas of church life in which you are most involved. The following is an attempt to communicate what we know. Please understand that the landscape is changing rapidly while we do our best to keep you informed.

1. **The church office is now officially closed until further notice.** Church staff are still working answering phones from home, creating online sermons and devotions, making phone and email contacts, bookkeeping, and so much more. Your clergy and church officers are staying in touch with members through phone calls, emails and texts, and all ministry meetings are moving to a virtual format. We are committed to following the most reliable advice from the CDC, local and state officials and the modeling of other churches in the Presbytery to be safe and responsible.
2. We are almost finished putting into place a hub of information to be linked prominently on our church website that will have COVID-19 update info, as well as various resources for church and community members. We hope to have it up and running by Friday afternoon March 20. The resource page will include helpful links as well as the schedule for various online and recorded programming such as Bible studies and devotionals, prayer time, Kingdom Kids, preschool and parents' activities, outreach needs and opportunities and much more. This will likely be continuously updated over the coming weeks.
3. The **Backpacks of Love** ministry continues to be an outreach focus as we safely provide food for families of Clear Creek Elementary (and Bain Elementary as needed) from our campus. Food can be dropped off in the large brown collection bin located under the portico at the Preschool entrance. We will continue to keep you updated on other ways that you can help serve – at a distance – through this strange and difficult time.
4. **Deacons, Stephen Ministers and pastors** are reaching out to communicate personally with our congregation to provide support, comfort, pastoral care and to identify specific situations that need to be addressed. Please let us know if you have a need or a concern about someone else. The church office number, 704-545-6172, is being routed during office hours. I can be reached by phone at 704-654-1319. Katie can be reached at 704-236-1369.
5. We will continue a **Virtual Worship Experience on Sundays** but as I write this we will likely not broadcast or record from the church campus. Katie and I are consulting with colleagues and Presbytery officials to understand what others are doing as we navigate these uncharted waters.

Clergy have been called on to model best practices for the communities we serve as we edge toward a potential shelter -in-place directive.

6. While **finances** are certainly not our top priority at this point, we know that we face some challenging times ahead. With no in-person worship we have lost a primary avenue through which our congregation traditionally gives, while certain essential bills must continue to be paid. There are also financial hardships that may result for some of us based on the types of jobs and vocations we have. Any projects requiring funding that were in process have been put on hold. The Finance committee and staff are working to continually assess the situation and respond accordingly. If you are able, please continue to give by mail, electronically or using the lockbox in the driveway of the administration building that is pictured here.



**Checks can continue to be mailed to the church office at Philadelphia Presbyterian Church, 11501 Bain School Road, Mint Hill, 28227. You may give online through the Give portal on our website, [www.philadelphiachurch.org](http://www.philadelphiachurch.org), or you can text PPCMH to 73256.**

7. If you have ideas on how to help, need physical or spiritual support, or just want to chat, please call the church office during regular business hours at 704-545-6172 and the call will be forwarded to Cynthia or Judy who will route you to the right person. If you need help after hours, feel free to contact Danny, 704-654-1319, Katie, 704-236-1369 or Stephens Ministers Judy Turnage, 704-582-9953 or Lisa Newton, 704-408-3383 who can help get you to the right place. **Please don't hesitate to call – we are all here for each other.**

In the midst of the chaos created by a worldwide pandemic, we are still the Church of Jesus Christ. Yesterday I officiated the small family-only graveside service of long-time member Betty Ford. Katie and I both continue to engage daily in pastoral conversations with church members, friends and colleagues. In the midst of all of this, life continues to happen and we are so very blessed to be in community together. May we all find ways to be a blessing to ourselves and others in the coming weeks.

Blessings and peace,

Rev. Danny Trapp