

Grace and peace from our Lord, Jesus Christ, and from your Session:

The Church never exists in a vacuum, cut off from the needs of the world God calls us to serve. The pandemic that is sweeping across our country and the world is something we have not seen before and to which we must respond. With that in mind, your Session met yesterday and voted to cancel all public gatherings in our buildings until April 1.

We were thankful to have Dr. Robbie DeCoux meet with us and advise on possible protocols for mitigating the spread of the new coronavirus (COVID-19), not only among our congregants but also in our community at large. The Session's carefully considered decision to cancel all gatherings in our sanctuary and adjoining facilities, in accordance with current CDC recommendations, means that on the following two Sundays, March 22 and 29, we will not gather for breakfast, Sunday School or our Morning Worship service.

Wednesday activities, including choir rehearsal, will not meet again before April 1, nor will the Thursday morning Bible study. Other groups within the church and community groups which meet in our facility are being notified of this decision. Our Mission Day of Service at the local homeless shelter, previously scheduled for March 21, is postponed and will be rescheduled. The Church Office will remain open, but please call or text if you plan to come by to ensure that someone will be there.

Even though we will not be doing many of the things that define us as a congregation, we continue to be the Church. We will continue to provide meals for those to whom we deliver each Wednesday. We will continue to check in on each other. Please make us aware of pastoral care and other needs. We are exploring ways to provide worship resources, including our Lenten sermons, while we cannot be together in person. We will keep you posted via Facebook and email.

Of course, the needs of the Church continue even when we are not able to meet together. We are able to serve because of your faithful giving. We encourage you to continue to give to both the regular budget and the mission fund. You may mail your offerings (PO Box 774, McComb 39648) or drop them by the Church Office on Third Street. For electronic payments, please give us a call and we will help you make those arrangements.

These are strange times that we have not experienced before. In this, as in all times, we claim and give thanks for God's promise to be with us always. We urge you to take sensible precautions regarding your own health and the health of those with whom you share your life and to call on me (church 601-684-4189, cell 601-996-9656) and the Elders who make up the Session when you have questions or concerns.

Grace and Peace,

Bob

Rev. Bob Phelps, Pastor
J. J. White Memorial Presbyterian Church