

## **Important Information**

**Dear Friends,**

All week I have been monitoring the Coronavirus as I tried to learn more about how it has impacted our community so I could make good decisions about how best to lead our congregation. In consultation with the staff and church leaders and in light of the advice from public health experts at the CDC and more locally I think we should not hold church gatherings, services, meetings or classes for the next two weeks to try to practice social distancing in an effort to halt the rampant spread of the Coronavirus COVID-19. I believe that this moratorium on church gatherings should begin immediately.

That means we will not hold worship services tomorrow - Sunday March 15, 2020. There will be no Family Service at 9 a.m. or Traditional Services at 11:00 a.m and no Bible Study class at 10 a.m. Everything for Sunday is cancelled. In addition I am recommending that we cancel all meetings for the next two weeks. I have asked the staff to work from home, if possible.

I apologize for making a decision that reverses the e-mail I sent out yesterday but this is a very fluid situation and many large organizations are making cancellations quickly because we are treading in new territory and it has been one hundred years since the world has experienced a pandemic on this scale. Cancelling events where people mingle together seems to me to be the kindest and most responsible thing to do.

Virtual Services on Sunday March 15 I will broadcast a message tomorrow on Sunday morning at 11 a.m. I will put it out on Facebook Live from the Pilgrim Church Facebook account. To get updates and information please be watching the Church's Facebook page and website. So I hope to "see" you online tomorrow at 11 a.m. If you miss it, the beauty of the online messages is that you can watch it anytime that fits your schedule.

### **Wednesdays in Lent**

We are making plans to continue our lovely Taize services in an online format. We will continue to feature the music from Taize using recordings I will still have the readings for each week. Perhaps you would like to light a candle at home and join us in this Wednesday at 6:15 p.m. Who knows? After social distancing for a few days this might be a good way to re-vitalize our spirits.

With our experience using social media every week we are all set up to provide worship via Facebook Live and on our website. [pcchp.org](http://pcchp.org). If you do not have a Facebook account, we will post the services in both places.

## **What we can do**

I know that losing the opportunity to be together will be a loss for all of us. Each week we all look forward to enjoying the peace and beauty of our sanctuary, listening to wonderful music, praying for common concerns, thinking about our faith and just being in touch with friends who have become like family. We rely on our church as a vital way to stay connected as a community of faith. We are social creatures so it will all be a challenge to comply with these new restrictions. I am hoping that we can find creative ways to make this a productive time of hibernation, a time for quiet walks in nature, a time for re-discovering the lost art of letter writing, or a time to sink into a long-awaited good book. I also know that many of you look out for a neighbor in need and these weeks may call for additional compassion, strength and resilience.

If you would like to join a team that makes phone calls to our shut-ins send me an e-mail - [cartmellism@gmail.com](mailto:cartmellism@gmail.com). If you have ideas to share with others about how to pass this time creatively send me an e-mail about that too and I will add it to my eblasts. I will increase the Eblast schedule and keep in touch more frequently as a way to support you and help us stay connected.

As I write this I hope you know that this comes with my hope that these new social distancing measures will reduce the strain on our healthcare system, and keep more people from getting sick, or getting sick at the same time. This e-mail also comes with my hope that you will all remain safe and be well.

**Blessings,**

**Rev. Susan**