



**First Presbyterian Church USA**  
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Carbondale, IL 62901

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**March 12, 2020**

To: The Congregation and Friends of First Presbyterian Church  
From: Rev. Kerry Bean, Interim Pastor

Hello, everyone:

My purpose for writing this letter is to inform you of some precautions that we are taking regarding worship and fellowship time for this Sunday (3/15) at the church. A planning group, including many session members, met with me last night and we discussed a wide range of possible responses to the outbreak of the Covid-19 “Coronavirus” that has now been declared a pandemic.

These initial precautions include:

1. There will be a **thorough, sanitizing cleaning** of the Fellowship Hall, the bathrooms, and the sanctuary during the Work Day on Saturday 3/14. Such extra cleaning will continue for the foreseeable future.
2. We are asking the hosts preparing for the Fellowship time either to **provide no food or provide commercially purchased and individually wrapped food items**. Beverages, like coffee, should be self-service.
3. Greeters to the worship service will offer you a squirt of **hand sanitizer** as you enter the sanctuary
4. Please sit in the pews in ways that **keep a social space of at least 3 feet** between you and your neighbors.

None of us know how severe the outbreak will become in the weeks to come. As the situation changes, the session and I will continue to discuss our response options.

One of my responsibilities is to make video and audio recordings of our worship services available to everyone. The Presbyterian Church USA has developed some guidelines for livestreaming worship which we will follow. I think it is most likely that there will be an abbreviated version of worship available online beginning March 22, 2020. Of course, we still audio record the worship services, and if you would like those recordings delivered to you, please let the office know. We also have several CD players available if you need one.

The last thing I want to say is that we want to stay in touch with you throughout the outbreak time. Please let your Deacon know if you are not feeling well or simply choosing not to attend worship as a precaution. We will be reaching out to you but you can help us by **calling your Deacon (maybe even once a week)** to keep us in the loop. They in turn will let me know how you are doing.

**As the outbreak continues and (presumably) worsens, I want you to strongly consider staying home and not attending worship.** This is especially true if you are showing any flu-like symptoms, including a fever. The best way to protect yourself- and your brothers and sisters in the church- is to limit exposure to potential infection. Having you participate in the life and worship of the church is important, but your health and the health of our community is even more important.

It may be that we will have to cancel in-person worship and even close the building in the days and weeks to come. But we are not at that point yet.

We will do everything possible to keep you in the communication loop as we figure out how to navigate our way through the outbreak. Your support and understanding are greatly appreciated.

At the bottom of this message is health advice that Parkland College of Champaign is sharing with their staff, faculty, and students. Please read it over.

Peace,

Kerry

## **STRENGTHEN YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM**

**Vaccinations may** boost resistance, but cures for virus-based illnesses like the flu don't exist. So, keep your immune system "tuned"—it's the only one you've got! Boost your immune system with 1) adequate sleep; 2) getting recommended vaccinations; 3) eating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables rich in antioxidants; 4) getting recommended exercise; 5) washing your hands and maintaining good hygiene; 6) avoiding smoking and heavy alcohol use (or getting evaluated for addictive illness if you struggle with these issues); and 7) maintaining a healthy weight.