

First Presbyterian Church USA
310 S. University Avenue
Carbondale, IL 62901

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March 18, 2020

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

Hello, everyone:

I am writing you again today to let you know about some very important decisions the session made as we met last night. We had a very in-depth discussion about a wide range of issues (especially, of course, about our ongoing responses to the COVID-19 outbreak). I am going to go through those decisions one by one here. Please know, though, while we tried to consider every detail, there will be circumstances arise that we did not anticipate. We will do our best to adapt to changing conditions.

1. **The church building is now closed, at least until May 15th.** There is a very short list of people who will have access to the building: office staff, janitorial workers, Stewardship folks (in case there are building-related issues), and a small group of folks helping to live stream worship online (more about that below). As they say, that's it. That's the list.
 - a. **Barb will be in the office on Mondays and Wednesdays** to take care of finances and help coordinate the flow of information. The office is not open to visitors or members. I know that some of you good folks have keys, and many have the code to get into the office area here at the church. **Please do not come to the church.** Any communication you need to have with Barb or myself can be done via phone or email.
 - b. **I will be in my office mid-day on Wednesdays.** Please feel free to call me or email me as you need. My office is not open for visits- nor will I be physically visiting people for the foreseeable future.
 - c. Folks from the community needing assistance are being asked to call or email the church.
 - d. **At this time, the Preschool is closed but the Daycare program remains open.** Daycare staff, children, and parents will be using a different door for access.

2. **We will be attempting to provide you all with an online live-streamed worship service at the usual time (9:30am Sundays).** I am encouraging you to visit our church's webpage at www.firstprescdale.org to find the link to the live-stream. It's not there yet, but my hope is that it *will* be there - prominently displayed by 9:00am on Sunday.
 - a. We are going to regularly send you the worship bulletin via email or the USPS. That way, you will be able to follow along with the prayers and liturgy, etc as the service progresses.

- b. If you can't watch the service live, the webpage will have a link to the recorded service.
 - c. If you would like to have announcements, joys, or concerns mentioned during the service, either call your deacon or email me at pastorkerry@firstpresdale.org by the Saturday night before.
 - d. I anticipate that the services will be abbreviated, with prayers, scripture, a sermon, and some music as available.
3. You will notice that I have attached to this letter a form for you to fill out to set up **direct deposit for your offerings**. The session has decided that all of the employees of the church, including the musicians and choral section leaders, will continue to get paid - at least until May 15th. All the usual expenses of maintaining the church building, insurance costs, office supplies, etc will still be there even though the building is closed. So, we need you to continue to support the church financially. Direct deposit is an easy way to do this. Fill out the form and mail it in, please.
 - a. If you prefer, please send in your offering by check via the mail. We will be picking up the mail from the post office twice weekly.
 - b. Please continue to give, but not if it endangers your own financial health in any way. Part of the uncertainty of this time is how the outbreak is affecting the economy. We need you to give only if your own finances remain stable.
4. The Deacons and the Session will be working with me to make sure that every one of our members are receiving needed care and ministry. If you know of a church member (including yourself) who needs help getting food supplies or to get to a doctor's appointment or other important matters, let us know. You can contact a deacon, call or email the church, or contact me directly. Our contact info is at the top of this letter.

This time of pandemic is new for all of us. We will do our best to stay in touch through phone calls, letters and emails. Visit our webpage and Facebook page. The newsletter for April will go out as planned. Please check out the Sunday service either live or recorded. We do not want you to feel forgotten. You are not facing these challenging days alone. We will reach out to you and want you to reach out to us. There will be a time when life returns to normal. God is with us and God will *stay* with us throughout this time. And we will be together. Maybe not physically, but in the Spirit.

Please let me know how we can help you in the days and weeks and (perhaps) months to come. God bless you and may God continue to bless our church.

Peace,

Kerry

Rev. Kerry Bean, Interim Pastor
First Presbyterian Church USA of Carbondale

A NOTE ABOUT DIRECT DEBIT FOR GIVING

We are offering members and friends of our congregation the convenient option of allowing the church to directly debit their checking account to give to the church. This means that the church is authorized to draw a set amount each month from the member's bank account. We hope that you will find this to be a convenient option. Importantly, it also allows the church to budget funds more efficiently. By taking part in this opportunity, you do not lose control in any way – one may change the monthly amount or simply stop this method by contacting the church office prior to the first of any month.

To take advantage of this program, please fill out the form below. This will authorize direct debiting of your account.

Even if you are already participating in this program you need to submit a new authorization form (along with a voided check*) each year.

Thank you.

DIRECT DEBIT OF CONTRIBUTIONS AGREEMENT

Attached is a voided check that will provide the necessary information to debit my checking account:

Amount: \$ _____ Semi-monthly on the 5th and 20th of each month.

Amount: \$ _____ Monthly on the 5th of each month.

Amount: \$ _____ Monthly on the 20th of each month.

I hereby authorize First Presbyterian Church to debit my account as indicated above.

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

***Current bank guidelines require a voided check. (A voided deposit slip is not acceptable).
Thank you for your cooperation.**

Return completed form to:
First Presbyterian Church
310 S. University Avenue
Carbondale IL 62901