



Friday, April 24, 2020

Dear FPCP Family and Friends,

We have now crossed the threshold of spending 40 days in quarantine. Forty days.

Last week, Jerry Smith reminded our staff that forty has always been an important number in a Biblical sense. You may remember that in Noah's day, the flood lasted 40 days. Forty years was the length of the Exodus. Jesus himself was tempted in the Judean Desert for forty days and nights which is why our celebration of Lent is also forty days.

There are theologians who would argue that within the Bible the number forty always represents change, and certainly over the past forty days our church has been changing in how we worship, grow, and serve together even while apart.

Today, our Governor is announcing the extension of the Stay at Home order, but as a church our Session has already made the decision that our church building and our church's Thrift Shop will remain closed throughout the month of May. Near the end of the May, our Session will meet to reevaluate the openings for June.

As a church, we have also decided that upcoming special events such as our annual Confirmation Dinner and Service will be postponed until the Fall. It is also our hope to reschedule our Baccalaureate service until later in the summer. The annual Spring Choir concert will not take place this year but will be celebrated again next year. Similarly, Vacation Bible School scheduled to be held in June will not take place this year but will return next year. All of these decisions were made prayerfully with the health and safety of our members in mind.

Friends, I know that change can be disheartening. But do not lose hope for God is on the move shaping the future of our church even now.

Please keep reading the larger body of this Friday email, for there you will find a letter from the Associate Pastor Search Committee (APNC) outlining their real progress. Please pray for this committee as they conduct interviews to find our church's next Associate Pastor.

Within our larger email, you will also find a very special announcement from the Committee who has been searching for our permanent Pastor for Youth and Early Adults. After conducting a nation-wide search, this committee has made a unanimous decision and as you read their announcement, you will see that there is much to celebrate today.

Clearly, our church will emerge from this virus changed. But my hope and prayer are that these changes will not only keep our congregation healthy and strong, but we will emerge from the next forty days with a deeper trust in God's abiding presence. Trust that God is faithfully at work in our church and in your life today.

Wishing you Christ's peace in every experience of change,

*Emily*