

Grace and peace to you from our Lord Jesus Christ.

I write to let you know that you are remembered and loved, as well as to provide you with an update on our congregation's ministry in these strange times we now inhabit.

Your Session met yesterday morning, and I am inspired by their faithfulness, as well as confident in the decisions we made together. In a time when the way before us is unclear and changing, I am grateful for their leadership and for the actions they have now taken—actions which both seek to protect our community while ensuring that the vital ministry we are doing together continues, albeit in different ways.

In light of yesterday's Session decisions, I share these important updates:

1. **Our church campus is now closed through April 5, 2020.** All activities, with the specific exception of Meals-on-Wheels, are canceled. The Session granted permission for the church staff to work from the office when something is deemed essential. You may certainly call the office at any time, but please realize the likelihood of someone being available is slim. *(\*\*\*\*As you likely have heard, following the session's meeting yesterday, the guidance has changed, suggesting a longer period for restricting gatherings. Again, we will monitor this and will share with you should a decision be made to extend our campus-wide closure.)*
2. The first action creates a difficult reality for our congregation's worship. **We will not have In-person worship for at least the next two Sundays (March 22 and March 29).** While we were hopeful yesterday that Palm Sunday (April 5) might be our next opportunity to be together, we will be monitoring the situation closely and will let you know if this becomes unwise. As you know, the fluidity of these circumstances suggests that our plans will undoubtedly change. We will do our best to let you know of those changes swiftly and clearly.
3. We realize that you are mindful of the economic concerns this crisis has created and will create for so many, I am grateful **that your Session acted to ensure that we will continue to compensate the church staff as if our programming were operating as normal.** Since some of our people only work when congregational activities take place in the building, I am particularly grateful for the Session's concern that our staff not suffer during this time. I am also aware that their generosity was made possible by yours.

4. While we cannot be together for the near future (and possibly longer), **we will be growing in our ability to use technology to keep us together.** Your Session took action to provide the needed resources as determined by pastoral and administrative staff (with assistance from members of the congregation) required for us to provide some form of worship electronically, as well as software platforms for electronic meetings, and other things needed to keep us connected as a congregation or to fulfill our mission to love God and our neighbors.

Your safety is of utmost importance to our congregation and to the community. Please do your part by remembering to practice good personal hygiene, and take note of these measures to help reduce the spread of any contagious disease. Above all, continue to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ in this place! Trust that God is with us. Call to check on your neighbors and church friends, pray for each other, and give thanks for all that is good in the world.

While our in-person worship and on-campus gatherings are canceled, we will do our best to stay in touch through technology.

- An abbreviated worship service will be posted on our website and Facebook on Sunday mornings at 11:00 am. While we may ultimately move to live-streaming this service from our sanctuary on Sunday mornings, our current technology doesn't allow us to do so reliably. As you read above, however, we are working to upgrade our existing platforms.
- You may share your gifts through the secure link on the congregation's website (<https://www.2preslex.org/resources/giving/>). We encourage your gifts in this way. While you may still mail your gifts to the church office, there will likely be a delay in processing during the short term.
- Follow us on Facebook for posts from our pastors and staff throughout the week. (<https://www.facebook.com/2PresChurch/>).
- Jen Brown-Murphy will continue to communicate through her newsletter to the families of our congregation's children. Please email Jen ([jenb@2preslex.org](mailto:jenb@2preslex.org)) if you'd like to be added to the list.
- Pastor Sara Benedetti will remain engaged with our congregation's youth and help to maintain their connection to one another.
- You may also find it helpful to watch previously recorded services, or read prior sermons at <https://www.2preslex.org/resources/sermons>.
- And don't forget to call each other. Write cards. Keep in touch, and stay safe.

We ask that you continue to pray for all those whose lives have been or will be impacted by this pandemic. If you have a pastoral concern and would like to speak

with a pastor over the phone, please send an email to one of the pastors, or you may call Pastor John at 540-383-1458.

In difficult times, we want to be together as the church. Faith is important to me, as I know it is for you. I am grateful that we can remain connected even in our absence, as my heart holds you now, and I covet your prayers for the living of these days. Can you hear the congregation singing our prayer to God? *“Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the living of these days, for the living of these days.”*

As a congregation, we want to act calmly, faithfully, and responsibly for the health of our beloved members and neighbors. Thank you for your understanding, patience, and prayer.

You are remembered and loved,  
Pastor John