



March 12, 2020

Dear members and friends of First Presbyterian Church,

With reports about the spread of the coronavirus (or COVID-19) in our country, we want you to know that the health of our community is of utmost concern to the pastors, elected leaders, and staff of First Presbyterian Church, Stillwater. We are doing all that we can to stay current with public health guidelines, follow best practices for hygiene, and exercise an abundance of caution and care in responding to this situation.

- Worshipers are always encouraged to participate, or not, according to their comfort, conscience and condition. Other worshipers should honor these decisions and refrain from making judgment or taking offense. Folding one's arms across the chest and smiling or nodding can be a gracious way to decline physical contact in greeting lines or other public encounters.
- Use common sense and your best judgment in protecting your own health and the health of others. If you are feeling ill or have recently experienced symptoms of an infectious disease, we ask that you stay home from public events and/or keep a safe distance from others to limit contagion. Even if you believe you are not sick, but are coughing or sneezing, be mindful of the anxiety this may cause in others around you.
- If you decide to stay home from worship or other events due to illness or health risk, please find ways to stay in touch — through small groups, church friends, social media, or emails and phone calls. We don't want to create situations where those who are ill also feel lonely, isolated or outcast. Please call the church office if you have a particular need or concern. We want to pray for you and provide other forms of assistance and care as needed. If you are home, please continue worshiping with us on KSPI AM780/94.3FM or via livestreaming each Sunday at 11:00 am www.stillwaterfpc.org/listenlive
- Since the passing of Christ's peace is a particular concern at this time, instead of shaking hands, we will touch elbows, smile, or bow, or simply share words of peace and

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Pastor

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welcome. These are all appropriate ways to express Christ's call to reconciliation in the church and world.

- We have also modified our communion practices for the foreseeable future, using individual bread wafers/having only gloved servers touch bread, and individual communion cups for our celebration of the Lord's Supper. These are expressions of our care for the people of God as the body of Christ.
- Let us be faithful and vigilant in our prayer for those nations, communities, families and individuals most affected by this outbreak, and for the medical personnel and government officials seeking to respond. Let us resist and reject fear and suspicion based on ethnicity or nationality; this virus is affecting people of all races and ages. Let us be generous in supporting organizations that provide assistance and support public health in our area and around the world.
- A special Task Force was approved by the Session on Tuesday, March 10, 2020, to monitor and respond to advisement or action of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, federal and/or local authorities, and the needs of our community, and recommend any further appropriate action for the health and wellbeing of our community.
- Above all, let us remember and rejoice that "nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Brief Statement of Faith; Rom. 8:38–39).

May Christ's love and peace abound,

Leah

Rev. Dr. Leah R. Hrachovec
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