



# *First Presbyterian Church*

436 East Second St – Salem OH 44460 – 330.337.9555

March 20, 2020

Dear friends in Christ,

Your Session met last night via conference call and agreed to suspend in-house worship services and other church activities through Easter. This action was taken as another precaution to the spread of the Coronavirus and in adherence to Eastminster Presbytery guidelines. We are continuing, to the best of our availability, to provide FPC Salem's TV Ministry for Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter worship services.

**Our concern for everyone – *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.* – Psalm 46.1**

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, we find ourselves in unsettling times due to the Coronavirus, COVID-19. Our mutual desire is for every one of us to remain safe and healthy. We encourage you to rest in God's grace and peace and remember that God is sovereign.

We are committed to doing our part to stop the spread of this virus by supporting the policies given by our local, state, and national health leaders and the Eastminster Presbytery. We continue to be vigilant as we gather information and make decisions on how we might be able to gather together after Easter. We will evaluate our decisions as the situation continues to unfold and keep you informed via email, our website ([www.fpcsalem.org](http://www.fpcsalem.org)) and Facebook (First Presbyterian Church of Salem, Ohio). If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the church office at 330-337-9555.

**Sunday Worship Services (ONLINE AND LIVESTREAM) —**

We value the importance of corporate worship and we also value the health and well-being of all our members and friends. In order to balance these values and considering the developing situation, we have decided to suspend all in-person worship through Easter. You can watch a modified worship service led by Rev. Phillips by these links:

**via Facebook:** First Presbyterian Church of Salem, Ohio;

**via You Tube:** [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) / FPCSALEM (Live Streamed);

**via FPC's Website:** [www.fpcsalem.org](http://www.fpcsalem.org)

**via the Cable TV Channel 1021:** at the following weekly times -- Sunday (1 & 9 am), Monday (1 am), Tuesday (3 am, 12 & 4 pm), Wednesday (1 am, 4 & 9 pm), Friday (1 am), Saturday (3 am, 12 & 4 pm).

**Christian Education, Preschool, Pres-Bees, LOGOS, Committee Meetings —**

We have suspended all scheduled programs and events on church property through Easter. Both the Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts have suspended their programming for the next few weeks as well. Your staff is working to assist each committee's needs and keep all informed of what the church is able to do. We have prioritized the cleanliness of the church as a top priority and the custodial and preschool staff have been diligently providing this service.

The church's office hours have not changed. Both Pastor Paul and Phyllis are here Mon.-Fri., 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

## How Can We Help You?

Your church is here to come alongside you with Christ's compassion and grace so that we may all experience His transforming love and healing as we go through this together. If you would like someone to pray with you over the phone and offer encouragement or if you need additional resources over these next few weeks, please reach out so we can support you. Call the church office at 330-337-9555.

We understand how stressful this season of uncertainty is and we want to be available to bring comfort and offer care as we journey this new path together. Send us your prayer requests or care requests, including requests for assistance if you are self-isolating to [phyllis@fpcsalem.org](mailto:phyllis@fpcsalem.org) or to [pPhillips@fpcsalem.org](mailto:pPhillips@fpcsalem.org).

## How You Can Help

**PRAY** for our church family, community, and the world that God will bring good out of this crisis. Pray for wisdom for our leaders as they make important decisions on how best to prevent the spread of this virus. **Pray** that we can come together as a country during this crisis.

**Keep in touch with each other** through all the various means of communication available to us. This is a rapidly changing crisis so please check our website and Facebook frequently to stay aware of the needs of our congregation. Although we may be somewhat physically isolated from each other during the next few weeks, there is no reason why we cannot remain connected and encourage one another.

**Giving Opportunities** – Our staff is still working, our mission partners are still depending on us, and our bills still need to be paid. Please be faithful about keeping up with your regular giving. Remember, the One Great Hour of Sharing offering on Easter. We hope you will give generously. You can mail your contributions directly to the church at 436 East Second St., Salem, OH 44460. In addition, new needs may arise which we may respond to as people in our community and world are affected by this pandemic.

**Pay attention to guidelines given through the office of Ohio's Governor and our public health leaders including:**

Salem Health Department – (330) 332-1618

Ohio Department of Health – (833) 427-5634, [www.odh.ohio.gov](http://www.odh.ohio.gov)

Centers for Disease Control – [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

Bear with us as we continue to monitor the latest information about the Coronavirus and how it affects our church and community. Our plans and measures can easily shift, and if they do, we will keep you informed.

Our love goes out to each and every one of you. We are praying for you and we are available if you need us. Take special care of each other, your loved ones, and neighbors, and know that the "God of all peace" is with you and will never abandon you. It is especially during times like this that we can let our light shine and bring comfort and love to others. Keep in touch, and together with God's grace, we will weather this storm and come out of it a stronger community! We are the church! Let's continue to be the church wherever we are, acting out of love and God's peace, which passes all understanding.

In Christ,

Your Session and  
Rev. Paul Phillips, Interim Pastor