



March 12, 2020

Dear Members and Friends of PCCH,

*“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble...”
~Psalm 46:1*

With you, the Session and church staff have been monitoring the Coronavirus/COVID-19 news closely, both the health developments and the growing wave of church, school, business and sports cancellations. We have spoken with church and medical colleagues locally and across the country about their responses. Things are very fluid, and news seems to be unfolding in real time.

No one directly affiliated with PCCH has been, to the best of our knowledge, infected with COVID-19. Nonetheless, and because of our deep concern for the well-being of our church and community, *we have decided to cancel in person worship for the next two Sundays, March 15 and 22*, and all activities in the building during that time. We will continue to assess the situation as we look to a longer term plan.

Cancelling worship goes against our instincts, of course, yet after extensive discussion, we believe it to be the wise course of action now. While we would do everything we can to minimize the threat, including adapting worship and sanitizing and deep cleaning, medical professionals strongly suggest that the practices of “social distancing” are particularly apt for a church community.

For the next two Sundays, we will offer a worship experience via Facebook Live. Simply log onto https://www.facebook.com/PCchestnutHill/?epa=SEARCH_BOX at 10:00 a.m. This Sunday will include prayers, scripture readings and a brief devotional; we will offer something more expansive for March 22.

Again, this was not an easy decision, but we collectively feel that it is the wise one. Simply put, canceling worship removes risk and is a good act of pastoral care. As one friend said to me, “Jesus cared about the health of the community,” and this is one way to demonstrate that commitment.

Next week we will update you on our plans. Please check the church website and Facebook pages and your email for these updates.

As we continue on this “unique” Lenten journey, please remember to check on neighbors, friends, and church members. Let us know of any pastoral concerns. You can reach staff members through their emails and the office phone.

Finally, even though we are not gathering in person, it would be helpful to our ministry if you can maintain your pledge support via the mail or electronically.

Thank you for your prayerful and thoughtful support as we move through this uncharted territory. Please pray especially for those affected by the virus and all those providing care.

Faithfully,

John Wilkinson