



# First Presbyterian Church of Ambler

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Ryan Balsan, Pastor  
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March 12, 2020

Dear FPC Ambler Friends,

I wrote to you yesterday outlining the first steps that our congregation was taking in response to the Coronavirus, including precautions in worship, and encouraging some to stay home due to health concerns. Since that time, we have continued to follow this quickly developing situation. We have received good guidance from community leaders and people who work in healthcare and education. In addition, the Montgomery County Health and Human Services Department recommends that group gatherings should be avoided, and Governor Tom Wolf recommends that gatherings with 250 or more people be avoided or cancelled.

It is clear that the situation with Coronavirus will get worse before it gets better. Medical and public health leaders have been clear that one of the most effective ways to slow the spread of this virus is through "social distancing." We do not want to put anyone at undue risk. **Therefore, the Session has decided that we will not gather for public worship in our church for the next two weeks (March 15 and 22), giving us time to see how this situation unfolds. During that time, we will evaluate the situation, and pray about what do do in the weeks that follow.**

The decision to cancel our Sunday worship gathering is significant, and is not taken lightly. We initially planned to host services with modifications to enable us to gather safely as a community. In light of what we now know about Coronavirus, we believe that those modifications will not be enough to protect our congregation and community from infection.

In addition, all other activities at FPC Ambler are cancelled (including small groups that meet at church) until at least March 22, and probably beyond that. Watch your email and our website ([www.fpcambler.org](http://www.fpcambler.org)) for updates and information.

Jesus' call for us is to love and serve our neighbors. Part of Jesus' calling is to be responsible to others who are more vulnerable and susceptible to infection and serious consequences from this disease. This decision not to gather for worship for at least the next two Sundays is one way that we can love our neighbors and our community, by choosing not to be a place where this virus can spread more easily.

In place of our regular worship gathering, we will host online worship. We will record the service including scripture, prayers, the sermon, and some music on Saturday, and the recording will be available on Sunday morning for you to worship online at home. The link is here: <https://fpcambler.org/messages/> . If you have prayer requests that you would like to hear lifted up in worship, you can email them confidentially to me at [ryan@fpcambler.org](mailto:ryan@fpcambler.org)

During this time when we do not gather on Sundays, our fixed expenses and our ministries continue, especially our commitments to our staff and our building operations. You have always been a generous congregation, and in this challenging moment, we ask you to continue to give generously to our work and life together. There are several ways that you can give:

- You can mail a check to the church
- You can [click here](#) to give to through our website's online giving portal, or go to our website ([www.fpcambler.org](http://www.fpcambler.org)) and click on the "Give" button at the top of the page.

Thank you for your continued support!

During this season of life in our church and community, we will continue our ministry of care for each other and our larger community. We are working on ways to reach out to those in need from our church, in Ambler, and beyond. If you have a particular concern, need help, or need prayer, reach out to me ([ryan@fpcambler.org](mailto:ryan@fpcambler.org)) or Pastor Eric ([eric@fpcambler.org](mailto:eric@fpcambler.org)). You can also reach us through our cell phones, and we are happy to share our numbers with you if you reach out to us through email.

We live in uncertain and unsettling times. I know that worship is one of the things that grounds us, that gives us stability, strength, and comfort in turbulent times. I encourage you to remain connected with each other, with the church, and with the Lord. In moments like this, I often take comfort in Psalm 46:

God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,  
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;  
though its waters roar and foam,  
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
the holy habitation of the Most High.  
God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;  
God will help it when the morning dawns.  
The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;  
he utters his voice, the earth melts.

The Lord of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Come, behold the works of the Lord;  
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.  
He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;  
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;  
he burns the shields with fire.  
'Be still, and know that I am God!  
I am exalted among the nations,  
I am exalted in the earth.'  
The Lord of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

May we find space to be still in these tumultuous times, and know the presence, love, and grace of God.

Yours in Christ and on Behalf of the Session,

Ryan Balsan, Pastor