



March 13, 2020

**Montreat Presbyterian Church
Latest Updates:
Face to face church gatherings suspended**

*Be strong and bold; have no fear or dread,
because it is the LORD your God who goes with you,
who will not fail you or forsake you.*

Deuteronomy 31:6

This evening, on a recommendation from our safety task force, the Session has unanimously decided to suspend all Montreat Presbyterian Church face to face meetings and gatherings for the time being.

The Presbytery of Western North Carolina has curtailed all face to face meetings, and is urging all of its member churches to do the same, given the state of emergency declared at national, state and county levels, in which all of us have been asked to do our part to help to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

Included are all worship services including Taize and Lent Wednesday noon services and lunches, as well as other upcoming events such as Montreat Wednesday and the Women's Circle. While it's tough to have to set these aside for the time being, we are convinced it is the right and most faithful thing to do.

As mentioned yesterday, we will, in the coming weeks, be trying some new technologies to help make home worship a unifying

experience despite our experience of "social distancing." Meetings will be held via Zoom or conference calling or other means. Members will be kept in touch by phone and whatever other means may bring us together. All of these and more will be clarified in the coming days as we continue to explore avenues of connection.

If I may write pastorally for a moment, I wonder if for some of us this may also offer an opportunity to engage in those practices for Lent that can be so rewarding, and are often hard to come by amid the distractions in our busy lives and our hyperconnected world. Moments of silence, stillness, uninterrupted thought, and peaceful solitude, *within the context of knowing we are surrounded by friends and good neighbors who are always standing by*, can make for an environment that holds the possibility of richly rewarding opportunities for spiritual growth.

The Safety Task Force will meet weekly (electronically, of course!) to advise the session on the duration of this measure, and we will do our best to offer succinct updates.

*"Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you
and that you may be in good health,
just as it is well with your soul."*

III John 2

K.G.

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