

March 18, 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Greetings and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ our savior and physician of all our souls. As a community, a congregation, and a world we face an unprecedented challenge with the rapidly spreading Coronavirus. We will face this crisis as God's people have faced countless challenges in the past: together. The leadership of Fairmont is taking all necessary actions to safeguard our members and staff, not merely maintaining but extending our ministries and missions, and deepening our caring for our members and our community.

At the present time, in-person gatherings for worship and all programs at Fairmont are temporarily suspended. They will be suspended for as long as public health concerns may require. Our Session has formed a physician's advisory group that is constantly monitoring the best available public health information and is advising us regularly. We ask that, ***for the present time please do not come to the church building.***

However, we *do* want us all to come together to be the church. Our real connection has always been through the Holy Spirit, not our physical proximity. Accordingly, we are offering a wide array of opportunities to worship, connect, care, and grow all through digital media. So, what should you do?

1. **Take care of yourself** -- Avoid in-person contacts with others, practice good hygiene, stay rested and well fed, and do everything you can to stay healthy.
2. **Pray** – Pray for the sick and the scared. Pray for doctors, nurses, and health care workers. Pray for leaders. Pray for teachers, delivery drivers, grocery store workers and everyone who is trying to make this better. Pray for the unemployed. And pray for our world and all who are scared and anxious.
3. **Love** – We may be physically separate, but we are called into ever deeper bonds of love and caring, calling and checking on each other, writing notes, and reminding everyone that no one is alone.
4. **Participate** – Join us and invite friends, family and neighbors for worship, Bible Study, and our Lenten School all online. Bring your children and their friends to join us online for daily children's time. For worship, visit [www.fairmontchurch.org/worship-videos](http://www.fairmontchurch.org/worship-videos) for current and past worship services and current live streams.
5. **Give** – As we ramp up our feeding efforts in our community, we need your financial support. Please give through our online giving portal at <http://fairmontchurch.org/stewardship-and-giving/>

The current pandemic is a worldwide crisis. The word “crisis” literally means a moment of decision. The leadership of Fairmont has decided to not only survive this emergency, but to innovate, grow, and transform our ministry by and through the Holy Spirit. Together, we can deepen our connections to God and each other. We know that we will pass through this

storm because God is with us. Jesus is with us reminding us not to worry and that all will be well. The Spirit will sustain and encourage us, empowering us to boldly be Christ's church. My hope is that someday our little children will look back on this time and tell their grandchildren that back in 2020 Fairmont really stepped up and was the church of Jesus Christ.

May God bless you and your families. Please stay in touch, join us in online worship, let us know of your needs, and in all things, pray.

In Christ,

Brian

**What has Fairmont stopped doing?**

- Public worship is suspended
- The office is closed, but we are regularly checking phone messages and emails
- Fit 4 You is suspended
- All public, in-person, meetings, classes and groups have been cancelled
- All outside groups (except 12 step groups) have been cancelled
- Suspended in-person visits to nursing homes, assisted care facilities, and hospitals

**What has Fairmont already started doing?**

- Sunday morning streaming worship through Facebook and YouTube
- On-line worship resources for both children and adults
- Session, Deacons, Trustees and Team meetings continuing through Zoom
- Christian Formation classes meeting through Zoom
- Accelerated building cleaning
- PYC weekly meetings through Zoom
- Confirmation weekly meetings through Zoom
- Daily children's ministry classes through Zoom, including preschool
- Daily messages to children and youth through Facebook Messenger and Snapchat
- Telephone connections with vulnerable older adult members
- Phone tree established to call people without internet access
- Pastoral Care providers accelerating telephone, card, and email outreach
- Youth have been organized as a tech support team for members

**What will Fairmont be doing?**

- New and innovative on-line worship experiences
- Extended community feeding relief efforts
- Direct material support for vulnerable older adult members
- Expanding Christian Formation offerings for members of all ages
- Encouraging use of on-line giving and text giving