



Christ Presbyterian Church, New Haven

**CPC Covid-19 Update**  
13 March 2020

Dear CPC Family & Friends,

In our previous CPC COVID-19 update a few days ago, I left you with the words:

*The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?...I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living! Wait for the LORD; be strong and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!*

Psalm 27:1,13-14

I hope these words and the implicit promises inherent in them will continue to bring us to a place of peace, courage, and resolve as we together take refuge in God and witness the transcending power and love of God to our neighbors. I want to encourage us all to continue thinking deeply about what the assumptions are of this passage and how they bring great comfort to us.

The promise is that God IS good and that he IS present in the land of the living! It's true, when we "fear" the Lord, whom/what else shall we fear? While this promise doesn't insure that none of us will get the coronavirus, it does insure that God's grace will be sufficient, that our ultimate happiness and flourishing is not predicated upon the coronavirus or any other circumstance but upon God who is our ever present and sufficient help in times of trouble even. The fact of the matter is behind our fears is the power we have given those things that we fear such as to be tyrannized by them. To fear the Lord is to un-empower those other fears in a way that sets us free from fearing them, wherein they no longer have power over us. This is the meaning of Paul's declared conviction—

*For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.*

Galatians 5:1

And again,

*But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."*

2 Corinthians 12:9

Last night the session was convened to consider the ever-changing circumstances of our situation and how we as a church ought to respond. The following decisions were made:

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1) We will continue Sunday Worship at this time **but move to 1 service at 10.**

We will utilize mostly the same worship procedures as last week with a few minor changes. Here is a summary, most of which have been incorporated into our worship bulletin for instruction throughout the service.

- Sanitizers will be placed at entrances into the sanctuary- we encourage people to use them.
- We continue to encourage a social distancing (seating gaps in pews as able, no physical contact, etc.).
- Those who prepare communion are instructed to first sanitize hands and then wear gloves, those administering communion will also sanitize hands and use gloves.
- This week the pastor with gloves will place bread in the palm of your hands formed in a cup without touching hand, an assistant shepherd leader wearing glove will place cup with wine (unless communicant specifies juice) on table next to him/her wherein communicant will take it.
- Collection basket will be placed on table on either side of sanctuary toward the front as to avoid human contact of person holding it.
- We will place bulletins on welcome bar and on table next to door for people to take (Try to only touch your bulletin) Greeter/host will stand behind bar to help those who need assistance.

2) There will be no nursery during worship or any other church event.

3) There will be no Sunday School

4) We will continue to allow Life Groups to meet (could even meet together during worship if desired). HOWEVER, by “allow” we mean not to put any conscience bearing burden on anyone or any group to do so, but only at the discretion of each member individually, and only if there is someone who feels comfortable hosting it. Again, there is no shame in not going or hosting—it is a matter of personal conscience related to personal health concerns and the advice of your own personal health provider. If groups do meet, sanitation best practices should be utilized (e.g sanitizers present and social distancing practiced, etc.).

5) We will continue Wednesday Adult School of Discipleship WITHOUT children (Kids Club) or nursery.

6) We will cancel all Youth Ministry Events unless otherwise noted.

7) We will continue Compline service using best practices in serving communion, etc.

8) We will postpone upcoming men’s retreat — will review later when to reschedule.

9) We will continue board meetings as scheduled (Session/WLB/SLB) using best practices. Boards may also want to utilize video conferencing as an alternative if desired. The church has an account with GoToMeeting and our Operations Coordinator can set that up for you upon request.

10) We will prohibit all outside groups from using our building until further notified.

11) The Session with WLB as able will meet by conference call on a weekly basis or as needed in the foreseeable future for prayer and to review the situation as it develops.

We want all church members to know that you have freedom of conscience to use your discretion as to whether to attend any CPC event that is still meeting or not. CDC has recommended that older adults or people with chronic medical conditions should take additional measures to protect their health (see [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus) for a list of serious long-term health problems). If you are uncertain whether or not you are at increased risk, please call your healthcare provider and obtain a recommendation on the medical prudence to attend any church event. We continue to ask that anyone who shows any signs of illness (e.g. over 100.4 fever and cough, other flu like symptoms) NOT come to worship or any CPC event still meeting. For the worship service you may join us using the online live stream ([cpcnewhaven.org/live](https://cpcnewhaven.org/live) – or access it on the CPC website, under the “Worship” navigation heading select “Live Stream”).

Finally, I want to reiterate that your shepherd leaders are keenly aware of the trauma all this can create—again wanting to direct us to the promise and encourage of the above noted Psalm. We again realize that the means by which that promise is made effectual are directly related to our partnering together of the flesh of Christ as that flesh is mediated vis-à-vis OUR flesh through “one-anothering!” Along these lines:

- Be especially aware of those who may be “shut-in” and alone. Take a moment to think about who in our church might inadvertently become “invisible” and be intentional about reaching out to them.
- Be especially aware of our older generation and the risks that are more relevant to them as related to the virus. Be intentional about checking up with them.
- And be especially aware of our neighbors, especially those who may be alone and/or of special needs as per the above. This is a moment in history when the love and mercy of Christ can shine through you!

Ok then, know that you are not alone. We are in God’s presence and we are in his presence with one another. God/we have your backside! Don’t hesitate to reach out to a fellow member or your shepherd leaders/pastors if you just want to talk or pray. And by all means, let’s remember to pray for one another and our city/neighbors, even that the goodness of God will be revealed, if not immediately, eventually, as to make good the promise:

*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress...No! In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Romans 8:35, 37-39

I am yours most affectionately,

Preston Graham

*Senior Pastor, Christ Presbyterian Church*