



Christ Presbyterian Church, New Haven

CPC Covid-19 Update
7 April 2020

Dear CPC Family and Friends,

As we continue to “hunker down” in our battle against COVID-19, perhaps many of us are beginning to discover a new lifestyle-liturgy. I don’t know about you, but I have especially been blessed by our Holy Week Liturgy of Morning and Evening prayers. I think many are discovering the peace and blessedness of being led through meditations and prayers to begin and end our busy and often stress filled days. They are designed to re-center us and our emotions and ambitions on God, who alone is the mover of all moving, the great physician in chief of body and spirit that moves all healing, the great provider in chief that moves all markets and businesses—to be sure with a redemptive purposefulness that might exceed our understanding but by faith, if not by sight, such as to await our submission and trust. I’m brought again to our first prayer that began our Holy Week of prayers:

Assist us mercifully with your help, O Lord God of our salvation, that we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of those mighty acts, whereby you have given us life and immortality; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

If you haven’t yet joined us in morning and evening prayers, I would encourage you to make a quick adjustment in your plans and do so if at all possible. It will bless your soul!

Our weekly session meeting last night was again filled with good work. We continue to review and act on all sorts of ideas and petitions related to a proactive and merciful response to COVID-19. (Keep checking our CPC COVID-19 Homepage: <https://www.cpcnewhaven.org/covid19>).

The session is particularly interested in discovering more and more ways to mobilize our congregations for the sake of mission and mercy especially related to local needs and initiatives. Again, we encourage each of us to offer ourselves as a living and holy sacrifice unto the Lord albeit tempered as needed by your particular health related risk-factors. Throughout *our* pandemic, I keep finding myself passing along the advice of the great 6th century pastor Martin Luther to his congregation amidst *their* pandemic:

You ought to think this way: "Very well, by God's decree, the enemy has sent us poison and deadly offal. Therefore, I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine, and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance infect and pollute others, and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me and I have done what he has expected of me and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others. If my neighbor needs me, however, I shall not avoid place or person, but will go freely.

Martin Luther, “Whether One May Flee from a Deadly Plague” (1527)

Finally, I encourage you to think ahead about who you want to invite to our Good Friday Compline Service at 8 PM and Our Easter Worship Service Sunday at 10 AM.

On Friday, we will accept the call *for all believers in Christ in the Presbyterian Church of America (PCA), the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) and the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) to set aside Good Friday, April 10, as a day of prayer and fasting to cry out for God's help in addition to a Holy Day of worship.*

On Sunday, we will consider the exhortation of Paul in Philippians to “rejoice” with a particular awareness of how we can do this in seasons of great suffering and pain as was the context of Paul’s exhortation. Hint:

...that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.
Philippians 3:10-11

I am yours most affectionately,

Preston Graham

Senior Pastor, Christ Presbyterian Church New Haven