



**good shepherd**  
presbyterian church

March 19, 2020

Dear Church Family,

Our local and national situation has changed dramatically in the last week since I communicated our initial (and then revised!) response as a church to the COVID-19 coronavirus. We moved from “taking strong precautions” in the same week to suspending all church activities. And it appears that the country is moving from “social distancing” toward “shelter in place.”

All this can be worrying, not just for fear of illness, but perhaps even more so because of fear of the unknown. And it’s normal to feel these things (as well as anger, impatience, frustration, sadness, grief, and many other emotions as we experience many unexpected consequences). But be reminded of this Good News from Romans 8:

*v.35 – Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

*v.38-39 – For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created things, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

We are moving quickly to find ways to stay connected for worship, fellowship, and yes, even mission! I’ll spell some more of that out, but have this special request **for people without Internet** that I am going to highlight so it won’t be missed:

**We are particularly mindful of folks who do not have Internet and want to make sure we are able to connect with you during this time. We think we know who all fits this category and have marked the top of this letter FOR YOU with a large colored asterisk (\*). If you fit this category and do not see this asterisk at the top of the page, would you call the church office (704-364-1234) and let us know your name and that this is the case? If it’s after hours you can leave us a message. We are hoping this way no one will fall through the cracks! (If you are in the category of no internet but you CAN text, that would be helpful to know; please text your name to Robert at 704-575-6529 (that’s his cell/text, which you are welcome to use).**

## **RESOURCES FOR WORSHIP, CONNECTING, AND MISSION**

### **DEACONS**

Each member of the church has a deacon assigned to you for care, prayer, communication, and encouragement. During this increased time of distancing and isolation the deacons will be reaching out even more to make sure you are connected and have what you need. If you are at-risk and need any help picking up groceries or with anything else, please let your deacon know! (If for any reason you don't know who your deacon is, please call the church office or reach out to Robert and we'll make sure to make that connection quickly!)

### **PERSONAL CONNECTIONS**

I'd also strongly encourage each member to reach out directly to each other (as well as friends, neighbors, family, etc...). Pick up that phone and call someone, *especially* if they are not online (but even if they are, a voice conversation can be so helpful in this time).

### **WORSHIP**

As many churches, businesses, and individuals are doing during this time, we will be putting worship services online. We'd like to make this interactive so will be using Facebook this Sunday to worship "live" together. Those viewing will be able to comment, react, and 'chat' while we all watch it together at the same time. For those not on Facebook, the service will also be available on YouTube. It may be possible in future weeks to call in and listen by phone. Audio recordings and a copy of the bulletin are also available after the fact for anyone interested in that (audio file or CD).

### **OTHER TEACHING/PRAYER/DEVOTION/FELLOWSHIP**

After this first Sunday we hope to make a number of other resources available, from small group study to prayer to chapel singing for children... maybe even some group games or hangout time. There is some wonderful (and fairly simple to use) technology to allow participation by audio/video. And we have some folks able to walk you through that technology if you have access to the Internet through a computer or smart phone.

### **MISSION**

As I wrote in the first congregational letter a week ago, our mission means individually thinking past our own risk to the more at-risk members of our church. Our mission means collectively thinking past our own church to how we can be the light and hope of Christ serving our neighbors and community. This means observing all recommended hygiene, social distancing, and "sheltering in place." On the next page I am repeating four "COVID-19 Challenges" from the 3/15 sermon.

## **COVID-19 CHALLENGES: Turning Testing into Spiritual Fruit**

1. *COVID Challenge #1: PRAYER* – Take time to pray each day. Pray specifically for some of the needs I have mentioned. Go through the church directory or through the names of the people who live around you. Pray specifically for protection, for re-kindled or deepened faith, for unknown needs.
2. *COVID Challenge #2: HUMAN CONNECTION* – Connect with at least one person every day. Talk to them on the phone. Check on a neighbor; do they need groceries if they are at-risk? Facetime with someone so you can see their expression. I'm hoping even if we aren't meeting face to face that each week I can share some video greetings during the online worship or recording. We'll be sharing some resources for conference calls or video for groups that want to continue meeting or start new connections. There are even some fun online group games for game night!
3. *COVID Challenge #3: CARE* – Cook an extra meal for someone who needs it once a week. Pick up groceries for someone at-risk. Offer yourself as a "tech helper."
4. *COVID Challenge #4: ECONOMIC HELP* – Look for and address one or two small economic challenges of others each week. Consider an extra tip for someone in a service industry who may only see one-fifth (or less!) of the regular business. Hear about someone who has been laid off or had significantly reduced hours? Consider a gift card or making a meal.

### **SCRIPTURE**

Several folks have asked for suggested scripture readings for personal devotions. With help from Zach (who recently preached about daily devotions), here are some to use:

- Psalm 16
- Matthew 6:19-34
- John 10:1-18
- Ephesians 2:1-10
- 1 John 3
- Romans 8
- Psalm 103
- 2 Corinthians 4:7-18

## ONLINE RESOURCES/LINKS

If you have access to the Internet, these links will help you get to church and community information. Some folks have asked me what the bit.ly means in the links... that is a standard URL-shortener which allows for a short link rather than a very long one... it is safe when coming from a trusted source – like your church! It is not necessary to type ‘www’ or ‘http:’ in a web address – you CAN, or can just use what’s listed below.

Good Shepherd Website	<a href="http://gspc.net">gspc.net</a>
GSPC Facebook Group (‘live’ service Sun 9am, 11am)	<a href="https://bit.ly/GSPCfacebook">bit.ly/GSPCfacebook</a>
GSPC YouTube Channel (archived services)	<a href="https://bit.ly/GSPCyoutube">bit.ly/GSPCyoutube</a>
Online Giving (credit or electronic fund transfer)	<a href="https://bit.ly/GSPC-giving">bit.ly/GSPC-giving</a>

You may also use our secure P.O. Box for checks  
(Good Shepherd Pres. Ch., P.O. Box 78175, Charlotte, NC 28271)

To be added to the e-mail prayer list or  
the Voice newsletter distribution, please reach out to  
Joni Bailey at [admin@gspc.net](mailto:admin@gspc.net) or 704-364-1234

COVID-19 GSPC-related Updates	<a href="http://gspc.net/covid-19">gspc.net/covid-19</a>
Center for Disease Control (CDC)	<a href="https://bit.ly/CDCgeneralCOVID19">bit.ly/CDCgeneralCOVID19</a>
NC Health/Human services	<a href="https://bit.ly/NCHHScovid19updates">bit.ly/NCHHScovid19updates</a>

If there is anything you need or ideas you want to share, please let me know! I believe spiritual care is extra-important in a time of fear and risk. So we want to **be the church fully “on” and at our best for one another and for our community**. Thank you for being a part of THIS special church family.

In God’s grace,



*\*Further updates will be posted at [gspc.net](http://gspc.net), e-mailed, or sent by mail. We will take special care to share any critical information by phone to those without Internet access.*