



Pastor's Reflections by Stacey Simpson Duke

March 18, 2020

Dear church family,

We're less than a week into suspension of normal church operations, and the news about COVID-19 continues to be a moving target. **It now appears that normal life in our nation will be on hold for eight weeks or more.** This is difficult news to process! It is clear to us now that we need to continue our suspension of normal church operations indefinitely, certainly at least through April 5, and probably a good bit beyond. We will continue to update you regularly as the situation becomes clearer.

Our church building will remain closed for now, and our Sunday worship services will continue online on March 22, March 29, April 5, and likely beyond. We will be offering the worship service via Facebook Live, but you do not need a Facebook account to access it. Just go to the church Facebook page: [facebook.com/fbca2](https://www.facebook.com/fbca2) and look for the Facebook Live video. We're working on setting up a dial-in option as well, for those of you who would prefer listening rather than watching on Facebook. The worship service video stays on our page and can be watched after it has aired live <https://www.facebook.com/fbca2/videos/233956957783092/>. Additionally, we've uploaded a devotional resource to our Facebook page to go along with this past Sunday's sermon.

We are now offering nightly prayers on our church Facebook page as well, at 8:30pm. These stay on our Facebook page and can be watched later as well.

All church gatherings in our church building remained cancelled through at least April 5. We are working on getting some options for fellowship and learning, for children, youth, and adults, available via Zoom or other teleconferencing platform.

Our staff continue to work remotely, meeting with each other electronically or via phone. They're accessible through the usual mechanisms except for in-person or via the church phone.

How will we still be church if the building is closed and we aren't gathering together? First and foremost, as members of the body of Christ, we are always the church together, whether we are gathered or scattered. This suspension of normal operations is temporary. Perhaps we can think of it as a new form of Lenten discipline for our congregation and community - a season of doing less and, perhaps, discovering new gifts in the midst of it. We let go of one form of our life together, trusting our future to the God of resurrection. Additionally, we maintain our concern for each other, and especially for the lonely and vulnerable among us. We encourage you to checking with each other via text, phone, email, video chat, and even "old-fashioned" mail. Let's be creative, consistent, and persistent in reaching out to each other and reminding each other that we are connected, valued, and most of all, loved. Finally, if there are particular ways your church family can serve and support you, please let us know. We have church members who are already

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volunteering to help get groceries and/or supplies for those who need help with such. If you need that kind of assistance, we will get you connected to those volunteers (if you want to offer that kind of assistance, please let us know). And if there are other things you need help with, please let us know that, too. Mary Davis will be organizing these kinds of efforts; you can email her at marydavis1956@gmail.com.

In the meantime: Please take care of yourselves, physically, emotionally, relationally, and spiritually. Follow all the recommendations for personal hygiene. Minimize being out in public, but try to get some fresh air when you can. Reach out to others in whatever ways you can, both to offer support and to seek support. Take the time to pray - for those who are sick; for those who are scared; for those who are economically impacted; for healthcare workers; for students whose studies (and much-anticipated competitions, performances, and events) have been disrupted; for the leaders of communities, congregations, countries, and healthcare systems; and for the church in all places. Be assured, too, of our prayers for you and for our community.

We will continue to monitor this public health situation and take into account recommendations for best community practices, and we will update the congregation as needed. Don't hesitate to reach out with questions or concerns.

With love,
Stacey and Paul



FBCA2 Online Worship
10am Sunday on FB Live
Join us @ facebook.com/fbca2



Hi kiddos! I have been thinking about you so much these last few days. I hope you are enjoying the time to read, play, and have a slower pace. I'm looking forward to writing you letters and calling you. Feel free to put a letter in the mail to me, if you'd like. My address is 2614 Page Court, Ann Arbor, MI 48104. God loves you and so do I! , Xan

FBC News & Happenings

The Central Area Annual Meeting scheduled for this Saturday at Olivet Church in Lansing has been cancelled. Please let Sue Ellen know if you would like to see the Annual Report and to vote on the budget and election of the new Chair.

The Board of Care and Community and your congregation want to be available to help in life's difficulties and transitions, but we can only do that if we know you are experiencing them. We can offer visits, help with food, transportation and possibly other needs. If you or your family lets the church office know, we will contact you by your preferred method to see how we can help.

Follow us on Facebook! If you aren't already a fan of FBCA2 on Facebook, come on over and "Like" our page: facebook.com/fbca2. We post regular updates there about what's going on around here, along with the occasional devotional thought. You can post on our wall as well. If you are already a fan, did you know that you can easily share certain FBCA2 posts with your own Facebook friends? Events and links that can be shared will have a "Share" button (in addition to the usual "Like" and "Comment" buttons). Click "share" and the event or link will show up on your own Facebook page for all your friends to see. It's a great way to get the word out about special happenings at our church.



Pilgrimage in Place: Taizé in Ann Arbor

What a beautiful time we had with Brother Emile and Brother John, who were here with us from the Taizé Community in France last week! We had a special dinner for youth and families with prayer and conversation with the brothers; three community evening prayer services (two with receptions and conversation, one with dinner); and an Interfaith Round Table forum with Q&A with the brothers. They also led prayers at the First Presbyterian Church staff meeting and had lunch and conversation on the topic of vocation with students at the Campus Chapel. Thank you to Allen and Paula Burton for opening your home and offering your hospitality to the brothers! Thank you to Heather Entrekin, Liz Larrivee, William Van Geest, Xan Morgan, and our friends at First Presbyterian, St. Mary Student Parish, and Campus Chapel, for all your work to make this event possible. Thank you to Heather Entrekin, Pete Stover, Mary Davis, Maryann Bowen, Roberta Hause, Charlotte DeVries, and Linda Turner, for a beautiful reception after the prayers we hosted at First Baptist. And thank you, as always, to Kat Becker and Lee Foley, for your work behind the scenes to make everything go so smoothly. - Stacey





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The Reverends Paul & Stacey Simpson Duke, Co-Pastors

Next
Newsletter
Deadline:
Sunday, April 12

Thank You from the Daytime Warming Center

The guests attending the Warming Center in February send their gratitude for our congregation's very generous gifts of health care items, warm clothing, and underwear. Your contributions during our "Undie Sunday" collection offered over 500 items, and another 160 items were purchased during February to meet special sizes and special requests. Your gifts of health care items and warm clothing were also appreciated, including over 200 pairs of socks donated by Andrew Redinger's Boy Scout troop. Thank you for being such a caring congregation! (And remember that hygiene items, feminine products, underwear, and socks may be donated anytime during the year - watch for sales and bring back your travel soaps and shampoos. Sue Ellen stores these items during the year for distribution during the warming shelter and for Vespers.)