

From the Desk of Rev. Polly D. Standing

March 18, 2020

Dear Family of Faith,

The Coronavirus continues to bring new information forward daily and therefore in order to care for the least of these among us we continue to make changes to our usual way of going about worship.

First, let me remind you that **you are** the church. Even when we do not gather together to be in worship, worship still happens. I do not find it a coincidence that our last sermon from the 4th Chapter of the Gospel of John clearly addressed this truth. Jesus stated to the Samaritan Woman that there would come a time when worship would neither happen in the Temple or on the mountain but rather in spirit. So, we too are learning this lesson. We each have to ask ourselves what it will look like for us to be in worship when we are not able to meet in corporate worship as usual. And even more importantly, how will we continue to be the church in our community?

Second, during Lent many of us either give up something or take on something new in order to think about the sacrifices and the responsibilities that Christ experiences on the way to the cross. How timely it is that we are experiencing these changes to our lifestyles and the responsibilities to care for those in need at this Christian Season of the year. I challenge you to see all of this journey as a means of identifying with the sacrifices of Christ especially in light of his disregard for his own desires to ensure the wellbeing of others.

Third, the Lenten Luncheons have been cancelled for this Lenten Season. We feel that it is in the best interest to those who faithfully attend and also fall into a high-risk category not to continue at this time. Perhaps you will find other ways to be in fellowship while we are unable to join together. You could send cards, write letters, and/or make phone calls.

Fourth, we have made the decision to do worship differently for the next few weeks. To that end we are looking at ways to record and send the sermon and/or worship music over the internet. This is new territory for us and will require new copyright licenses. It also will have a huge learning curve. We are working to enable us to record and post our own worship by next week. In the meantime, our Bishop, Rev. Scott Jones, will be leading a live worship service at 11:00am this Sunday on The Conference Facebook page. Here is the link: <https://www.facebook.com/txumc/> I would also remind you that each of you have been given free access to RightNow Media and have access to a multitude of worship experiences through that resource.

Fifth, I will be asking our Children's minister to develop a very brief family active learning opportunity to send out each week for you to experience together as a family. Please watch the email for this and other ways to worship at home.

Sixth, I have compiled a list of songs that are selected for this season and would encourage you to use the gift of music to help you worship. You should be able to pull these up on YouTube.

Contemporary: His Glory Appears by Hillsong United Brooke Frasier Version, Lamb of God by Tenth Avenue North, Does Your Heart Break by The Brilliance, Beautiful Things by Gungor, Beautiful Lord by Chris Tomlin.

Sacred Hymns: "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded" Latin hymn, sometimes attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux, 12th century; "O Love Divine, What Hast Thou Done" by Charles Wesley, 1742; "What Wondrous Love is This" American folk hymn; "Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed" by Isaac Watts, 1707; "Beneath the Cross of Jesus" by Elizabeth Clephane, 1872; "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" by Isaac Watts, 1707; "O come and Mourn with Me Awhile" by Frederick Faber, 1849; "Cross of Jesus, Cross of Sorrow" by William Simpson, 1886; "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me" by Augustus Toplady, 1776

Seventh, we will continue to be available for prayer. You can call the church office during office hours or leave a message after hours. You can email the church at Franklinumc@gmail.com. Also, I encourage you to use the new directory that has been sent out as a means of praying for members of the church.

Finally, Eighth, I encourage you to think on these verses:

"You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you" Isaiah 26:3

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will." Romans 12:2

"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things." Philippians 4:8

With great love and assurance that we will meet in worship together again I pray that God bless you and keep you in Christ's light,

Pastor Polly