March 30, 2020

Brothers and Sisters,

Woodland Presbyterian remains a church scattered during this time of quarantine. While are not able to meet in person, we remain the people of God through online worship, small group virtual meetings, family worship, and lots of phone calls and text messages. This has been a strange New Season of life together but one where we trust that God is seeking to form us spiritually and to use us to bless our community.

In light of recent announcements regarding continued social distancing through April 30, all corporate gatherings are postponed indefinitely. Yes, this means we won’t see the children raising their palms this weekend in the center aisle for Palm Sunday. Yes, this means we will not be able to silently depart from the sanctuary following the Tenebrae service. Yes, this means we won’t be able to take in the fragrance of the tulips and lilies on Resurrection Sunday and many more of the blessings of being together personally.

Yes, these are sad things. They ARE cause for lament but we worship a God who is not bound to a building. We worship a God who has said, wherever two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them. We are the Church wherever we are gathered. We are connected to one another online, in spirit and in our hearts. By being apart we reduce the chance of infection and thereby protect the vulnerable among us. Our hearts are also stirred with longing to be together when it is wise to do so. My hope is to celebrate the Resurrection in a big way upon returning!

Until then, we will continue to worship online together on Sundays and also at 7:00 pm, Thursday April 9th, for a Tenebrae service. We encourage you to light seven candles and turn the lights down in your home, extinguishing a candle with us as we go through the service.

I would like you to join with me for a Day of Prayer and Fasting on Good Friday, April 10 so that we can cry out to God in this time of crisis and distress. The EPC is joining other denominations to seek the Lord together to ask for him mercy. Fasting is the spiritual discipline we had planned to consider in the month of April and is the subject of the chapter four in Celebration of Discipline. I encourage you to begin following the Tenebrae service on Thursday night, fasting and praying with us on Good Friday.

A COVID response team is gathering to prayerfully consider what resources we have to serve the Lord by caring for our community. Send me your ideas and keep loving one another and maturing in order to serve our hurting world!

Blessings,

Pastor Matt