

Dear Seven Oaks Presbyterian Church,

In light of all that is unfolding around us, it is not lost on the church that our Lenten theme is about the wilderness. Though these are rather wild, strange times, we remember that God is with us, and we are reminded of Jesus' call to prioritize care for the least of these, those in our communities who are most vulnerable (Matthew 25). In that spirit, we want to do our part in every way possible to reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and keep members of our church and surrounding communities well.

Scientists here in the U.S. and abroad have made it clear that the more we limit contact and create social distance, the better our chances are for "flattening the curve" of how quickly and widely the virus spreads. This is critical for protecting those most susceptible to the illness, supporting our healthcare system and its employees, and ensuring that necessary, life-saving care is available for those who need it.

With much discernment, we've been keeping a close eye on developments and recommendations regarding the coronavirus as this situation unfolds rapidly here in South Carolina. In careful conversation with medical professionals, the SOPC Session, Presbytery staff, and other state and local faith communities, we've decided to suspend all in-person worship services and church gatherings (large and small) at Seven Oaks until CDC advises to resume. This includes Supper Clubs/meals, group quilting events, Chin Church events, committee meetings, social activities, worship, music and bell practices, small groups and Sunday School events.

Just because we will not meet in person does not mean we will not be meeting. Zoom groups are currently being set up for Growth groups and if you would like to join any of those groups, please let the office know. Session will meet via zoom when necessary as well. Our congregational meeting for the election of elders will temporarily be postponed until we discern that there is no other way to elect except by electronic means prior to June installation date. Teaching of elders will happen, just on a different time table.

Your current elders will be making calls to all members during this period to maintain community connection and stay apprised of any needs that arise for our members. Pastoral care visits will continue as needed via phone. Hospitals are no longer allowing visitors and our folks at living communities are quarantined into their rooms/homes. Please continue to reach out to make sure that all is well.

Recommendations are that staff work from home whenever possible. The staff of SOPC will take care of necessary business and our financial assistant will be frequently in office but the office will not be presently staffed. Those coming to our office for assistance will be greeted with a notice of where to call and staff can retrieve those messages and will return and assist as soon as we are able. If any business can be handled not in person, please do so. Staff will be available by phone and email, text and FB messenger to address any needs that arise.

Holy Week will be honored virtually with online events on Palm Sunday, Wednesday, Maundy Thursday virtual communion service, Good Friday private worship service, and Easter Sunday. Session voted to hold April 12<sup>th</sup> Resurrection Sunday (Easter) Worship as a 'drive in' at 10am on our back parking lot, live streaming onto our phones so that you can adequately hear the music and words of worship to participate. This will be placed on our signs for the neighbors and you are invited to bring your coffee cups, snacks, and worship in your cars as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord.

We are working on plans to worship together through our Facebook and You Tube pages on Sundays, and we will develop liturgy and reflections to mail to our members who aren't online.

If you have not already made plans, our financial leaders advise to make plans to submit your pledges regularly. As always, pledges may certainly be mailed to the church or you are encouraged to sign up for online giving. This is a critical time for the church to embrace the call to community in a different yet significant way. We will be serving those outside of our walls more frequently in the coming months and your tithes help to make this gift of Christ possible to those who struggle in our community.

During this time, we encourage you to extend grace and patience as we navigate what is uncharted territory. We'll do everything we can to keep you updated as this unfolds. Please do stay in touch with one another (especially those who are more isolated) through phone calls and social media. If you have pictures of how you are spending your time during this physical isolation, please send them to [sopc@sopc.net](mailto:sopc@sopc.net) so that we can share with our community.

Email resources for worship each Sunday will arrive on Thursday afternoon in your inbox. If you would like a hardcopy of sermons or liturgy, please call or email to let us know. Online resources will be available at the following websites.

#### Facebook:

Seven Oaks Presbyterian Church

- will host online worship services
- Will host active and pertinent updates

SOPC CommUNITY of Faith Group will host

- Will host online streamed worship
- Prayer meetings Mondays at 1030 am
- Will be used alongside our email prayer requests

#### YouTube:

Seven Oaks Presbyterian Church (has an image of the church building in the corner picture) and a video of Ed Ayers

#### Zoom:

You will need to download the Zoom 'App' onto your phone or computer.

You will be sent a link to join a meeting at a specific time (via email)

You sign into that link and will be able to view video and sound with others in the Zoom group.

This is a 'virtual' meeting and will work well to stay connected in your small groups.

Jack Noe can assist by phone to get you started if needed. Please let the office know how to help.

As the body of Christ, we find reassurance in all the times Jesus says “Peace be with you.” And we remember that, perhaps especially, now is the time to pray for one another, to be a good neighbor, and to find ways to serve those in need. May the love of God, the compassion of Jesus, and the movement of the Holy Spirit guide us through these challenges we face together.

May the God of all hope be with you always.

Pastor Jana Creighton, the SOPC Staff and SOPC Session