

March 20, 2020

Beloved Alamance Presbyterian Church Community,

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult...
The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.*

Psalm 46 is one of my favorites. It offers us courage, hope, and resilience. It reassures us that God is with us and mighty to save. Still, it pulls no punches. It does not sugarcoat the truth sometimes, life comes crashing down on us and the whole world is just left to tremble. All we can do is trust in the God of steadfast love and faithfulness, stand firm, and hold on tight. I wanted to write you all in part to offer some of that same encouragement. God is here with us, even during this coronavirus pandemic. God is faithful, even through these perilous days. And God is a very present help, in part, because God uses us to help one another. I would call on you, sisters and brothers, to be helpers. Look for ways you can help. Call each other on the phone. Send a note or a text message. Learn how to video call and talk face-to-face. Reach out, and if anyone has a need, be creative in the ways you can offer help. If you have an idea or concern, share it with us at Alamance.

I also want to write you to ask something of you. Please, friends, I implore you to STAY HOME! Limit your exposure to other people, but especially those whose immune systems may not be as strong. Restaurants are closed. Stores are closing. Where possible, employers are encouraging work from home. Schools are now teaching our young people remotely (even my kindergartener!). Your church is following suit. Alamance Presbyterian Church is already ahead of the curve with our Livestream service. You can watch church from home every week. If you don't have that capability, let us know. We might be able to help. We are also posting new content every day to our updated website and through our Facebook feed. We hope you will take advantage of those offerings, and we promise more to come. Stay tuned for news about these things.

Your session will meet via video conference call on Sunday evening to address future closings. We previously voted to remain closed through Sunday, March 22. Though it is ultimately up to the session to decide, I would advise not to look for any of our regular activities to resume in the near future. We will communicate with you our formal plans as soon as they are decided.

I would also ask that you please continue your faithful financial support for our congregation. While we certainly have resources others do not, the truth is that the financial implications of this pandemic will likely last far beyond the virus itself. I assure you that everyone on our staff is hard at work. We are making pastoral phone calls. We are creating videos and preparing for events we hope to reschedule. We are updating websites, crafting letters, taking on additional building care and maintenance tasks, preparing worship services, and fielding an increased volume of calls and messages. The church office is very busy! Your support insures that we can sustain our faithful, creative, dynamic staff through this crisis, not to mention pay our bills and keeping up a church we will all one day come back to.

One way you can support us through our new online giving platform. It's easy to find on our website. You can now even text to give. You'll find all the information about those options at www.alamancechurch.org. Feel free to mail in your contributions, or if you absolutely must, drop them by the office. As always, I ask of you now so I will not have to plead to you later. I have no doubt you will come through for us!

In closing, here are just a few other quick notes I want to share.

- For the time being, the food pantry will continue to operate. Hungry people in our community need us now more than ever.
- Again, for the time being, the Child Development Center is open. For many parents, including a number of first responders, medical professionals, and aid workers, the Child Development Center is critically important. To care for our families and to provide for the staff, the day care will remain open as long as it is feasible. As an extra precaution, no adult other than a teacher is allowed in the educational building during their hours of operation (8:00-5:00.)
- The pastoral staff will only be making hospital or homebound visits in the event of an emergency.
- The church office is open, but the staff have been instructed to limit their time in the building to necessary tasks. If you need to call or stop by, it would be prudent to do so earlier in the day.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear... Take courage and take heart, friends. Be helpers. Help us all by staying home. Don't forget to give, and don't forget to tune in on Sunday!

In Christ's Love and Light,



Dr. Kyle Goodman, Lead Pastor