

Dear First (Scots) Family,

Even before last week's declaration by the World Health Organization that the COVID-19 constitutes a global pandemic, there was no shortage of worry about the virus and its potential impact. God knows this reality, and God knows the worry that can reside in our hearts; still, God proclaims: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid" (John 14:27).

Our church's leadership (the Session) remains faithfully engaged with issues related to COVID-19, continues to pray for those who have been and may be affected by it, and, out of an abundance of caution and abiding love for our church family and larger community, has decided to take the following steps:

1. Shift to online only worship for Sunday, March 22nd and 29th at 11:15 a.m. You can access this online worship at www.first-scots.org.
2. Postpone all in-person programming at First (Scots) until at least Thursday, April 2.
3. Accelerate implementation of our new texting protocol. You can opt in or opt out anytime. To receive text messages <http://www.first-scots.org/first-scots-text-opt-in/>

The first and second steps are consistent with presiding medical advice and our current city ordinance. They reflect our hope that you will also take certain precautions to remain healthy and help slow the spread of the virus by staying home if you are sick, social distancing, etc. After speaking with the Mayor's office, I have been assured that the ordinance does, in fact, permit us to resume with adjusted corporate worship in April should we determine that the way is clear.

Please also know that, while all church meetings are presently being conducted telephonically, our church offices remain open at this time and ministries like Meals on Wheels continue. What's more, our pastoral team and staff stand ready to assist you. Speaking of potential needs, our Deacons are currently reaching out to people who might be more susceptible to COVID-19. If you know of someone who is need of a call please notify the church office.

The third step is another way we plan to communicate with you. Through texting and a variety of other means, we, by God's grace, hope to remain close as a church family and be for one another a source of hope and encouragement in these trying days; indeed, "Take courage," our Savior says, for "I have overcome the world."

As we take those words to heart, let us be empowered to have faith in the face of fear and be equally emboldened in our prayer life in the ways we can care for one another.

As you may know, the CDC and government officials are continually updating guidelines. This creates uncertainty for all. We will continue to update you with the ways First (Scots) plans to serve our church family while trying to follow guidelines. You can find recent updates and links to the streaming services on the church site: www.first-scots.org.

In closing, a simple prayer: "Almighty and Everlasting God, you are our refuge and our strength, a very present help in times of need; therefore we come before you with confidence, praying for those who are sick, for those who are scared, for those who face financial uncertainty or any other heavy burden. Help all of us to continually draw near to you, to cast upon you any sense of anxiety, and to find peace, because you love us, O Lord. Amen!"

In Christ's Service,

The Rev. Dr. L. Holton Siegling, Jr.

To sign up to receive the Kirk-News contact Candi at publications@first-scots.org
You may access our online giving options to [≤https://abundant.co/firstscots/give>](https://abundant.co/firstscots/give).