



The Reverend Doctor Julie Schuett
11100 Spanish Road, Ely, IA 52227

March 18, 2020

Dear Church Family,

On Tuesday, March 17, Gov. Reynolds issued a State of Public Health Disaster Emergency activating the State Disaster Emergency Plan, as you have heard on the news. One item is particular to churches:

E. Mass Gathering: Social, community, spiritual, religious, recreational, leisure, and sporting gatherings and events of more than 10 people are hereby prohibited at all locations and venues, including but not limited to parades, festivals, conventions, and fundraisers. Planned large gatherings and events must be canceled or postponed until after termination of this disaster. <https://governor.iowa.gov/press-release/gov-reynolds-issues-a-state-of-public-health-disaster-emergency>

With prayerful consideration and abidance to the laws of our land, the Session and I are temporarily closing the church building based on Gov. Reynolds directive.

We will have to DO church and BE church in other ways.

We will:

1. Connect and encourage each other's faith digitally
 - a. Worship will be modified and shared via Facebook live at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday
 - b. Have a daily email shared on the church's email list.
 - c. Have a daily Facebook posting.
 - d. Continue Prayer Chain concerns through Donna Reihman. Thank you Donna!
 - e. Begin online Bible study chat groups to substitute for Wednesday morning Bible study.
 - f. Begin youth group meet through online meeting platform.
 - g. Begin Sunday School family group email for ideas/lessons and have online meeting for lesson/singing/support.
2. Connect and encourage each other's faith by phone calls. I will be going through the membership contact list and start calling. Answer if you have the time to chat.
3. Assist one another and our neighbors with errands and tasks as we can. When you or someone else needs something done, call and we will get someone to do it/help with it.



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What can you do to stay connected with your church family?

1. Dig out the membership directory at the back of your annual report and phone them.
2. Phone neighbors/family to see if they can use a delivery from the store, errand to the bank, etc.
3. Grandparents can relieve parents with a video chat and “babysit” for a time.
4. Call/email a college kid. They will probably go nearly crazy living at home again. Their parents too.
5. Channel concern, fear, and panic into productivity—go outside. Read. Clean. Downsize and make plans to donate.
6. More ideas to come. Please share yours too.

At church we will not be having in person worship through March 31. There will not be music rehearsals, meetings, Bible study, youth programming, etc. Clean Up Day is postponed too.

Only when tested, do we find the strength and the weakness of our faith. Know that you are loved by God and by your church family. We will love our way through this rough part of the pathway of faith.

In Christ,
Pastor Julie and the Session at First Presbyterian Church near Ely

PS: If you need help getting on Facebook, or on the prayer chain, or on the church email list, please contact Stephanie at the church office.

PPS: If you are concerned about your financial situation, please use your best judgement with your church donations. If you want to send your donation to the church or to Judy Serbousek, she will process and deposit them weekly.