



May 21, 2020

Dear Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church members and friends,

On March 13 we closed our church campus. Since then our staff and leadership have made an amazing transition to fully online worship from home. Last week we hosted our second virtual coffee hour after worship, meeting as a group on Zoom, and then in small groups to talk about and share this journey together. Bible studies, small groups, PW circles, and other church groups have been meeting online to study God's word, stay connected, and to discern plans for the future. Church officers and others have been regularly calling members of our congregation to hear how they are experiencing these times, to share church news, to offer help, and to pray.

The impacts of the pandemic have been profound, bringing loss of health, life, and financial stability, bringing changes to how we work, learn, socialize, shop, manage our household, and how we care for family and friends. But it has not changed that we care deeply for one another and for our communities near and far.

COVID-19 will be with us for the foreseeable future. As California starts a carefully planned reopening, you might have questions about when we will be back on campus experiencing worship and other events in person. **We believe that our community life will continue online for quite some time, measured more in months than weeks.** Guidance from PC(USA) asks that we identify "the risks that have caused a disruption within the usual mission and ministry of the congregation." Further, they assess that "The current risk...is the risk of transmitting throughout the community a virus that is highly transmittable, potentially deadly, and associated with long-term health issues, and for which there is not yet a cure nor a vaccine."

We will continue our online worship and meetings until we can be sure of the ongoing health of our congregation, neighbors, and friends. We endorse the views expressed in the Pastoral Statement from PC(USA): "[When] this congregation begins to resume public activities, please know that we will do so through a careful process of discussion and discernment, with an abundance of caution and concern for those who are most vulnerable, upon consideration of the best scientific knowledge at our disposal, in the spirit of constant prayer, and with full trust in the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit."

We close by quoting from the San Jose Presbytery in the document "Returning to Church." Our Executive Presbyter, Rev. Joey Lee, writes "**What future we will find ourselves in depends not only on the behavior of the virus, but on the actions of people—as individuals, churches, communities, and governments.** The way forward will not be a matter of following a timetable, but of faithfully discerning the signs of the times, and responding accordingly. It has always been that way for the church: 'You have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown...'"

With you in faith,
Lisa McManis, Lead Elder for Worship
The Session of Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church

Rooted in Christ, Reaching out in Love

Resources for Further Reading

Link to SVPC weekly online worship:
facebook.com/SunnyvalePres/videos/

PC(USA) “Returning to Public Worship—Theological and Practical Considerations”
pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/covid-19/returning_to_public_worship_may_2020.pdf

San Jose Presbytery “Returning to Church”
sanjosepby.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/returning-to-church.sjpby_.2020-1.pdf

Coronavirus/COVID-19 Resources from PC(USA)
pcusa.org/covid19/

Santa Clara County Public Health Department—COVID-19
sccgov.org/sites/covid19/Pages/home.aspx

Calgary Church Shares Painful Losses from COVID-19
bit.ly/CalgaryChurch