

April 22 2020

“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, through them mountains tremble with its tumult...Be still, and know that I am God!...The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.” (Psalm 46)

Dear Calvin Church family,

I am writing to update you on where we currently stand with regard to the suspension of in-person activities at the church. At our monthly stated Session meeting this past Monday, April 20, the Session prayerfully made the decision to extend our suspension **through Sunday, May 17**. Like you, we continue to monitor the public health announcements and recommendations of both Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

I know this has not been an easy time for any of us. One of Calvin’s greatest strengths as a church is the way the love of God is experienced and shown in our relationships with one another. We love our times of fellowship, whether at the church, in our small groups, visiting with one another, and so on. We have had to find new ways to continue our fellowship and our relationships. The good news is that, because of the deep relationships we have developed as a church, you are continuing to reach out to one another, to connect with one another through cards, phone calls, text messages, and even video chatting online! Make no mistake, God is present in these interactions just as much as when we gather for a potluck lunch after church.

So I want to say “Thank you.” Thank you for the time you set aside to write a card to someone. Thank you for the time you take to call someone on the phone, or send a text message, or invest in learning a new computer video chat program. Thank you for your prayers for one another and for this church.

I also want to say “Thank you” for being faithful in your gifts and giving to the church. This is an unsure time, but you have continued to give to the ministry of Calvin Presbyterian Church. Given various individual circumstances, some of us have had to adjust our giving for a season. That is ok, and to be expected. But even with changes, you have continued to be faithful in the ways you are able. That is all we are called to do – to be faithful in the ways we are able. The result of this is that currently, our finances are in good shape. On behalf of the Session, thank you.

We will get through this chapter, because God is faithful. I am reminded in this Easter season of the analogy of a seed used by both Jesus (John 12:24) and the Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 15:37). The seed falls to the ground, and it lies dormant for a season, even appearing as if it were dead. But then it is changed, and grows, and blossoms into something previously unseen; it is different, yet the same. Much of what we associate with church is in a season of lying dormant. But the good news is that Jesus literally lives to bring about new life out of what was once dormant, and even dead. And like the seed, though much of what have come to associate with church may appear dormant in our present circumstances, God is at work! There will be new life, and it will be the same, yet also different. We will be the same church, but we will also be a new, different church, in much the same way as a seed grows into something new. God is faithful, family! Whatever the future holds, may we rest in that truth, and that promise.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Kevin