

WESTMINSTER

Orthodox Presbyterian Church

March 20, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters,

I am writing to you on behalf of the elders to update you on our response at Westminster to the ongoing developments with COVID-19. Our response can be divided into two main questions: what and why.

WHAT changes can you expect?

- **We are cancelling all mid-week in-person gatherings until further notice.** This includes all Wednesday night meetings at the church and in the Cove area, as well as all other activities such as the Women of Westminster, Senior lunches, Spring Recital, etc.
- **We are going to worship REMOTELY in our HOMES at 10:30 a.m. for this Lord's Day and next (March 22nd & 29th).** By 10:30 a.m. each Sunday morning, there will be a new sermon available on the homepage of our website for you to watch along with accompanying resources in pdf form for you to use as you assemble for worship in your homes (<https://holidaysburgopc.org>). As a means of outreach and encouragement, we suggest that you share the link with your friends and family as well!

WHY are we implementing these changes? These are changes to our normal practice at Westminster and should be biblically explained. What follows are five biblical reasons we are making these changes:

1. **We are called to glorify and enjoy God.** To glorify and enjoy God is our chief end in life (1 Cor. 10:31; WSC 1). We understand that these provisional modifications may seem counter-intuitive, because we also affirm that God commands us to worship Him and to not neglect meeting together as is the habit of some (Exo. 20:8-11; Heb. 10:24-25). Considering the current circumstances, we believe these temporary changes will bring glory to God and hope that reasons 2-5 will further explain why.
2. **We are called to worship and serve the Lord.** The fourth commandment tells us to rest and to worship the Lord by remembering “the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exo. 20:8). Rather than cancelling worship, we are asking you to gather as families in your homes and worship remotely beginning at 10:30 a.m. for the next two Lord's Days. I will be providing a pdf of the bulletin and the psalms and hymns that you can use to worship the Lord in your homes and new sermons pertinent to this situation that will be posted as videos on the homepage of our church website (<https://holidaysburgopc.org>) and available each Sunday morning at 10:30.
3. **We are called to respect and submit to authority.** The fifth commandment which states “Honor your father and your mother” means not only our natural parents but “especially such as, by God's ordinance are over us in place of authority, whether in family, church, or commonwealth” (Exo. 20:12; WLC 124). Romans 13 states that every person is to “be subject

to the governing authorities” believing that they are “God’s servant(s) for your good.” We believe that the precautions recommended by our state and national civil authorities are within the bounds of their God-given authority and are for our good to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and help save lives.

4. **We are called to protect and preserve life.** The sixth commandment which states “You shall not murder” requires “all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life, and the life of others” (Exo. 20:13; WSC 68). COVID-19 has proven to be a life-threatening virus, especially to the elderly and weak, and we believe we can love our neighbor as ourselves by taking these precautions to prevent its lethal spread. Like Nehemiah and God’s people who “prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night,” so we should remember that “God, in His ordinary providence, makes uses of means” (Neh. 4:9; WCF 5.3). It is our hope and prayer that the Lord will not only hear our prayers for His mercy and protection, but also that He will be pleased to preserve lives through these temporary means.
5. **We are called to encourage one another and bear witness to the world.** Jesus said, “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (Jn. 13:35). Though many of you will be primarily at home, we should still take time to encourage one another and show love to one another (1 Thess. 5:11). Above all, please pray for one another and for our community during this challenging time (James. 5:16). Calling, texting and e-mailing one another are some practical ways that we can encourage one another and try to stay connected even while “social distancing.” You might also consider inviting others to make use of the resources on our website and offer help to your neighbors if they need assistance with necessities.
 - If any of you (especially those of you who are elderly or who have special medical circumstances) need assistance obtaining food or other necessary items during this time, please contact deacon Brian Livermore (814.381.5913) who will be happy to coordinate assistance.
 - Also, if any of you become ill and would like me to call or visit and pray with you, simply contact me by phone (814.944.8642, ext. 202) or by e-mail (chadmullinix@gmail.com).

Finally, the elders will continue to closely monitor the situation and do our best to stay in communication with you about our plans for April and thereafter. May the Lord bless you and keep you!

With much Love in our Savior,
Pastor Chad