

May 14, 2020

Dear Church Family,

After much study and prayerful deliberation, the Session has at this time decided to continue our practice of conducting worship by live stream only. While some of our neighboring and sister PCA congregations are beginning to return to in-person worship in the coming weeks--and we certainly respect their prayerful decisions to do so--we haven't yet seen strong enough evidence that the threat posed by larger social gatherings in our area has subsided enough to warrant a return; even a return that would be filled with new and thoughtful precautions.

Just yesterday the [Hamilton County Department of Health](#) announced 41 new COVID-19 cases, a one-day record high. [One congregation in north Georgia](#) that returned late April to in-person worship (masks, social distancing, hand sanitizers, etc) has seen three new cases of COVID-19 within their congregation. They will be re-closing after only three Sundays of being re-opened. Another factor informing our decision is the growing evidence that [congregational singing poses a special danger](#) to spread COVID-19. We weren't sure we were willing to re-gather for an in-person worship experience that, among other things, eliminated congregational singing.

It pains us that we must continue to worship at such a distance from one another. Our hearts long for a return to a full-orbed, embodied, communal experience of gathered worship with each of you--something we so easily took for granted a few short months ago. But we are not yet persuaded that we can safely return to even a modified version of this practice at this time. We will reassess this decision at our June 11 meeting, and a subcommittee (including Dave Macallister, Ardyce Ridolfo, Jessica Anderson, Cal, and me) will continue to monitor the situation closely and evaluate our options.

If you have questions about our decision, please do not hesitate to reach out to one of us. And, most importantly, as we continue during this time of physical separation, please keep us informed of any needs you have--physical, spiritual, or emotional. We must work extra hard to stay connected with and to care for one another during these days. Please continue to gather as you have been doing using technologies available and seek out new ways to do so as we move forward.

"Every time I think of you I thank God for you. I have joy in my heart every time I ask God to help you. I thank God for the joy we share in telling the good news from the very first day until now." Philipians 1:3-5

With much love.

For the Session,
Jay