

To: The Willistown UMC Family
From: Pastor Jim
Date: 3/14/2020
Re: Worship Is Cancelled for tomorrow, March 15

As I said in yesterday's memo, the COVID-19 situation is one that is rapidly changing. Since 2:00pm yesterday the president has issued a national emergency, the governor essentially shut down our neighboring Montgomery County, and the first case of COVID-19 has now been confirmed in Chester County. Because of these things and Bishop Johnson's recommendation that congregations with a high percentage of vulnerable persons should cancel worship, I believe this is the best decision we can make.

This is a time when it's particularly important to remember how many times Jesus told his followers to "fear not" and "do not be afraid." This disease must be taken seriously. We need to do all we can as individuals and as a society to limit its opportunities to spread and to care for our health. We need to be prudent in our interactions with others and to follow the advice and directions of health professionals – wash hands, don't touch our faces, maintain social physical distance, avoid crowded places, wipe down surfaces, etc. But it's also a time to remember that God is with us in the good times AND in times of trouble.

I encourage you to spend time tomorrow alone or with your family in prayer. Pray for those who have the virus. Pray for the medical professionals who are treating them. Pray for the clinical scientists who are working to better understand the virus. Pray for our local, state, and national and world leaders who are making the decisions about how best to deal with this pandemic. And pray for the peace of Christ to enter all of our hearts and to carry us through the stresses of this situation.