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| First UP ChurchA Note from Rev. Phil |

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| March 26, 2020 To the Beloved of First United Presbyterian Church: Some of you have asked how the Becks are faring in these difficult and different times. I would love to share with you that we are all great, taking “social distancing," house worship, and the togetherness of six in a household in stride and that all is well. I would also Not be telling the truth.  Our family of six have all had our moments of tears, anger, dismay and mounting levels of loss. Last night we were informed via email that it is the intent of the State Department which runs the YES program of which Carole’ our AFS South African exchange student is part of, to send all YES scholars back home as quickly and safely as possible. This news, while we have anticipated it, has been crushing. Carole’ wants to remain here, we would like her to remain here, and her parents in South Africa would like her to remain here as well. It is hard, just like with the virus, to have people or things controlling our lives that we have no say in.  We are living into the new reality that we will get a phone call or email saying that Carole’ needs to be at the Pittsburgh Airport today. While we have registered our dismay and distress over this decision without consultation with us and we have local and national AFS employees and volunteers also advocating for us, I believe that when we celebrated Carole’s birthday at the beginning of March will be the last time she will have been in corporate worship with everyone. Additionally we have learned of the postponement of Kathryn’s graduation from college, Corey’s summer research class to multiple National Parks has been cancelled as has Joshua’s performance at the PMEA All State Conference. This weekend was to have been the congregational celebration of my 25th anniversary of my ordination that we have postponed as well. The losses mount. I have my moments and find that I am apt to cry without warning. I know there will be a flood of tears one day, but it hasn’t happened so far. Yet, even in the midst of all that is happening God is good. I watched Kathryn and Carole’ singing together during worship and realized this would never have happened if we hadn’t been brought back together. All four of our children sat and played a board game with each other last night, laughter echoed in the house, and then they stayed up to all hours watching some kind of documentary.  We are baking bread, eating home cooked meals, sitting at table with each other every evening and finding ways to work together. We have met our new neighbors and have done the social distance talk across the fence as we have watched their two year old explore his back yard. We have opportunities to advocate for others including food for the pantry, growing your own food in your front or back yard, and have learned that there are positives to technology. I have dreams of adding more raised beds for more vegetables in my backyard and the pear trees I ordered have arrived. Last night’s sunset was gorgeous and you can feel the season changing. Daffodils are up in the yard and fat robins are everywhere looking for worms to eat. The prophet Isaiah says this, “Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. *Isaiah 43:18-19* While difficult, we see a way forward and God is in the midst of it all. When Carole’ returns to South Africa, she will join her parents and her family and while difficult to see her go (and most likely leave early), the promise of Jesus Christ is that we will meet again, if not in this life, then indeed in the life to come.  With loss and cancellations comes new opportunities. Who knew we could do worship in a house and despite some technology issues, that it is good worship, really good worship. These times might indeed be the last times that our whole family will be under one roof and so in the midst of this all we are thankful. Know that I hold you in prayer and as the cancellations and losses may mount, God is faithful, God is the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. God is with us and yes, God is good. All the time. Thanks be to God. Peace,Rev. Phil  |

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| First UP ChurchOffice Update |

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| Monday Afternoon, March 23 Update To the Beloved of First United Presbyterian Church - Tarentum: There is an almost dizzying rate of information and change that we are dealing with as a staff and congregation. We want to keep you informed on the latest. A “Stay in Place” order has been issued for Allegheny County. For our congregation this means the following. Our program and office staff will be working 100% from home. They will not be at the church building at all. In addition, all key cards to the church have been turned off at this time and will remain off for the following two weeks. Much of the rest of what we are doing remains the same. You can still be in touch with Jessica Jones, Church Secretary, via email at [office@fupct.org](https://www.fupct.org/so/b4N49fDva/c?w=wDdU6DMPJkFb2FWNWmrAqGLZiUxZUK22H9j3So-7tAU.eyJ1IjoibWFpbHRvOm9mZmljZUBmdXBjdC5vcmciLCJyIjoiOGI4NTIwMmMtODA2My00NmZlLWVmYTctNzJkMTRmNzM5ODJjIiwibSI6Im1haWwiLCJjIjoiNjJiNDNkOWItYzYyYi00NWZkLTlkZjgtNjRlMGFjYTczZTMwIn0) or via her personal number at 412-216-6314. You can be in touch with me via email at [pastor@fupct.org](https://www.fupct.org/so/b4N49fDva/c?w=PWcHAfDbxZHiEdjE4msFRt5165Seizxuk7VFnnc5Pa4.eyJ1IjoibWFpbHRvOnBhc3RvckBmdXBjdC5vcmciLCJyIjoiOGI4NTIwMmMtODA2My00NmZlLWVmYTctNzJkMTRmNzM5ODJjIiwibSI6Im1haWwiLCJjIjoiNjJiNDNkOWItYzYyYi00NWZkLTlkZjgtNjRlMGFjYTczZTMwIn0) or via my personal number 724-448-7618.  Lindsay is in frequent touch with the youth and they and their families have her personal number. She can be reached at [thelindsayfraser@gmail.com](https://www.fupct.org/so/b4N49fDva/c?w=M_CRTm4tvBetVaneE31pV5bIuMAHvm7FFhsAYre3I-A.eyJ1IjoibWFpbHRvOnRoZWxpbmRzYXlmcmFzZXJAZ21haWwuY29tIiwiciI6IjhiODUyMDJjLTgwNjMtNDZmZS1lZmE3LTcyZDE0ZjczOTgyYyIsIm0iOiJtYWlsIiwiYyI6IjYyYjQzZDliLWM2MmItNDVmZC05ZGY4LTY0ZTBhY2E3M2UzMCJ9). I will be doing an evening prayer service from my home on Facebook Live this Wednesday at 7pm and Sunday morning worship at 11am. We will continue to provide important resources and updates for the community via email, Facebook and the church website, [www.fupct.org](https://www.fupct.org/so/b4N49fDva/c?w=d3fc-jNAu0Fs6jT6d6tB_T2m66XwFgb9yShj_5vo0_Y.eyJ1IjoiaHR0cDovL3d3dy5mdXBjdC5vcmciLCJyIjoiOGI4NTIwMmMtODA2My00NmZlLWVmYTctNzJkMTRmNzM5ODJjIiwibSI6Im1haWwiLCJjIjoiNjJiNDNkOWItYzYyYi00NWZkLTlkZjgtNjRlMGFjYTczZTMwIn0). Peace be with you. Rev. Phil  |

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| First UP ChurchA Note from Rev. Phil |

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| March 21, 2020 Hello Saints of First United Presbyterian Church - Tarentum both near and far, I wanted to share with you several upcoming happenings connected to the church as we continue to charter these unknown waters. I have created a Facebook group called First UP Church Prays. Social media is one of the best ways for us to be connected to one another. It is a private group and can’t be seen by anyone except those in the group. If you would like to be added, please contact me at [pastor@fupct.org](https://www.fupct.org/so/f9N3zK2Uh/c?w=mei3IESPWCpO4cs1QTzS5yZTJOPKY9SSiBvp0yZZs88.eyJ1IjoibWFpbHRvOnBhc3RvckBmdXBjdC5vcmciLCJyIjoiOGI4NTIwMmMtODA2My00NmZlLWVmYTctNzJkMTRmNzM5ODJjIiwibSI6Im1haWwiLCJjIjoiNjJiNDNkOWItYzYyYi00NWZkLTlkZjgtNjRlMGFjYTczZTMwIn0). Sunday morning at 10am I will be doing an online Sunday School class via the online platform known as Zoom. If you would like to join me for this, please contact me at [pastor@fupct.org](https://www.fupct.org/so/f9N3zK2Uh/c?w=mei3IESPWCpO4cs1QTzS5yZTJOPKY9SSiBvp0yZZs88.eyJ1IjoibWFpbHRvOnBhc3RvckBmdXBjdC5vcmciLCJyIjoiOGI4NTIwMmMtODA2My00NmZlLWVmYTctNzJkMTRmNzM5ODJjIiwibSI6Im1haWwiLCJjIjoiNjJiNDNkOWItYzYyYi00NWZkLTlkZjgtNjRlMGFjYTczZTMwIn0) so that I may send you the link. Sunday morning at 11am I will again go live on Facebook from my home for Sunday Morning worship. It is a blessing to have such musically talented children and family and I am grateful that they are willing to share those gifts and talents. We are still working out kinks of going online, but hope to have better quality video for you soon. If you aren’t on Facebook, I would encourage you to set up an account so that you can watch these online videos. “Like” or “Follow” the church Facebook page, First UP Church - Tarentum. You can also view these videos even if you don’t have a Facebook account after we are done recording. I would also ask that you keep our first responders and medical personnel in our prayers. In conversations with them they are really concerned about when the “wave” will hit and there will be a “wave.” I have one friend who is a full-time nurse in Ohio that they have been told there will be no leave time, unless you are sick, through July.  While I certainly hope this all does stretch into July, it shows the seriousness that the medical community is taking Covid-19. Lastly if you would need to reach me the best ways to do so is via email at [pastor@fupct.org](https://www.fupct.org/so/f9N3zK2Uh/c?w=mei3IESPWCpO4cs1QTzS5yZTJOPKY9SSiBvp0yZZs88.eyJ1IjoibWFpbHRvOnBhc3RvckBmdXBjdC5vcmciLCJyIjoiOGI4NTIwMmMtODA2My00NmZlLWVmYTctNzJkMTRmNzM5ODJjIiwibSI6Im1haWwiLCJjIjoiNjJiNDNkOWItYzYyYi00NWZkLTlkZjgtNjRlMGFjYTczZTMwIn0) or through my personal cell # at 724-448-7618 or our Church Secretary, Jessica Jones at [office@fupct.org](https://www.fupct.org/so/f9N3zK2Uh/c?w=LOfXbzyKCJ45172OOm-DxZ6YSe4rMIFurYRnmePIQRA.eyJ1IjoibWFpbHRvOm9mZmljZUBmdXBjdC5vcmciLCJyIjoiOGI4NTIwMmMtODA2My00NmZlLWVmYTctNzJkMTRmNzM5ODJjIiwibSI6Im1haWwiLCJjIjoiNjJiNDNkOWItYzYyYi00NWZkLTlkZjgtNjRlMGFjYTczZTMwIn0) or her personal cell # at 412-216-6314. May the peace of Christ be with you. Rev. Phil |

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| March 19, 2020 Beloved, as many of us adjust to a new normal, I wanted to share with you some information about what is happening at the church and with our staff. Our church building remains closed for all group activities and we are even limiting activity of staff in the building. We have found it difficult to check the church phone system so we are sharing our personal phone numbers. Jessica Jones, Church Secretary, is working from home and is able to do most of her activities there. If you should need to reach her please email [office@fupct.org](https://www.fupct.org/so/e4N3pCqUv/c?w=FyaP0Ov0TrT-xmHuemyq7NBfR5u__xj9isv42e03_fU.eyJ1IjoibWFpbHRvOm9mZmljZUBmdXBjdC5vcmciLCJyIjoiOGI4NTIwMmMtODA2My00NmZlLWVmYTctNzJkMTRmNzM5ODJjIiwibSI6Im1haWwiLCJjIjoiNjJiNDNkOWItYzYyYi00NWZkLTlkZjgtNjRlMGFjYTczZTMwIn0) or call/text her at 412-216-6314.  Dave Babinsack, some of you might remember him, is our “new custodian”. He is taking the opportunity to do a deep cleaning throughout the church. Lindsay Fraser, youth director, is doing individual reach out to our youth and has also been instrumental in adding additional lunch distribution sites in the Highlands Community. I know this pause has been difficult for our church organist, George, and choir director, Sue, as they are so used to the rhythms of corporate worship and I know they miss the opportunity to be present with the choir and congregation. I am trying to be connected with many in our congregation and sorting out the kinks of doing online worship. Speaking of, I have started a private group on Facebook called First UP Church - Prayers. Please email me and I will add you to the group. It is private so it allows us to share names of individuals who could use our prayers.  If you should need to reach me, you are invited to call or text me at 724-448-7618 or email me at [pastor@fupct.org](https://www.fupct.org/so/e4N3pCqUv/c?w=kknyF7G2_0mZCM2ydgIVdMJ-EDPPrUQYM4joyudEwAM.eyJ1IjoibWFpbHRvOnBhc3RvckBmdXBjdC5vcmciLCJyIjoiOGI4NTIwMmMtODA2My00NmZlLWVmYTctNzJkMTRmNzM5ODJjIiwibSI6Im1haWwiLCJjIjoiNjJiNDNkOWItYzYyYi00NWZkLTlkZjgtNjRlMGFjYTczZTMwIn0). Lastly, if you are in need of anything, our community has come together and we can assist. There are people who are willing to drop things off and someone's home, just make a phone call to check in, or various other things. I do want to take a moment and encourage you all to continue to practice social distancing. In a congregation of close to 300 and many more people connected to the church, it is probably inevitable that someone in our congregation will be diagnosed with Covid-19. I understand that limiting our movement and physical connection to people is really hard. Yet, as I speak to many people who are in the medical community or who are most at risk from this virus, it is imperative that we try our best to assist them by flattening the curve.  I am heartened by the many ways that the medical community is not only assisting the most vulnerable, but the ways worldwide that scientists are working to develop vaccines, additional tests, and finding antivirals to fight Covid-19.   Psalm 46:1-3 says this: *“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.”* May the peace of Christ be with you. Rev. Phil |

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