



## Oak Hill Presbyterian Church

March 12, 2020

Dear Oak Hill Presbyterian Church Community,

The Session (elected leadership board) of Oak Hill Presbyterian Church met last night and shared in extensive conversation and planning around coronavirus preparedness in our community. Using guidance and resources from the CDC, our local public health officials, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, and more, we considered preparedness and prevention options that might work best in our context. We do not feel a sense of panic, but rather a faithful responsibility to take extra caution in slowing the spread of illness among vulnerable populations who use our building and gather in community at Oak Hill.

With that as our focus, the Session has decided:

- We will continue to gather for in-person worship at Oak Hill. We will practice alternative forms of passing the peace and collecting both food and financial offerings. We encourage folks who feel any COVID-19 symptoms or who suspect they may have been exposed, and anyone who is worried about being immune compromised or in a vulnerable population, to stay home. We will share resources for anyone who would like to worship from home.
- We will immediately stop all non-essential programming and in-person gathering at Oak Hill through March 22, 2020. This means we are canceling Craft Night, Open Gym Night, Bible Study, Sunday School, and Fellowship Hour. We're also reaching out to outside groups who use the building to cancel those meetings. For purposes of this response, we are considering Worship, Care and Counseling services, and AA meetings essential programming, and those programs will remain open at Oak Hill at their leadership's discretion, with some additional planning for extra safety and sanitizing.
- AMEN St. Louis Spring Break programs will continue as scheduled, pending individual group decisions. We'll restrict AMEN programming to the AMEN House and the Upper Room, to be extra cautious about contact in building spaces.
- We will be increasing our sanitation practices- more frequent wiping down of surfaces, keeping hand sanitizer stations out, adapting the passing of the peace and the collection of the offering in worship, etc.
- We will continue monitoring the local response. The Session plans to meet again after worship on March 22, 2020 and to continue or amend our response then. We are also prepared to make swift decisions based on an email vote, as necessary. And Pastor Erin

will closely monitor the need, should it arise, of suspending in-person worship. Pastor Erin will be in contact with both local authorities and the Presbytery and will share their guidance with the Session and the congregation as necessary.

- We will communicate all plans and decisions via the Oak Hill Presbyterian Church website: [www.oakhillpcusa.org](http://www.oakhillpcusa.org). Please be sure to check regularly.

We are acting out of caution and care for those most vulnerable around us. With that in mind, church members are encouraged to be aware of needs that arise among and around us. Please check in with your neighbors and church friends. If you aren't feeling well, please stay home. If you are concerned about being in public spaces right now, please make safe choices for your own health.

We will continue sharing our daily Lenten Devotionals online. We will post links to online worship services. And we will remain open to other ways to stay connected and to stay faithful together during this outbreak.

We are taking these precautions out of love and concern, with science and public health as our guides in decision making. At the same time, we remain deeply committed to prayer. I ask that you join me in praying for our community, our country, and our world- for all who are ill, for all who are worried, for our hospitals and medical providers, for leaders making community health decisions, for all who will be impacted financially by closures and work stoppages, for all who don't have affordable access to health care, for all the unmet needs impacts that we haven't yet imagined. We know that God loves this world and loves each creature, and we pray for God's protection, care, and companionship in this difficult time.

If you have questions, concerns, or needs, please do not hesitate to contact the church office at 314-664-5524.

With love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Erin Conahan". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "With love,".

Pastor Erin