

UPDATE – 24 March 2020:

From Pastor Gary Rueter:

In conversation with Dave McLean, Chair of the Board of Servant Leaders, Dave Leege, Lay Leader for the Worship Ministry Leadership Team and Brad Womble, Ministry Administrator, we have determined that it is best for us to **close the Prince of Peace building through the end of April**. This means that we will continue to offer worship online through that time. **Though Easter worship will be online, we are also making plans to make our first weeks back in the sanctuary a delayed Palm/Passion Sunday, Holy Week, Easter Celebration.** Watch for that as we work our way through the pandemic.

We are committed to paying our church staff salaries for as long as contributions support those payments.

The Prince of Peace Preschool and Kindergarten has closed through the end of the school year since its schedule follows the Fairfax County Public Schools. Teachers and Assistants at the school will receive their last paycheck for this year on Friday, March 27. The School Board has chosen to seek to continue to pay the Principal and office staff to keep the infrastructure in place in preparation for next year.

May the Lord help our Nation flatten the curve and come through this crisis with less illness and death than we expect.

UPDATE – 14 March 2020:

Greetings,

For the next two weeks Prince of Peace is **cancelling all events, meetings, and worship** in order to help prevent the spread of the Corona Virus (COVID-19). The building will be closed **March 14th – March 27th**. We will re-evaluate with time and let you know if there are any changes, as soon as possible. If you any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to ask. We are here for you!

Please visit our website for updates and Worship resources www.popl.org. *We are praying for you!*

UPDATE – 13 March 2020:

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Prince of Peace,

In light of the rapid moving developments in the now National Emergency of the Covid-19 disease, I am moving to cancel Worship and Sunday School for the next two weeks at Prince of Peace, so we will not hold Worship Services or classes the weekends of **March 14-15** and **March 21-22**.

Instead, Prince of Peace will provide a **Vimeo** worship experience that you can access, or you can check out the Lutheran Hour Ministry resources that will be identified in an email that we will send **before 4 pm on Saturday, March 14**.

We are postponing the **Town Hall** and the **Call Service** that were originally scheduled at Prince of Peace on these weekends. We'll be making other arrangements for these important gatherings, so watch for those details, as well.

Please stay safe, practice good hand washing and social distancing as the CDC advises. Above all, trust the Lord Jesus to take care of you as you practice these things, stay in touch with your neighbors who are at risk, help where you are able, and keep in touch with the Lord Jesus in prayer and thanksgiving.

Yours in Jesus' name,

Gary Rueter
Vacancy Pastor

Message from 12 March 2020

Dear Prince of Peace family,

We love and care for our congregation in all respects, including the physical well-being of our community. We are asking you to take precautions to keep yourself and others safe in light of recent developments with the coronavirus. We are also concerned about your spiritual care. Don't hesitate to email or contact the church office if you have any needs or prayer concerns. Please also let us know if you chose to self-quarantine so we can offer support via phone or email.

God's Word reminds us:

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as children, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" Romans 8:14-15

Let us not fear. Instead, we can look for opportunities to lean on God's Word and share the peace of Christ with people that are troubled.

We continue to serve our church and community as we always have. We are currently developing a plan regarding services in the event of a closure. In the meantime, if you feel most comfortable staying home, we support your decision. Please join us in praying for those who are affected by this illness, as well as their caregivers and those working around the clock to minimize the impact of this virus.

In our worship we are limiting physical contact by:

- encouraging passing the peace with elbow bumps, peace signs, or head nods instead of handshakes or hugs.
- not passing offering plates, but instead having them at the doors as people enter or leave the sanctuary.
- practicing pilgrim distribution at stations rather than kneeling at the altar rail thus eliminating much touching of that rail
- asking everyone to receive the bread with an open hand so that Pastor can place the bread with little touching
- discouraging use of the common cup for Holy Communion for sipping or intinction during this alert
- providing more separation between individual cups in the trays to avoid inadvertent touching of other cups
- provide blessings of children at Communion without touching them
- having hand sanitizers available in the lobby as people enter worship

At Prince of Peace:

- Our cleaning staff and teachers are disinfecting high traffic areas daily.
- We post recordings of our sermons on our website- <https://www.popc.org/media/sermons/>
- Our school will continue to follow the Fairfax County schedule (for example closing 3/16)
- Our church will wait for and follow the instructions of government and our LCMS synod.

At this time, we still plan to hold the Town Hall this Sunday, March 15, at 3pm and the Call Service on March 22 at 3pm.

There is peace in Christ,

Your Ministry Staff at Prince of Peace

Guidance from the Washington Department of Health and the CDC can help us remain educated and mindful of practical matters. Stay informed www.cdc.gov

1. *Stay home when you are sick.*
2. *Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and avoid touching your face.*
3. *Anyone returning from an area of high alert (currently South Korea, Iran, Italy, and Japan) are encouraged to refrain from attending public events until a 14-day timeframe has been observed.*