



FIFTEENTH STREET UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Dear Friends,

Grace and Peace to you! I am writing to you today to encourage you during this time of uncertainty. On Monday, November 30th, we received a letter from our Bishop and here is an excerpt from his letter.

“We are all keenly aware that the numbers of COVID-19 cases are still increasing rapidly. Many of the hospitals throughout Pennsylvania and our country are experiencing a serious rise in admitting COVID patients. Our district superintendents are reporting that more and more of our pastors and laypeople have tested positive for COVID. As health officials strongly believe that even more people will succumb to COVID during this post-Thanksgiving season, the full Cabinet and I are deeply troubled and greatly concerned for the health and safety of our people.

This is a very grave situation that requires a sacrificial response. **For your safety and that of your friends, family, and neighbors, I, as bishop, along with the full Cabinet urge you to not conduct indoor in-person worship or gatherings for the rest of the year.**

My sisters and brothers in faith, I know this is very difficult to hear. I know that not everyone wants to pause in-person worship, especially during Advent. Calls for a temporary break from public gatherings may feel like a threat to our religious freedom. But now we must put our preferences aside and do what is best for our faith communities and the larger communities in which we live.

We must work together to stop the spread of this disease. We must do all that we can to make sure that more people do not fall victim to COVID. I firmly believe this is our calling, for such a time as this.”

My heart is breaking and I don't like it but we must cancel services and all activities at both 15th Street and Donation Churches. Please know that services will happen on line starting December 6th. I pray you are able to get on line to watch. Please know that I will still be in the office Monday–Thursday from 8-4 and will be available any time on the phone, text or email. Please use my cell phone number 814-312-0913 to call me. If you are emailing me please use the Bservello@susumc.org because I can access this email from my home in the evening.

There are many things that we were planning to have happen the next four weeks and there is still the need for that to happen. However, there are three cancellations that you need to be made aware of.

The three cancellations are: the Christmas decorating of the 15th Street sanctuary planned for this Saturday, December 5th, the Church Christmas Party at Hoss's on Tuesday, December 8th and the Donation Christmas Dinner/ Program scheduled for Sunday, December 20th.

Mitten Tree – We still need those donations. If you are willing to donate mittens, scarves, gloves, hats, or even socks, I will gladly accept them here at the church. Please call and let me know when you will be coming in, in case I need to leave.

We are selling Cashews for Christmas. If you want cashews, please call to place your order, and we can set up a time for you to come in and pick them up the week of Christmas (beginning Monday, December 21st). We will coordinate that with David Faust.

Even though we had cancelled the Cookie Walk and the Come To The Stable programs, we are still asking for donations to be made for the Benevolence Fund and for the Heifer Project. Also, donations are continuing to be accepted for Adopt-A-Family, through the Salvation Army. As you continue to support the church through your donations, we would ask that you would consider marking your envelope, accordingly, for these three ministry endeavors.

We will have a new directory and contribution envelopes for 2021 ready soon that we were going to distribute during December, but obviously we cannot do that now, so again we will gladly give them out if you stop by the church. To mail these things out, it would cost about \$5.00 so we could mail them if you would be willing to add \$5.00 to your donation specifying postage for your directory and envelopes.

Christmas Cards for shut-ins can either be mailed individually or you can still bring them here to the church and we will make sure they get their cards in time for Christmas.

We appreciate each of you that have been supportive of the church throughout this whole pandemic. Your contributions are so important in keeping the church going.

Christmas will still happen, Christ will still be born, but we will not be able to fellowship like we are used to doing.

Again, know that I am here and willing to talk with each and every one of you at any time.

May God bless you during this holiday season and I pray that as we go into 2021 we will be able to gather together again.

Merry Christmas

Pastor Barb