

## Announcements about Palm Sunday and Good Friday and Easter

Dear First Church Family,

It is hard to believe that three Sundays have gone by since we were last all together. When we are able to gather again, what a joy it will be. We were all hoping that would be Easter, but God has other plans which we trust in. God is working out his good purpose.

Even though we cannot be together in person, we can be together in Spirit and in worship, and unto that end, I have the following important announcements about the special services coming up:

**Palm Sunday (This Sunday):** Children have always been a big part of this service, and they still will be. An invitation went out for families to make Palm branches with their children and send in videos and pictures. We thank those of you who did so. Those will be used in the service.

Also, we have safely videotaped at the church a few children reading Scripture passages. Those videos will be played as part of the service. Our constant effort is to be creative, while still being safe.

**Good Friday:** Pastor Matt and I will lead communion as part of the livestream service. Some of you might be wondering if this is biblical. We believe it is for the following reasons.

1. We are doing so because this is the ONLY way we can gather together while obeying Romans 13 during this unprecedented time. This, we hope, is a onetime event.
2. We believe it is better to observe than not to observe. God has given us communion as a means of grace. Through it our spiritual union with Christ is strengthened as well as our union with one another. Since we are all missing in person fellowship, we believe communion is a great need at this time. Just as we Elders will at times administer communion to people who are shut-ins, not able to come to church, we want to administer communion during this time of a stay-at-home order.
3. We are gathering together via livestream. We believe this fulfills 1 Corinthians 11:33.
4. We believe this is Elder-led because the Elders are calling for it and giving you the following instructions via this communication.
  - This is only for First Church professing members. Please do not encourage friends and families who are not full professing members of First Church to livestream and partake. (They can certainly livestream our service, but we ask them not to partake). This is our request because we are not sure if the Elders of their church would concur with our decision.
  - Before the Good Friday service begins, prepare the elements. Have small pieces of bread on a plate ready to eat. Have small glasses of grape juice or wine poured and ready to drink.
  - Wherever a husband/father is present, we ask him to lead by passing out the elements at the appropriate time during the service.
  - If you have any problems obtaining the elements, please contact your district Elder.

This service will also contain prerecorded Scripture readings.

**Easter:** We will still have our morning praise service, and our 10:00 a.m. service. Between the two services, we encourage you to have a family breakfast as we usually do at church. To make it easier for you regarding the breakfast, we are going to leave an hour of time between the two services. Our morning praise service will be at 8:15 a.m. and will conclude at 8:45 a.m. The prelude for our 10:00 a.m. service will begin at 9:45 a.m. We encourage you to start the livestream for the prelude because piano, organ and brass will be playing favorite Easter hymns.

This special music will be prerecorded. Again we are trying to be creative while maintaining safety.

We will also have prerecorded scripture readings as part of this service as well as the congregational prayer.

In closing, I want to thank those who participated in our Thursday Night of prayer, either by Zoom or by livestream. We know our sovereign God heard our prayers, and he is answering according to his good, gracious plan.

Building, Loving, and Serving with you,

Pastor Glenn