



Dear Friends,

With the onset of the season of Coronavirus Covid-19 shelter in place, quarantine, and isolation, attending church online has become an essential function of our ministry at FPC Marietta the past nine weeks. Except for our regular 11 am livestreamed worship, all other virtual church additions have come with little or no advanced planning or preparation.

We are blessed beyond measure to have already upgraded our livestream capability without knowing how critical the need would become. We are equally blessed to have those resources thanks to the generosity of this congregation, along with the talents of many of our staff and volunteers, to continue the ministry of the church through digital/electronic means. We are blessed to have gifted musicians who are part of our staff and congregation to continue providing meaningful worship experiences while we are apart. And let us not forget the many gifts and abilities of our worship leaders who “keep calm and carry on” as if there were not a global pandemic.

We appreciate those of you who responded to our recent Virtual Church Survey, which indicated where we need to improve, what we’re doing right, and how important having this aspect of ministry is to the continuation of building God’s Kingdom here in Marietta, and far beyond.

**Summary of Virtual Survey:**

- 157 survey respondents
- 88 write-in responses: half with only positive comments and half including a mix of positives and suggestions for improvement
- Areas for improvement:
  - Virtual Technology – improve the flow of the service without technical disruptions
  - Music – help us “sing” at home
  - Additional Outreach – who is stuck at home without connection, both digitally and personally?

**How We’re Responding:**

We’re working to resolve technical difficulties to reduce the amount of disruption experienced periodically during livestream and particularly two weeks ago.

- We have upgraded an internet connection to improve bandwidth capacity.
- We have added a technical support team to respond to viewers who are having difficulties, which can be accessed through the app, the website, a phone line, and with prompts, Facebook.
- We have learned through research and experience that not everything can be resolved at this time, but we aren’t going to quit trying to improve. However, the pressure on internet and video streaming infrastructure across the globe is unprecedented. Vimeo has maximized its capacity as has the internet. Other variables on quality depend on the individual’s operating system, age of device, recency of software, browser, and a household’s strength of internet connectivity.

We’re working to enhance congregational music experiences

- While we are without hymnals, we will sing more familiar tunes.
- Hymn leadership will be provided during congregational singing.
- Chancel Choir videos from pre-coronavirus services will be included as appropriate.

We’re working on connecting with members who may not have access to technology or the know-how, but due to pandemic isolation and quarantine, are feeling even more isolated.



- FPC Neighborhood Groups will become the human link between the church and the congregation, especially those who are feeling disconnected.
- Congregational Life Council in conjunction with FPC Neighborhood Groups will be launching an initiative to contact every single member of the congregation to determine what needs they may have, via phone or mail.

**What's Next:**

- The Reopening Advisement Group is developing plans to restart operations at an appropriate time, while taking the necessary health and safety precautions.
- The development of additional virtual offerings to possibly include devotionals, additional Sunday School classes, or simply times to connect with each other as a congregation.
- The identification of opportunities to connect those who are unable to connect virtually.

We give thanks for being the church, in all times, and all challenges. We give thanks to you for being part of this church family, and for your continued support.

In His Service,

Rev. Joe Evans