

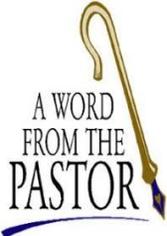
The Pipe Line

Beckley Presbyterian Church
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April 29, 2020



Dear Church Family,

Grace and peace to you, in the name of the Lord Jesus. I hope you all are well and safe. We have missed being together at church, but know you are the church wherever you are. This is not the ideal way to do things, but I hope you have been able to worship and study with us through Facebook and YouTube, and listened to the radio broadcast at 7 p.m. Sundays on WJLS 99.5 FM. The writer of Hebrews said, "Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching." (Hebrews 10:23-25) We are not together in person, but we are not neglecting to meet. We have changed the format, and it's not what we would have chosen, but it is the best we can do in a pandemic without endangering the health and welfare of those who are vulnerable to Covid-19, which includes all of us. We will be back together in person, and when we do that, we want to know we did all we could to protect everyone and prevent the spread of disease in the community.

The Session has voted to suspend in-person services through May 24, and to re-evaluate on May 25. That means we will not gather in person on May 3, 10, 17 and 24, but will continue to post online services. This is in line with other churches in the Presbytery of West Virginia, which has also cancelled the Presbytery meeting that had been scheduled for May 21. The General Assembly scheduled for June will meet electronically.

This remains a serious situation. Wash your hands frequently, maintain at least six feet of social distance. If you are sick, stay away from other people.

I was thinking about the letters in the New Testament, and how most of them were written to followers of Jesus who were living in difficult times. The Letter to the Hebrews was written to church members who had experienced persecution. Some were disappointed Jesus had not returned yet, and had begun to abandon the community. The author reminds people of the great cloud of witnesses, those who had gone before in faith and endured difficult things, and encourages his readers "to run with perseverance the race that is set before us."

When I think of all those people of faith who have gone before us, both in our personal lives and in this church, I am encouraged that if they dealt with such tremendous trials as the Spanish flu, the Great Depression, World War II and challenges both public and private, that we should face all we do in faith and assurance of God's love for us no matter the circumstance.

The church continues to maintain a pantry that can provide you meals for a day or so (chicken noodle soup, beef-aroni, snack crackers, fig bars, fruit cup, pudding). A volunteer will bring it to your house and set it outside your door. If you are in a high-risk group, we have volunteers who will go to the grocery store or pharmacy for you and set your items outside your door. Whatever your needs are, you can call the church office at (304) 252-6289 or call my cell phone at (336) 970-9227.

God bless you.
Monte



CALLING ALL GRADUATES

If you would like to recognize someone you know that is graduating please email the office at Office@beckleypres.org with the name and information for the Pipeline.

LECTIONARY READINGS

May 3

Acts 2:42-47; Ps. 23;
1 Peter 2:19-25;
John 10:1-10

May 24

Acts 1:6-14;
Ps. 68:1-10, 32-35;
1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11;
John 17:1-11

May 10

Mother's Day
Acts 7:55-60;
Ps. 31:1-5, 15-16;
1 Peter 2:2-10;
John 14:1-14

May 31

Day of Pentecost
Acts 2:1-21 or
Num. 11:24-30;
Ps. 104:24-34, 35b;
1 Cor. 12:3b-13 or
Acts 2:1-21; John 20:19-23
or John 7:37-39

May 17

Acts 17:22-31; Ps. 66:8-20;
1 Peter 3:13-22;
John 14:15-21



| | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 06 Paul Wykle, Jr. | 15 Becky Callaway |
| 08 Valerie Hartling | 19 Bill Mullins |
| 09 Marcia Fairlie | 20 Charley Maynard |
| 09 Joan Wilkinson | 20 Nick Rahall |
| 09 Jean Bolen | 21 Monica Rahall |
| 14 Jørn Otte | 26 Carolyn Lucas |
| 14 Marlene Blankenship | 26 Scott Milne |
| | 27 Debbie DiGiulian |



A WEEK OF SUNDAYS

Every Sunday we proclaim the gospel and celebrate the truth of the resurrection. But during this special season, we have the great privilege for seven Sundays - a week of Sundays! - to proclaim and celebrate Easter and the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. Our Christian observance of seven weeks of jubilation between Easter and Pentecost has Jewish root that harken back to the 50 days celebrated from the day after Passover to the Festival of Shavuot, also called the Festival of Weeks. The Jewish Festival of Weeks started out as a harvest festival, but came to celebrate the giving of the law at Mount Sinai. This time period was considered a time to rejoice. What Moses and the law did for preparing the way for the Lord, the Holy Spirit does for the Christian community. In the same way that we ponder sin during Lent, perhaps these days might be a time to reflect in gratitude for our blessings. Even in the midst of trials and problems, God loves you.

-Based on an excerpt from the Companion to the Book of Common Worship



POINTS TO PONDER

The leadership of the Presbytery held a Zoom meeting last week with the pastors. People spoke about how they are coping with the Covid-19 coronavirus and what they are thinking about in making plans moving forward. None of these things are binding on us, but were expressions of what people around the Presbytery are talking about. Among the things that people said:

Once we start worship again in person, we need to communicate clearly the protocols such as not shaking hands, not passing the offering plate.

We don't have enough information yet about when to re-open.

Have greeters in the parking lot to remind people to practice social distancing.

Do not pass the offering, but have buckets at the back.

Have self-contained elements for communion (Note: Toni has ordered a box of 500 individually-packaged communion cups that have the wafer and juice sealed.)

Changing habits and instincts about hugging or touching is going to be harder than we think. Social distancing is more challenging than you think.

Someone said that even if we have worship, the vulnerable people won't come, and others disagreed with that and said that if we do have worship we ought to be prepared that some people will feel compelled to come even if they are at greater risk.

Each congregation needs to look at bottleneck areas, such as certain doors or restrooms.

"My biggest concern is that we open too soon." After the 1918 flu pandemic, people got together too soon and the second wave was worse than the first. We need to be wary of re-opening too soon, because of the danger of second and third waves of infection.

Continue to expand online worship and teaching. There is a tremendous desire and hunger for online worship and content. We need to continue doing this even after we come back in person. Live streaming is a great evangelistic tool. We need to use the Internet as a new tool in our toolbox and embrace it. We can continue to reach people we haven't been able to reach in other ways.

Again, these were not comments from me, but among things said by pastors around the Presbytery. I thought they are all things to think about. I agree with the pastors who have been excited about the response to online teaching and worship. As of Wednesday, our Facebook livestream from this past Sunday has 164 views and the videotaped version we posted has 204 views, while the separately posted children's sermon has 210 views. These numbers will grow as the content remains available and people find it. Our children's sermon on Palm Sunday has 314 views so far and the one the week before about the song "Jesus Loves Me" has 419 views. A children's sermon we posted four years ago in Ararat has 8,652 views so far. These online teachings and worship offerings continue to be found for years by people who are seeking to learn or worship. I miss worshipping in person, and of course, we want people to come here when it is safe, but I believe we need to embrace technology to continue to reach out to people beyond our church walls. A former church member who lives out of state wrote this week to say how much she enjoyed the online service and how good it was to see the sanctuary again.

Monte

ELDERS ON CALL

- May 3-9**-Bob Mestrovic & Betsy Gilmer
- May 10-16**-Bill Richmond & Marie Lewis
- May 17-23**-Marcia Fairlie
- May 24-30**-Dan & Mary Calvert
- May 31-June 6**-Barbara Yurick



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Please continue to send in your offerings by mail. We are doing OK financially, but not as well as we would like. Our offerings for March 2019 were \$19,724 while our offerings this March were \$16,882. That puts us at 86 percent of where we were last year when we didn't have a pandemic. Offerings for April 2019 were \$20,109, while offerings this April have been \$15,776, or about 78 percent of what they were last year. Please join in continuing to make weekly offerings. Since we have not been here in person, most of this is from what you have mailed to the church in support of the community of believers. That's doing well, and thank you for all the ways you support the church. It is greatly appreciated. We want to weather this crisis and come out strong in all ways, even financially. You may send your offerings to:



Tithes and offerings

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NURTURING FAITH IDEAS



May 3: Read Acts 2:42-47 The first Christians shared all they had with each other so that nobody was hungry. How do we share our food so that nobody has need? Help plan and prepare a meal for your own family, then take the same

ingredients to a local food pantry. Use only ingredients that may be used by the food pantry.

May 10: Read John 14:1-14 Jesus says, "If you know me, you will know my Father." What adjectives or descriptive words describe Jesus? Make a list of Jesus' personality traits. Realizing that these show us what God is like, think of how you copy Jesus in how you act and care for all God's people.

May 17: Read Psalm 66:8-20 Psalm 66 reminds us that God is with us through hard times. The psalmist praises God when times are bad and when they go well. Think of times when you have struggled through bad times, then think how you know God was with you. Give a prayer thanking God for God's steadfast love.

May 24: Read 1 Peter 4:14:12-14, 5:6-11 Here we are told to humble ourselves under God and to cast our anxiety on God who cares for us. What anxieties are you hanging on to? Make a list of the things on which you have been worrying. Pray to God to take care of each item, then tear up the list knowing that God will care for you.

May 31: Read John 3:13-17 Scripture tells us that "all who hate a brother or sister are murderers." How might we "lay down our lives for one another" without physically dying? Search through the newspaper or listen to the news for a story of someone who is a victim of hate. How might you show them love?