

First Presbyterian Church
721 Church St.
Jefferson City, TN 37760

May 2020 Newsletter, Rev. Dave Strickler, Pastor
First Presbyterian Church, 721 Church St., Jefferson City, TN 37760
Phone/Fax: 865-475-2761 E-mail: fpcjctn@gmail.com Website: www.fpcjeffcity.org

Dear Church Family,

Someone asked me recently how things were going at the church, how we were managing under this strange season of COVID-19. I could hear from the deep concern in their voice that they were anticipating the worst, and it’s a concern I know many of us share. Everything from our finances to the ministries and programs they support could have been hit hard by the wide-ranging ripple effect of the measures we are all taking to “flatten the curve” and keep people safe. That being said, I was delighted to have the opportunity to share with that concerned individual that our congregation is managing remarkably well during this time—and, I must confess, my tone became somewhat boastful.

Our church family has been quick to respond in constructive, creative, and life-giving ways to this pandemic. From the start, I am grateful to say that we came together in consensus regarding the closing of our facility to gatherings, services, and activities. That decision could have been difficult or divisive, but it wasn’t. Instead, it was addressed with courage, with intelligence, and with a spirit of gracious solidarity. Since then, our congregation has continued to show its true colors as a faithful community of care and mission.

Our members have continued giving of their time, talents, and financial resources to keep our commitment to reflect the love of Christ to our world—as well as to keep the lights on in the church office. People are reaching out in prayer and support to one another, bearing witness to the truth that the abiding love of the Holy Spirit continues to bind us together, even when we cannot see each other face-to-face.

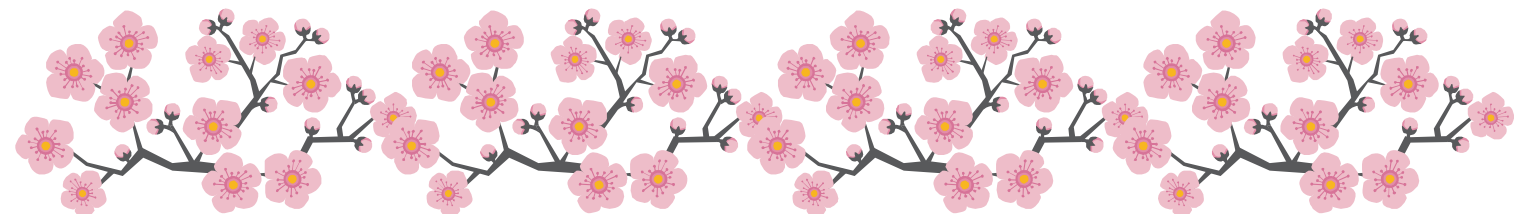
Church Street Café has modified its practices to continue providing meals and bags of nutritious groceries to meet the growing needs of our neighbors, who are facing increased economic difficulties. While we can’t offer the same level of warm welcome or fellowship, the warm meals and homemade cookies are going a long way to remind our friends at CSC that they have not been forgotten, but that we are here to serve and to love in the ways we can.

We made it through Holy Week and Easter using only online worship resources—a challenge no one warned me was coming when I was in seminary—and we have continued adapting our Sunday morning routine with services on our website as well as Zoom Sunday school. The response to these experiments could have been disheartening. Instead, it’s been encouraging and empowering.

We have not stopped worshipping. We have not stopped connecting. We have not stopped caring. When I am asked how we are doing as a congregation, it strikes me that we are doing what we as a church family always do: we are rising to the occasion. We are by no means out of the woods with this crisis. But I must say that I couldn’t be prouder or more grateful for who you are as the church of Jesus in Jefferson City right now. In this Easter season, I urge you to keep rising, and may the Lord bless you and keep you this day and in the days to come.

Grace and Peace,
Dave

P.S. By way of reminder, we are continuing to meet by Zoom video conference for adult Sunday school. If you would like to join in, please let me know, and I can send you the invitation to the Zoom meeting. Our class recently decided to begin a study of Ellen Davis’s book *Getting Involved with God: Rediscovering the Old Testament*. I have been coming back to this book so often over the years, and I am excited to have this opportunity to explore it with our class. Ellen Davis taught me Old Testament in seminary. She also routinely participated in daily morning prayer with students and faculty on campus. She is an altogether incredible scholar of the Hebrew Bible and a stunning reader of Scripture. Her approach to the text is uniquely dynamic, making the Old Testament in particular come alive in fresh ways. Her book *Getting Involved with God* is a great introduction to the way she engages with Scripture and a great re-introduction not only to the Old Testament, but also to the God made known through its pages.



APRIL SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

April 15, 2020

- In deciding to keep the church closed for services and activities through May 16, this means being closed for May 10, the date we had set for Youth Sunday. Rather than try to do Youth Sunday virtually, the Session suggested that we defer its celebration until we are back together in person. Once things settle down, we will identify a new date and communicate it with the congregation.
- We received a report from the Personnel Committee communicating that our Interim Music Director Kathy Bowen has decided that, due to family concerns, she will not be able to continue on with us beyond the end of May. While she made clear to us that this timeline was a possibility at the start of her time with us back in November, we remain saddened at her departure and are exceedingly grateful for the gifts she has shared with us as well as for her leadership. We are now in the process of initiating a search for a new Director of Music. If you have any contact information you would like to share for potential leads, please refer them to the Personnel Committee: David Nowell (865-548-6743), Pam Kustermann (865-680-5951), Troy Evans (423-619-4386), and Shanna Carmack (615-999-0701).
- The Session received Catherine Bard's resignation as Ruling Elder in the class of 2021. Catherine shared with us that, due to a health concern that causes significant fatigue, she is stepping back from her roles on Session and the Worship Committee, but for the time being will continue her role as Chair of the Mission Committee. We accepted her request with prayer and support. Session agreed to leave the vacancy in the class of 2021 until the Elder Nominating Committee meets this Fall.

MISSION CORNER

Times are rough for many people right now. I'm not telling you anything you don't already know. However, there is also good going on right now, too. As you are no doubt aware Church Street Café is continuing. In addition, if you or someone you know is in need of food assistance, please contact Heather in the office to see how the church can help. Next, a teleconference was recently held regarding this year's Mission Yard Sale. Due to ongoing issues related to Covid-19 as well as reports of local city plans for a separate event to be conducted on the first Saturday of October, any current planning on our part has been postponed until July. As you know, each year we select a non-profit organization to be the recipient of proceeds of the yard sale. Non-profit organizations are, like many others, struggling. Usual fund-raising activities have had to be postponed or canceled. Let me, therefore, take this moment to tell you a little about one of these organizations which you can help, while at the same time helping yourself and your family. Renovatus is an organization that seeks to empower people to be free from drug and alcohol addiction and restore them to Christ-centered living. This organization operates a farm that not only supplies life supporting skills to individuals, but also farm fresh wholesome food to the community. Right now, you can sign up for membership to receive food from Renovatus over the growing season. Think about it, local farm-fresh healthy food that you don't have to stand in line at Wal-Mart to pay for. How? Simply go to Renovatusrc.org. Click on Farm and select 2020 CSA. 2020 Community supported agriculture (CSA) is now open for membership applications. They will cap membership at 45-50 members this year. Signing up sooner rather than later helps the farm decide on seeding and planting before it is too late. Please check them out. We don't need to wait for a Mission Yard Sale to help the people who are helping others in our community.

**The Session decided to extend our closing for services and activities at the church through May 16. We will meet again as a Session by Zoom video-conference on May 4 to re-evaluate the public health situation as well as health department recommendations in order to determine whether that remains the best choice, if an extension is advisable, and/or if we might implement "phased openings" under certain conditions in the future. We intend to meet to review the situation every two weeks.*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 Communion Zoom Sunday School 9:45 a.m. Worship Service available online Claud & Kay Gowan	4	5	6 Mission Committee Teleconference 4:00 p.m. Kent & Susan Clouser	7 Rich Harlan	8 John Ryan Scarlett Ashley Williams	9
10 Zoom Sunday School 9:45 a.m. Worship Service available online MOTHER'S DAY	11	12 Curbside Pickup Church Street Café 5:00 p.m.	13 Session 6:30 p.m. Charlie & Dian Wise	14	15 John Rinehart Doug Dykstra	16
17 Sunday School 9:30-10:30 a.m. Worship Service 10:45-11:45 a.m. Connor Hypes	18	19 Connie Harlan	20 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	21	22 Jama Seahorn	23
24 Sunday School 9:30-10:30 a.m. Worship Service 10:45-11:45 am J Moser	25 OFFICE CLOSED	26 Church Street Café 5:00 p.m. David and Susan Nowell	27 Christian Education 6:30 p.m. Jack O'Hare	28	29	30
31 Sunday School 9:30-10:30 a.m. Worship Service 10:45-11:45 am Five Cents a Meal						



B&G
CORNER

Happy May everyone! Even with social distancing, your B&G committee has been keeping things functioning around FPC. This past month, we wrapped up the electric panel replacement. This project was a big one and had been delayed several times, so we are all very happy to have it complete. Committee members have also been knocking out outdoor tasks, such as resetting the bricks around the benches on the east lawn and staining the CSC shed porch and ramp.

At our April meeting (conducted via conference call), the committee decided that regular maintenance checks are essential during our church closure, and we have since been conducting these on a weekly basis. So far, no major issues detected, even with several significant storms!

Rest assured, we will keep an eye on things until operations return to normal. So for now, be safe and check in on each other. We look forward to seeing all of you in church again soon!

MONTHLY INCOME		YTD ACTUAL INCOME YEAR-TO-DATE (YTD) INCOME/EXPENSES		
APRIL /TOTAL	\$16,197.00			
(\$17,761 is needed monthly to meet budget)				
		ACTUAL	PRORATED	YTD BUDGET
		INCOME	\$101,394.53*	\$62,334.96
		EXPENSES	\$61,199.84***	\$66,181.03
ACTUAL INCOME OVER EXPENSES: \$40,194.69				
YTD PRORATED INCOME OVER EXPENSES: \$3,545.16				
*This number includes memorials designated to our general budget.** Some members pay their entire yearly pledges in January. This number has been adjusted to reflect what actual giving through April would be, if completed yearly pledges, were divided out monthly. ***Expenses are lower than expected, due to the cancellation of services and activities over the last 8 weeks. If you have questions, please see Heather.				