



Worship Committee, Session moves forward with Re-opening Plan

Upon recommendation from the Worship Committee, the Session has approved the next phase of re-opening the church. The discussed, amended, and approved motion is as follows:

We will resume worship at 11:00 am on Sundays beginning August 30, 2020. The congregation will sit to the back of the church. Social distancing will be in effect. This includes: Masks are required; do not come if a person feels ill, is at elevated risk or has someone at elevated risk in their home; no touching; observe social distancing when moving, standing, sitting; Please do not attend if you have been to another state or country which is on the quarantine recommendation list, etc. These requirements will be published in the newsletter, in notices to the congregation and at the door. In addition, the Deacons/Worship team will keep a record of who attends, and a greeter will take the temperature of all who enter. Judy is purchasing an appropriate thermometer. We will either block off spaces or indicate where people may sit. The congregation will respond responsively and pray jointly but will not sing. Bulletins will be available with all of the information needed for the service. We will record as we have been, but will live stream the video on Facebook at 11:00am. After the service, Shaun will edit the video as he has been and will post to YouTube by Monday morning for folks to watch on their TVs or other devices. We will email out the bulletin on Fridays so that if a person is watching live on Facebook they can follow along to the PDF (could even print it out at home if that was easier for them). If at any time it becomes too much for Shaun to do the editing with school responsibilities, then he would just post the live video on YouTube without adding anything. Finally, for any person that we learn of who has been participating by YouTube and who does not have an ability to obtain the bulletin, we will arrange to deliver a copy to him or her.



Sundays, September 6 & 13

The Reverend Dr. Daniel B. Merry will join us for the first half of September. Many will remember Dan from his time working at Pittsburgh Presbytery and his visits as the representative for mid-sized churches during our first pastoral transition between 2002-2005 as well as his work with the Malawi Partnership. He retired last year after serving 13 years at Southminster Presbyterian Church in Mt. Lebanon.

We will celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in worship on September 6th. For those attending the live stream recording session Sunday morning, we will have the elements sitting in the back of the sanctuary to take upon arrival so that you may partake when invited to do so. Those watching from home are invited to prepare bread and cup before watching to partake as well.

Sundays, September 20 & 27

The Reverend Kellie Weekley-Mills returns to the pulpit for the second half of the month.

Depending on the progress of the PNC search process, we will secure additional guest preachers for October Sundays, or we may be announcing a new pastor to join our FPCE family.



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*Believing we are
called together
by God's love
through Jesus Christ,
our mission as the
First Presbyterian Church
of Edgewood
is to love God,
to love each other,
and to love our neighbors.*

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

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**LOVE GOD
EACH OTHER
OUR NEIGHBORS**

More About Sunday Mornings...

The Worship Committee and Session have been prayerfully considering our next moves as a worshipping community at Edgewood. We've had multiple Zoom meetings and email discussions to determine if and when it will be safe to gather together in person.

The reality of our situation is that the majority of our membership falls into the high-risk category for exposure to COVID-19, and so every decision is discussed through that lens of safety and health considerations for our more vulnerable members.

In an effort to gauge the feelings of the congregation, an electronic survey was sent out to the membership. Results yielded an almost 50/50 split on whether we should continue our pre-recorded services, edited and posted on YouTube and the website; or to move to in-person Sunday morning worship. We also consulted a document prepared by the PC(USA) titled "Returning to Public Worship: Theological and Practical Considerations," which provided much insight and guidance from the larger denomination.

Our resulting recommendation to Session we felt was a compromise that met the needs of most of our members. Those who desired to be **in worship** on Sunday mornings could attend – with our already established safety protocols in place. For those who wanted to be part of a **live experience from home**, we now can live stream using our newly purchased Mevo camera (give us a few weeks to get used to the app and figure out the best sound...we're learning the program and how to use the camera together!). To allow for following along live, the bulletin will be sent out ahead of time as the words will not be on the screen in real time. And for those who are **not tied to Sunday morning** and want to experience the edited version of the video we have posted since May, the YouTube link will be available on Monday (after I have a chance to edit and upload it Sunday afternoon/evening).

Obviously, we would all love to be back in regular worship, sitting wherever we'd like, without masks, fully singing, with a choir, lots of hugs, and Lorraine's cookies in the Lounge afterward...but as long as schools are going virtual, restaurants are still at 25% capacity, sports are taking place without audiences, Broadway shows are canceled, social distancing and masks are required, we feel this is the best we can offer to continue in this unprecedented time.

Thank you to the members of the Worship Committee for their faithful and prayerful work: chair John Foster, Rhonda Apessos, Martha Crean, Lorraine Douthett, Marcia Haley, Sunny Sakai, Lisa Segedy, and myself.

"Let us be faithful, then—to God and to one another—as we receive the gifts and work through the challenges of this time in the life of our congregation and world."

Peace, *Shaun*



Pastoral Search Update

We are in the midst of interviewing candidates for the part-time pastor position and will provide an update next month.

Paul Otori, Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC)

Session Notes

- Approved the use of the lounge by Mary Barr for a class of about 6 people. The class will meet Tuesdays in August at 1-3:00 PM. The class will meet at their own risk and follow COVID protocol.
- Discussed building security following notification that a door was left open.
- Heard that the PNC planned to interview a candidate for our ministerial position.

Stewardship Update

We are thankful for the faithful who continue to support our church. These trying times heighten our awareness of what we have. We cannot take anything for granted. Thanks be to God!

Paul Otori, Stewardship Committee

Wilkesburg Community Ministry – Backpacks

Tom Ochs would like to thank everyone who donated to the WCM backpacks. Over \$850 was collected and sent to WCM.



WCM also thanks the 51 generous donors who contributed \$9,353.00 on August 19 for the Pittsburgh Foundation's "Pittsburgh Gives #ONEDAY" fundraising event.

Nominating Committee Update

The 2020 Nominating Committee has begun to work on a slate of proposed officers for our year end meeting. This year, we have 4 members of session and 2 deacons who will have completed their terms. If you feel called to serve on either of the boards, please contact any member of the nominating committee. Rhonda Apossos, Mary Ann Hartman, Sallie Monk, Lisa and Jim Segedy.

F.R.O.G.S. AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM **FRIENDS, READING, & OTHER GREAT STUFF**

Woodland Hills School District has decided (like most other districts) to hold their first 90 days virtually – so FROGS will be put on hold until the time when students actually return to the brick and mortar building, in-person educating. Look for more details in the coming month as we find out more from the school, which will tell us how we will move ahead with our after school program at FPCE.

Judy Mysels, FROGS Program Director



In our transition and overall confusion of days during the pandemic and closures, we missed an important announcement from our Deacons...the winner of the 2020 Melfard Douglass Memorial Scholarship is Travis Allabon! Congratulations to Travis as he heads to WVU.

Our Food Pantry is in great need of donations to restock our shelves. We welcome canned goods and nonperishable items as well as personal care items, paper products, and toiletries. Donations can be dropped off at the church during regular office hours. Monetary donations are also welcome and can be used to shop for needed items. Checks can be made payable to FPCE with Deacon Food Pantry in the memo.

During the closure, we did tend to several friends of the church by picking up and delivering items we did not have from local community food banks. We also referred some to WCM. We're hoping to connect with our friends at Shady Side Academy Junior School, as their second grade class typically holds a food drive in the fall. In the past, they have come to the church as a class to deliver the items, but with the uncertainty of COVID and online learning, we're not sure if we can expect the donations.

Also, a note about canned goods: if you have expired items in your cabinets, you can take them to the Wildlife Rescue rather than throwing them away.

Finally, some news about friends in our church family: Jason Hartman is doing much better; Kathy Horner will have back surgery end of the month, Helen Ebken is in rehab at Concordia, Bill Stineman is healing nicely. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and yours and remember God is Good.

Mary Ann Hartman, Deacons Moderator

Prayer Warriors

Did you know that we have a dedicated group that prays for you constantly? A core group of FPCE members maintain a prayer list that is continually updated as joys and concerns are passed along in the life of our congregation. They set aside intentional time and pray for specific individuals or situations that are brought to their attention and follow up on those prayer requests with calls and emails. If you would like to know more about our "Prayer Warriors" or would like to be added to the email list and make intentional prayer a focus of yours, please contact Michelle Santo at cshell73@yahoo.com.



The Digital Upper Room

As a subscriber to *The Upper Room* devotional, FPCE was given access to a PDF version of the September-October issue. The file was attached to the email sent to the congregation by Shaun on Friday, August 21. It is also posted on our website at www.fpcedgewood.org under the "News & Updates" section. Hard copies of the magazine are also available at the church and can be picked up during Judy's regular office hours.



from **Lament to Hope**

Lamentations 5:20-21

A Brief Summary of the 2020 PC(USA) General Assembly

The 224th General Assembly was a most unique experience for everyone involved. It reflected the two pandemics that were happening around it - the COVID-19 pandemic and the protests and demonstrations for racial justice. Intended to be held in Baltimore, the need for social distancing and loss of meeting facilities necessitated a new approach and so the meeting was held exclusively online. Baltimore was still honored as the host city.

The online Assembly necessitated a number of changes to the usual process and operations of the Assembly. There were none of the usual committees to review business items before they reached the floor in plenary. Instead, all business was done in plenary. To accommodate that structure, the business was initially limited to critical and necessary items, which initially totalled about 30 items. A few late items were accepted, two related items were approved to be pulled from the referral to the 225th GA, and two items responding to the current situation were included. All other business, including special committee and working group reports, as well as almost all overtures - including those proposing Book of Order changes - were referred to the next Assembly. About 140 items in total. So don't go looking for any descending overtures for your presbytery to approve.

All of this was scheduled for one evening meeting on Friday, June 19 and two all-day sessions on Friday, June 26 and Saturday, June 27. The first meeting went long with the business so another session on Saturday, June 20 was held specifically for the Co-Moderator election. Here are some of the items the 224th General Assembly dealt with.

Election of the Co-Moderators: Ruling Elder Elona Street-Stewart and Teaching Elder Gregory Bentley were elected Co-Moderators on the first ballot on Saturday evening. Ms. Street-Stewart is the executive for the Synod of Lakes and Prairies and is the first Native American to be elected Moderator. Mr. Bentley is the pastor of Fellowship Presbyterian Church of Huntsville, Alabama and a member of the Presbytery of North Alabama. While all three teams standing for Co-Moderators mentioned the PC(USA) Matthew 25 Initiative, they placed a special emphasis on it. Their logo, which was in their moderatorial material and on the wall behind them as they moderated, was the sankofa bird standing in the Mississippi River. The sankofa bird, a tribal symbol from Ghana, represents taking the best of the past to enhance the future. The Mississippi River connects Elona's home in the Twin Cities with Gregory's home in the south. The waters are a symbol in both her Native American culture and his African American heritage.

Election of the State Clerk: J. Herbert Nelson was approved by the Assembly for a second four-year term as Stated Clerk. He was put forward by the nominating committee and there were no other candidates.

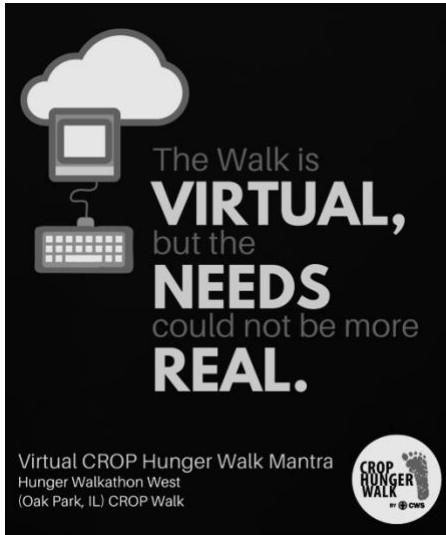
Social Justice Programs: There were additional live streamed programs throughout the week including the Poor People's Campaign Digital March on Washington and the Youth Rising Coalition event highlighting work with the youth of Baltimore. The Assembly theme was "From Lament to Hope", taken from Lamentations 5: 21-22 and the Assembly Bible study took a closer look at the passage and the theme in light of current events.

Racial Justice: This was a topic that permeated the GA while also being a point of frustration. The two items removed from the referral list and approved by the Assembly are actions to help the Native American Coordinating Council and their ministry across the country. One of the added items is "On the Church in This Moment in History - Responding to the Sin of Racism and a Call to Action" which affirms black lives matter and calls the church to repentance and action to remove systematic racism. The second item was "On responding to the COVID-19 pandemic" which calls for a pastoral response in this crisis and advocacy and care for the marginalized who are hit hardest by the pandemic. There was also great frustration among many, especially the Young Adult Advisory Delegates, that more was not done. Two attempts to incorporate concerns for black women and girls in different statements fell short of votes to get them on the floor even though the actions had strong support from the YAADs.

Budget and Per Capita: The COVID-19 crisis is impacting the church and the projection is a 25% income decline this year over earlier projections. In light of that the Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Mission Agency, and Administrative Services Group proposed a unified budget and asked for the ability to amend the budget in the weeks ahead. The Assembly approved but restricted the budget flexibility a bit. In light of many congregations and presbyteries also struggling at this time the OGA, which had earlier proposed a per capita increase, brought an unchanged per capita request to the Assembly, which after GA financial implications will be \$8.98 for 2021 and 2022.

Love is an Open Door...Sometimes

While Anna and Hans romantically and playfully sing the duet “Love is an Open Door” in the movie *Frozen*, what we’ve discovered recently with our doors is less playful and more unsettling. Church doors have been found left open in the past few weeks – the side transept door by the sanctuary and the lower ramp door by the Scout Room/Band Room. This is very dangerous and has to stop. **DOORS SHOULD NOT BE PROPPED OPEN FOR ANY REASON.** If you are privileged enough to have a key to this building, please respect it. Signs are now posted on doors to never prop open doors. *Thank you.*



Virtual CROP WALK: Sunday, October 11

2020 Crop Walk, like other marathons/races/walks will be virtual but is still accepting donations as before. If you are interested in “walking”, have questions or are curious about the Crop Walk, visit their website: CropHungerWalk.org. Donations can be sent to FPCE notated on check line as “Crop Walk” or can be electronically donated at website: CropHungerWalk.org. Look for First Presbyterian, Edgewood on website to donate. Let’s set a record for donations/walkers this year!

About the CROP Walk

We believe in ending hunger. And, in 2020, we will continue to fight against the new challenges of disease and disaster that leave people hungry. Join with us in raising funds to help neighbors near and far get the meals they need this year.

The Crop Project was organized in 1947 when farmers were asked to donate food and seed crops to our hungry neighbors in post-World War II Europe and Asia, a program that soon became known as the Christian Rural Overseas Program - CROP. In 1969 in Bismarck, North Dakota, and in 1970 in York, Pennsylvania, the first walk events were organized to raise funds to support CROP. Since then, CROP Hunger Walk events have been held in hundreds of communities large and small raising millions of dollars to eradicate hunger and poverty.



Sharing the Joys & Concerns of FPCE

- Georgia Sue Crean was born on Wed 8/12 at 1:11am to Bill and Sarah Crean. She arrived 3 1/2 weeks early, but is a good weight at 7 lb. 12 oz. Everyone is home and working through all of the changes. Grandparents Bill and Martha are planning a trip to Minneapolis in September.
- New address for the Baldwins: 3391 Ichabod Way, The Villages, FL 32163
- Congratulations to Lorraine Douthett on her recent retirement from UPMC Children’s Hospital

2020 FPCE Graduates!

- **Oyinkansola Adebajo** graduated from Oakland Catholic High School, Magna Cum Laude. She is a global initiative scholar and also received the third highest amount of scholarships from the colleges she applied to. Oy will attend Muhlenberg College to study Theatre Arts - with a focus on directing and screenwriting.
- **Travis Allabon** graduated from Trinity Christian School. He was in the National Honor Society. Travis will attend West Virginia University to study aerospace engineering.
- **Alaijah Clements** graduated from Chartiers Valley High School with High Honors. She is a member of the Mathematics Honor Society. Alaijah will attend the University of Pittsburgh to study biology.
- **Hunter Legge** graduated from Woodland Hills High School, where he lettered in Rugby. Hunter received a scholarship from Riverview Bible Institute in Tampa, Fl. His goal is to complete their 3-year program to graduate with a Bachelor's in Ministry.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR GRADUATES. WE ARE PROUD OF YOU.

JUST FOR FUN!

New Orleans church uses funny religious-themed jokes to help its worshipers observe social distancing

By CARLY STERN FOR DAILYMAIL.COM

PUBLISHED: 16:55 EDT, 18 August 2020 | **UPDATED:** 11:14 EDT, 19 August 2020

A church in Louisiana has reopened at reduced capacity amid the coronavirus — and its pastor has come up with a divinely funny way to maintain social distancing. Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New Orleans is only open at 10 per cent occupancy these days, so pastor Ray Cannata, 51, outfitted several of the pews with signs directing worshipers to sit elsewhere and stay six feet apart.

Each of the signs has a humorous, bible-referencing message, including 'Jesus sat the 500 down in rows. But not this one' and 'Reserved for Elijah only.' 'People are coming into the church to worship and celebrate, but they're worried about getting sick or making someone else sick. Everyone's wearing masks and giving each other space. It's all stuff we aren't accustomed to at all so this just helps lighten the mood.'

The signs all reference God or specific biblical passages or figures. 'Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born, and if he were here today, he still wouldn't be allowed to sit in this pew,' reads one. "'I have prepared a place for you,'" one sign reads, quoting John 14:3 'Just not this pew.' "Zacchaeus climbed a sycamore tree to get a better seat... this pew was not it,' says yet another, while one more reads: "'You will find me when you seek me." Just not in this pew. Keep seeking.' 'Remember when the Lord put a "Flaming Sword" at the entrance of the Garden of Eden, so Adam and Eve couldn't go there?' asks another. "'Flaming sword" can also be translated [as] blue tape.'

The pastor said they they'd gotten the idea from other churches with similar signs and borrowed a few, but made up some on their own. According to Facebook, most worshipers are still tuning into the church's livestream.

'Not perfect, and a lot of extra work, but we're trying our best to be safe and to worship the Lord,' it says.

Commenters really seem to enjoy the funny signs, calling them 'fantastic,' 'really funny,' 'creative,' 'too cute,' and 'clever.'



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**PLEASE JOIN US FOR
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