



Kirk News

June - July 2020

Presbyterian Church of Easton



Hi, Friends

I was just going through the PCE pictorial directory and realizing how many of you I haven't met yet — not even by phone or Zoom meeting! Although I'm only with you for a brief while, I do hope there'll be ways for us to get together at least a few times before your new interim pastor arrives.

In the meantime, PCE goes marching on. As you know, as of June 21st the sanctuary has been open on Sunday mornings for actual live, in-person worship. We're a strange looking group with our face masks, sitting six feet apart, and no congregational singing — but it still feels like church to me! The Transition Team, Trustees, and Session have been and are working very hard to ensure our safety and comfort and I must admit, it feels so good to be physically together in worship again. Rest assured that worship online will continue, so don't feel like you have to hurry back. Come when you feel comfortable. And whenever that is, wear your face covering and prepare to receive a squirt of hand sanitizer at the door!

Christ's work at PCE continues. Committees are meeting, the Session is meeting, the Trustees are meeting — it's just via Zoom, instead of face-to-face, and it works fine. We welcomed two new people to Session: June Bittinger and Shirley Seward, both a gift from God when it was most needed. So thankful for them, and for the Deacons as they do their best to care for congregation members and still observe social distancing, for the AV team who make online worship possible, and for all who are faithfully continuing in love and service during this strange time. PCE may be a church in transition, but relationships are strong and the work of Jesus continues!

Thank you all for your warm welcome and encouragement. You are a very easy congregation to love, even for a "Bridge Pastor"! Even if we haven't met personally, each of you and PCE are in my prayers.

Much love to you all —
Susan

Meet Our Interim Pastor



Rev. Jeff Howard is coming to PCE as our interim pastor. He is an experienced Interim Pastor having successfully shepherd churches in transition in Eagle Rock, California, Pocomoke City, Maryland, Ocean City, Maryland, Middletown, Delaware, and most recently, Elmer, New Jersey. Before becoming a pastor, Jeff was a member of the National Presbyterian Church in Washington, DC, and owned TARSUS Point of Sale Systems where he automated retail stores. He is a 2007 graduate of Fuller Theological Seminary. Jeff's passion is preaching and teaching the Bible. He believes that transformation occurs in people when they worship, study the Bible, pray together.

Jeff will be coming to Easton with his wife, Grace. Jeff met Grace working together for an international student ministry at Pasadena Presbyterian Church in California, while in seminary. The story of this ministry won the PCUSA Multicultural Story contest in 2006. They are both interested in missional outreach and church growth. They empower each other through morning prayers and reading the Bible together. They pray for churches that they have served and are currently serving. They enjoy cooking together and sharing it with others in Christian fellowship. They like taking long walks together. They are excited to meet the faithful Christians in Easton who are very precious gifts from God.

Grace is also an ordained pastor in the PCUSA. Grace started a new church in Princess Anne, Maryland. She started student ministries at the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore, and Salisbury University. She was the pastor of Delaware City Presbyterian Church. Currently, she is a pulpit supply pastor in New Castle Presbytery. She is an adjunct professor at World Mission College of Greater Washington and Washington Theological Seminary. She is passionate about prayer and Christian healing ministry. She loves to praise God and is learning to play the guitar. Grace has two sons. JaeCheon is a pharmacist in Philadelphia, PA. JaeHyeon is a Bioinformatics Software Engineering Scientist in Cambridge, MA.

Worship

Janet Shimko

Discussions at Worship meetings focused on the challenges of holding virtual services during the time Maryland limited in person meetings to ten people and then the gradual re-opening of PCE in a step wise fashion to 50% capacity with safety of our members participating in Worship as the goal. A detailed plan was developed based on guidelines from the National Assembly, New Castle Presbytery, the CDC and Talbot County Health Department.

The Book of Order requirement for quarterly communion was discussed and it was felt that with three in-person communions and three virtual communions already taking place by the first week in June, only two more are needed this year in the third and fourth quarter.

Kudos to: Rev. Susan Bennett for her interesting sermons and adaptability to virtual speaking, Bob Huntington and his variety of music which adhered to public health suggestions about the spread of COVID during singing, Jim Arnold and the AV Team for moving from recorded and edited sermons to partial services to full services with live streaming, our choir and bell members, June Bittinger and Kim Cassady and the liturgists for the increased role that each assumed during these services, Barbara Mullikin and the ushers who also assumed increased responsibilities during the in person services, Scott Worsham for his beautiful floral arrangements at the front of the church, Tal Bone and Dale Byrnes for creating the bulletins and the Trustees for all of their accommodations to make PCE safe to worship in person.

Trustees

Clyde Dickey

The trustees have been busy supporting the resumption of in-church services by helping configure the building to meet virus restrictions. We continue to make daily building checks. We are also meeting with contractors to decide what repairs and renovations are needed for the manse.

Thanks to all the members for their help.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS 2020

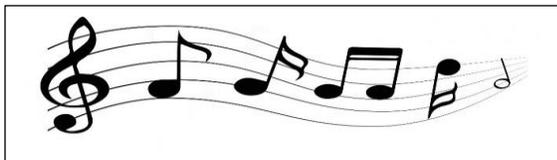
The coronavirus pandemic has not stopped the work of the church! Your Session has been meeting more frequently lately and using Zoom to meet online in view of the coronavirus pandemic restrictions. Following are the *Blessings and Business* from the May and June 2020 Session meetings.

Blessings

- PCE's Bridge Minister, Rev. Susan Bennett, was introduced virtually to the congregation and her first sermon is still available on the pceaston.com web site;
- Two church members volunteered to serve on Session at the May 20 meeting;
- Planning for re-opening the church for in-person services is underway with the safety of our members as the primary focus.

Deacons

During normal times, the Deacons' provide transportation, deliver the altar flowers, sponsor a spaghetti dinner, and send out cards. COVID-19 has caused the Deacons to make adjustments in connecting with the members of the church. Along with Session, the Deacons are calling members of the church to keep them up to date on the happenings. We've also sent out over 74 birthday greetings and 14 caring cards and we have been visiting some members that are not in closed facilities. We're providing transportation to a few now that the church is open for Sunday service, and delivering copies of Tuesday TidBits and Monday Musings to those members that do not have email addresses or access to the church website. If you know of a member that would like a call or copies of TidBits and the Musings, please let us know."



From the Desk of the Music Director...

Now that the church has returned to weekly worship services, I am pleased that music can be part of that progress.

Unfortunately, singing is the *best* way to spread COVID-19 as our aerosol droplets can be projected 15-20 feet! Singing with a mask on is not very practical either. Congregation members are being asked to either hum along or say the words quietly during the hymns while a few song leaders function as the "voice of the people". This procedure is heartbreaking and frustrating, but necessary for now to keep us all safe.

A bell duet rang a few weeks ago and is working on new selections. Likewise, a smaller bell group has played once already and is preparing more music for future presentations. Also, the Taizé instrumentalists have helped lead worship and will continue to do so periodically.

As we move forward, I am working on other ways for there to be music as part of our worship experience. It is my hope to start including vocal soloists, duets and trios along with other instrumentalists. We are, of course, trying to observe the necessary protocols in the process. It will be a long time before we can once again have a full choir or even enjoy of hymn-sing Sunday.

My heartfelt thanks to all the Music Ministry volunteers who have faithfully continued to serve, albeit in new ways. Deep appreciation also goes to Jim Arnold and the AV Team for making weekly worship possible through new technology. PCE is truly blessed to have such dedicated people share their gifts and talents, which enable and enhance our continued worship of the Lord!

Membership/Fellowship

The Membership Committee is working on creating a definitive list of church members-both active and inactive, friends and visitors. Dale Byrnes is reviewing the CCIS database and combining with existing membership lists with input from June Buttinger, Elaine Young and Janet Shimko. The meetings do not focus on Fellowship at this time until we are able to gather again safely. We are looking for a few new members, please give one of our members above a call if you are interested.

Mission Committee

Bud Marseilles

After serving our neighbors for over 20 years, the PCE food pantry closed in March when the church building closed. Our small food pantry has been distributing about 200 bags of non-perishable food each year to around 45 families. Remaining food was donated to the Interfaith Shelter and St. Vincent de Paul's food pantries. The Church of God at 1900 N. Washington St., St. Vincent De Paul, the Neighborhood Center in Easton and St. Michaels Community Center are serving our food pantry friends. These pantries have received checks from our mission committee's food outreach fund. These food pantries distribute over 1,500 bags of food each week and are well equipped to meet the needs of the families our small food pantry has been providing.

The mission committee thanks the Fahrman, Osburns, Dickeys, Golls, Peggy Feehley, Elaine Young, Connie Knopp, Becki Wilson, Caroline Sproul and all who

have donated food and funds for their long-term commitment to the pantry. Funds remaining in the food account will be used to meet future needs in the community through donations to such programs as Meals on Wheels, Backpack meals, The Maryland Food Bank and Neighborhood Center.

Should an increased need for food distribution arise within the community, the time feel right, and with Session approval, our church may reinstate our food pantry as a local mission project. But for now, other food pantries are more than capable of meeting this local need.

Personnel Committee

Bud Marseilles

We have been helping the Interim Pastor search team by answering questions about pastor benefits.

We have been examining which tasks should be included in the next church admin job description. A list of tasks that volunteers once did/could do again has been circulated. Some tasks may be retained, and some eliminated as we update the church admin position. Once an Interim has been hired, the personnel committee will take steps to hire the next church administrative assistant for the church.

During this interim a small group of volunteers is handling all church admin tasks, Special thanks go to Dale Byrnes, Barbara Hoehn, Darlene Fahrman, Bud Marseilles, Janet Shimko and Tal Bone for their help keeping PCE running smoothly.

Women's Association

The Naomi Circle will begin in person studies again the fourth Tuesday of September at 10 am at PCE. The Lydia Circle which usually meets the fourth Monday of the month at 12 pm, is postponing in person meetings for a few more months. Both Circles welcome new members, please call Helen Williams or Janet Shimko for more information.

Presbyterian Pre-School

Hello everyone! I hope this message finds each and every one of you well. The preschool team is meeting on July 17th to move forward with our plans for our re-opening in September. As of now, our start date for our 2020-21 school year is September 9th. PPS has been approved by the Office of Child Care to reopen with modifications. Prior to re-opening the preschool wing will be fully sanitized. We have some details to work out to keep all of our students and staff safe, however, we are eager to return to our preschool family. Precautions and new guidelines will be implemented.

Take care,

Missy