



**First
Presbyterian**
CHURCH OF PORTLAND

Spire
MAY 2020

Dear Friends,

What a month we have had, from the announcement of social distancing in our community to aid in the slowing of the Coronavirus, to spending weeks at home; in this time, our world and so many of our usual patterns of life have been incredibly altered. At first the sheer scope of the pandemic was hard to take in, with so many who have been ill, furloughed or grieving losses.

Then we realized the impact on nearly everyone we know, graduates who would end their studies without ceremony or celebration, weddings postponed, parents trying to homeschool children while balancing work online from home, friends in medicine at risk on the front lines, and those in retirement communities feeling isolated but nonetheless vulnerable.

There has been a sea change in the way we connect with our church and church friends as well. While we've been streaming Sunday worship services for several years, now we are gathering for worship by streaming only, worshipping together from our homes, seeing the familiar beauty of the sanctuary and the faces of pastors and musicians as we are drawn together in one spirit. You'll read in this newsletter of more ways we are responding in this time in worship, education and service.

In this season of the virus, we are also in the church season of Eastertide, the Sundays following Easter when we remember Christ's resurrection, and the difference it makes to our lives and world, even and especially in such days.

We affirm

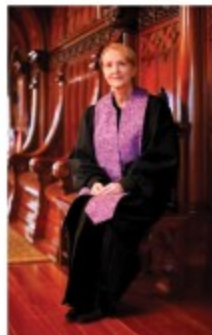
...that even in days that have been dark, there is a light in Christ that shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not been able to put it out

...that even when we hear of so many dying, our Lord has promised, they who believe in me, though they die, yet shall they live

...that even when our hearts are heavy, he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows

...that weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes with the morning

So may we keep the faith, keep praying, keep reaching out to call and to care, and keep finding in Christ our hope and our peace,



*Rev. Audrey Schindler,
Beth Nakamura/The Oregonian*

First Presbyterian Church

Sunday Worship at 10:30 am

1200 SW Alder St. Portland, Oregon 97205

Church Office (503) 228-7331

www.firstpresportland.org



Communion Table, Maundy Thursday Service
Beth Nakamura/The Oregonian

We're thankful
for our Deacons

and others who brought Easter lilies around, and to all of you who have been phoning and sending cards to connect with church friends.

Streaming Worship: a note...

The church is working to strengthen its streaming services, and meanwhile, those watching the streaming have this suggestion for those watching on a Mac device: rather than using Safari as the browser, you can download a free copy of Chrome as a browser, and join the streaming by searching for the church website using Chrome. This allows a stronger connection and more uninterrupted viewing. Thanks for your patience as the church continues to adapt to a higher-tech world!

Session Commission

At a called meeting of Session in March, an Administrative Commission was appointed to respond to church needs through this season. They are empowered to act for the Session on matters arising between Session meetings. They include:

Audrey Schindler, Moderator

Joyce Evans, Clerk of Session

Steve Snodderly, Co-Chair, Facilities Committee

Jon Bates, Co-Chair, Facilities Committee

Erich Merrill, Chair, Personnel Committee

Ways you can stay connected to church:

- * streaming worship at this link at 10:30am on Sundays: (<https://www.firstpresportland.org/service-broadcast>)

- * watch for email updates at least weekly. (Please let us know if you presently don't receive these, and we can add you to the list)
- * contact the church office to help arrange for phone conference or Zoom teleconferencing for your group to continue connecting
- * call church friends to check in
- * continue to support the church through giving on the church website at <https://www.firstpresportland.org/giving>, or mailing in checks to the church office
- * let the pastors and Deacons know of needs you may have, and if you are ill

Church staff are answering the church phone and emails by remote access, as they work from home. **The church phone number will be answered during our usual office hours, Tuesdays to Fridays, 8:30 to 5pm at (503) 228-7331, and email to office@firstpresportland.org.** For urgent needs out of office hours, you may email our church business administrator, Bonnie Garcia, at cba@firstpresportland.org or call her at (619) 948-6080.

Resources for Resilience Through These Times

Scriptures to reflect on and hold to heart:

Nehemiah 8:10b ...do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

Isaiah 41:10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you.

Isaiah 40:31 But those who wait for the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not faint.

Colossians 1:11-12... being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.

James 1:12 Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

How Staff are Sustaining the Church's Mission and Ministry:

Pastors leading in Sunday worship and Virtual Vespers

Audrey: aschindler@firstpresportland.org

Preaching for services
Managing staff
working with Session to guide the church's life

Brenna: bdykman@firstpresportland.org

Coordinating pastoral care with pastors and Deacons
highlighting ways you can serve

Carmen: cgoetschius@firstpresportland.org

Working on social media ways of connecting
Pastoral care

Emily: estecher@firstpresportland.org

Developing family resources for this season

Zane: zkbuxton@gmail.com

Providing pastoral care
covering pastoral needs on Fridays

Spencer: spencer@menucha.org

Guiding Menucha through this time

Greg: ghomza@firstpresportland.org

Providing music for Sunday services

Kim: publications@firstpresportland.org

Coordinating communications and worship bulletins

Gall: office@firstpresportland.org

Answering church phones and providing office support
Providing bulletins and sermons to those homebound

Bonnie: cba@firstpresportland.org

Coordinating office coverage with staff
church financial matters

Facilities staff:

Continuing to deep clean the church facilities and care for church buildings

How long?

With the situation changing week to week, Session has decided that we will continue to worship by streaming only, until the way be clear to return to worshipping together.

Please continue to look for church emails and check the church website for updates.

How to Continue Your Giving

Thank you for your support of the church, as care continues, you may give through the church website at this link: (firstpresportland.ccbchurch.com/goto/giving) or mail your check to the church office: 1200 SW Alder St., Portland, OR 97205.

New Church Website

On April 8th, we released a new website for First Presbyterian, and on Easter Sunday, over 230 households live-streamed our Easter Services! The new website is one of the capital campaign projects that the Outreach Committee has been working on over the past year. Be sure to watch the new welcome video; you can find a link to it on the home page (Mac users can view the video through Chrome browser). And because the new website automatically adjusts for small screen sizes, it looks great on mobile phones and tablets. Watch for updated photos and additional information over the coming months.

How to Live Stream Services on New Website:

Join us for our live streaming of Sunday services at 10:30 am. On the home page of the church website: (<https://www.firstpresportland.org/>) click the yellow button "Live Stream Worship," which links to the Worship Services page.

There, you'll find the link to the church's live streaming, (<https://www.firstpresportland.org/church-life/worship-services/service-live-stream/>), plus bulletins and hymns for Sunday services and the Zoom link for Virtual Coffee Hour!

Virtual Vespers continues every Sunday and Wednesday night at 7 pm. Join us for these live services of evening prayer on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/FirstPresPortland>) or Instagram (https://www.instagram.com/firstpresbyterian_pdx/). Archived vespers can be found on the church website service livestream page (<https://www.firstpresportland.org/church-life/worship-services/service-live-stream/>).

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Emily Stecher, Director of Christian Education

Faith Formation Resource Hub for Families and Adults

All faith formation resources, including at-home Sunday School lessons, coloring sheets, family devotionals, as well as

educational and devotional resources for adults, can be found in one place – the FPC Faith Formation Resource Hub (tinyurl.com/fpcfaithformation2020). This Google Drive folder is regularly updated with new resources for you all to use at home during this time. Links to this resource hub can also be found on the church's website on the "Children and Youth Ministry" and "Adult Education" pages.

Children's & Youth Ministry:

During an unusual Holy Week and Easter, FPC families were invited to actively participate from home this year. Many families shared that they made homemade bread for Maundy Thursday Communion and worshipped via the church's live streamed services. Emily Stecher continues to regularly update the FPC Faith Formation Resource Hub and share resources with families via the FPC Children and Youth CCB email list. There are weekly, simple at-home Sunday School lessons for families to use in addition to other resources like coloring sheets and family devotionals. For Holy Week and Easter, Emily recorded a video telling the story of Holy Week and Easter using only one piece of paper and offered a Facebook Live on Easter



Virtual Zoom Confirmation Class!

Sunday for families, and Daniel, FPC's Children's Music Director, recorded a video teaching an Easter song for the children.

All of these videos can be found in the Faith Formation Resource Hub. The FPC Confirmation Class concluded its final sessions

on schedule after Easter, except we gathered on Zoom virtually instead of in-person! Pastor Spencer Parks and long-time member Lauren Deming joined on April 19th for a conversation on the church's fellowship, breaking of bread, and call to hospitality. For the final session on April 26th, Pastor Carmen and the confirmands' mentors from the congregation joined for a conversation about what church membership means as the confirmands conclude their Confirmation journey. Those confirmands who decide they are ready to become "active members" and make a public declaration of faith will be visiting the FPC Session virtually on May 6th for conversation about their Statements of Faith. The exact date for Confirmation Sunday, originally scheduled for May 31st, is yet to be finalized as we wait for the way to be clear for in-person gatherings in the Sanctuary.

The FPC Youth Group gathered on Zoom on March 29th for a time of checking-in, fellowship, and prayer. Everyone had a blast playing a game that involved showing funny objects from our houses! We will gather in this way again on Sunday, May 3rd at 7:30 pm. All middle and high school youth are welcome! The zoom link is (<https://zoom.us/j/93022271544>) and the Meeting ID is 930-2227-1544.

Adult Education:

Virtual Sunday Morning Adult Bible Study with Will Deming

Starting on Sunday, May 3rd, Dr. Will Deming will resume the weekly Adult Bible Study from 9 - 10 am via Zoom, diving deep into the Scripture passages for that day from the lectionary. Participation in these discussions is a wonderful primer before attending worship via livestream at 10:30 am. The weekly Zoom link is (<https://zoom.us/j/92285138816>) and the Meeting ID is 922-8513-8816.

Virtual Open Circle Women's Fellowship

Join the women of Open Circle for fellowship, study, and prayer weekly on Thursday mornings through Thursday, May 14th from 10 - 11:30 am. The Zoom link is (<https://zoom.us/j/827988495>) and the Meeting ID is 827-988-495. All are welcome!

Virtual Adult Ed:

A Pilgrimage Story with the Resleys on May 17th

First Presbyterian members Bill and Deborah Resley will speak about their pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago in Spain on **Sunday, May 17th** after the live streamed worship service at 12:30 pm via Zoom. For more than 1,000 years, pilgrims have followed "The Way" across Europe to the tomb of Saint James, the apostle. Dial-in to hear their story and participate in a discussion about the role of pilgrimage practices in the Christian life.

The Zoom link is (<https://zoom.us/j/94657006493>) and the Meeting ID is 946-5700-6493.

Caring in times of crises:

Many of us have found ourselves in full-time or part-time caregiver role because of this pandemic. We are caring for people who are sick, for friends and neighbors who cannot leave their homes, for children who should be in school, for aging family members. It is important in these times, to remember self-care and ourselves. It is important to rest, fuel our bodies with good foods, and listen to what is going on with our emotions. It is important to carve out a few minutes of time, even just 15 minutes a day, to spend time in practices that are life giving; like reading scripture, meditating, walking, listen to music and making art. Remember that you are not in it alone. Please reach out to Pastor Brenna (bdykman@firstpresportland.org) if you need any extra support or encouragement.

Our Missional Response to COVID-19:

This pandemic has uncovered some of the vast discrepancies in our social system. Those who struggle with basic needs have been hit the hardest. In light of this, our Mission team has reached out to our neighbors at Alder House in this season. A number of members have been sewing masks for their residents. Volunteers have been working with the Northeast Emergency Food Program to provide extra food supplies for our neighbors and their pets. The church has also provided Alder House with plenty of art supplies to help promote self-care and cultivate joy while being socially isolated. If you would like to help in these efforts, more volunteers are always welcome! Please contact Pastor Brenna at (bdykman@firstpresportland.org). Our mission team continues to reach out to our mission partners and we will keep you up to date on other needs as we hear of them.

Support the Northeast

Emergency Food Bank

In these challenging times, our neighbors who were already struggling economically are greatly impacted and those organization that serve vulnerable populations are feeling the impact as well. Our mission partner, the Northeast Emergency Food Bank is looking for additional supplies and volunteers. Volunteers are needed to help build and distribute food boxes Mondays through Thursdays and on Saturdays, from 8:30am - 2:30pm. They are also seeking people to assist with cleaning and resetting for the next day from 2:30 to 4pm on the same days. 4800 NE 72nd Ave, Portland, OR 97218

Virtual Vespers

For a very long time, Christians throughout the world have participated in Vespers, or evening prayers, at the close of day. In this time of quarantine, the church staff has developed "Virtual Vespers" and every Wednesday and Sunday evening at 7 pm, you are invited to participate in a time of prayer and reflection on scripture. These Vespers can be found on our Facebook page (First Presbyterian Church, Portland Oregon) and our Instagram account ([firstpresbyterian_pdx](https://www.instagram.com/firstpresbyterian_pdx)). A familiar face guides you through a time of evening prayer that helps us find our footing as we turn to a God who is near no matter what troubles we face. If you do not have access to social media, an archive of the Virtual Vespers can be found on our website. In these days when anxiety and fears would weigh us down, we turn to Christ who reminds in John 16:33 "I have said these things so that in me you would have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart, I have overcome the world!"



Music Notes

—Greg Homza, Director of Music Ministries

2020 was off to such a great start! I took some time after Christmas to visit with my folks in Florida, and then spent four days on retreat at Mount Angel Abbey. We had a wonderful *Celebration Works* concert in early February, and plans were in place for



Lent and Easter (including brass and timpani). A group of 16 singers from FPC sang for a service of Evensong at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral on March 8th, and it was heaven on earth. It's hard to imagine that just a few days later, we made the decision to cancel choir practice amid coronavirus concerns, and then to reduce to just the section leaders for the service on the 15th. We went from eight singers in the loft that day (already practicing social distancing), to six on the 22nd (with greater distancing), and since the 29th, one. It has been both challenging and gratifying to “think outside the box” as we re-plan (sometimes several times over) the music for worship services. Thankfully, the



Greg Homza at the Organ, Maundy Thursday Service
Beth Nakamura/The Oregonian

Holy Spirit has been helping out, whispering ideas from time to time.

Having to postpone the two remaining

CW concerts was

disappointing, but necessary. We hope to reschedule at least one of those concerts during the summer. And of course planning the 2020-2021 season is presenting some challenges (if anyone has a crystal ball, could I borrow it?) In the meantime, we are posting links to some beautiful and calming music each day on the CW Facebook page, (<https://www.facebook.com/CelebrationWorksFPC/>) some of it well-known, but most of it not.

Thanks so much to everyone who has reached out to offer words of thanks and encouragement...it really means a lot! And speaking of thanks, I am so very thankful for my wonderful spouse Leah lending her beautiful voice to Sunday worship, and for the very talented Maddy Ross and Ann van Bever and their stunning contributions to the Good Friday and Easter Sunday services. And of course the pastors, sound team (Murlan Kaufman, Erich Merrill, Russell Smith, and Dan Wade), and sexton pro tem Bill Edwards for their gracious and collaborative spirit in these difficult times.

I am enjoying being in touch with many of the members of the FPC music ministry by email, phone, and of course, Zoom. The choir has had weekly Zoom meetings since March 19th, and while those are nice, I miss everyone terribly, and yearn for the day when we can all be together to make music and sing (and ring) praises to God once again. I am also enjoying the Zoom coffee hour gatherings on Sundays, as well as the Zoom “elbow-bending group” gatherings on Friday afternoons, which have grown in size (probably for a variety of reasons).

I am reminded of a stanza from the beloved hymn, *Blest Be the Tie that Binds*. “When we are called to part, it gives us inward pain; but we shall still be joined in heart, and hope to meet again.” May it be so.

Grace and peace and health to you all,

-greg

Jim Patterson's Retirement From FPC

Our bookkeeper, Jim Patterson, is retiring on May 29th. We are happy for him as he begins this new journey in his life and glad that as a church and choir member, we will continue to see him. And equally so, we are saddened that he is departing employment at FPC. Jim has been with FPC for six years as a steady, dependable and invaluable asset to our accounting department. His gentle, calm, caring and accommodating nature has assisted and supported the business office as it navigated through several transitions these last six years. We will miss you Jim, and thank you for your commitment and dedication to FPC. Please feel free to extend to Jim your personal good bye and well wishes.



Make Masks With the Church's Mission Team!

During this season that has put pressure on many, our church is reaching out to our neighbors at Alder House to see how we can help. Our mission team has sourced fresh fruit and pet supplies from our other mission partner Northeast Emergency Food Bank. We are also putting together art supplies to help people cope with isolation, but we still need your help! We are looking for people who might have supplies and be able to sew masks for the residents of Alder House. If you can help, please send an e-mail to Pastor Brenna to schedule a pick-up or a drop off of your mask donations (bdykman@firstpresportland.org).

Connect with FPC via Social Media

Friends, if you are a regular user of social media, you are encouraged to connect with the church and one another through the First Presbyterian Facebook Page (facebook.com/FirstPresPortland), the First Presbyterian Instagram (@firstpresbyterian_pdx), and the First Presbyterian Youth Instagram Account (@fpcpdxyouth).

Virtual Bible Study Begins

Are you looking for an opportunity to explore the scriptures and connect with other? On Mondays join us on Zoom at 6 pm for a Bible study for this unique season. Each week, the group will come together to taste and savor a different scripture. We will be looking at texts through a new lens and sharing our insights with one another. For more information contact Brenna (bdykman@firstpresportland.org). To join us, follow the link (<https://zoom.us/j/97941419399>)

Street Painting "Jade's Jewel"

Each year, the Razzano family from our church and friends work on a street painting project called "Jade's Jewel" at the corner of NE 61st Ave and Tillamook Street. One of their daughter's caretakers, a PSU art student, designed it. The purple flowers in the design are there since purple is the color for Rett Syndrome. With social distancing in mind, the event will look differently this year. You can see more at the event's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/StreetPaint2015/>). Contact Joey Razzano for more details and to sign up by email at (joey.razzano@comcast.net).

Open Circle Project for the Rose Haven Shelter

Rose Haven Day Shelter for Women and Children is a day shelter and community center for those experiencing trauma of abuse, loss of home and other disruptive life challenges. Please consider donating during this time of critical need, clean, ready for use warm clothing, clothes, boots and outdoor gear or sponsor a meal prepared in a commercial kitchen. Donations can be made by placing closed and sealed boxed or bagged items into your vehicle's trunk and staying in your car while delivering items to be safely gathered from your vehicle's trunk by Rose Haven staff during the hours of 9-noon M-F. Their shelter is located at 627 NW 18th St., (503) 248-6364, less than a mile from FPC, a part of our neighborhood. We look forward to this project expanding as health-related restrictions ease in the months ahead. Questions? Please contact Cindy Finch (cindylooufinch@yahoo.com).



Natasha and Steve Brown's doodle dogs love our live streaming Worship services!



First Presbyterian

CHURCH OF PORTLAND

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FPC's Streaming Services Highlighted in the Oregonian Newspaper During Holy Week

Our church was featured in the Oregonian newspaper during Holy Week and Oregonian Staff photographer Beth Nakamura visited our church during the Maundy Thursday service. Read the article and view all of the photos here: (<https://www.oregonlive.com/coronavirus/2020/04/crafting-an-easter-message-of-hope-and-faith-at-a-time-when-both-seem-elusive.html>).



*Rev. Audrey Schindler and Rev. Spencer Parks, Maundy Thursday Service
Beth Nakamura/The Oregonian*



Beth Nakamura/The Oregonian