



First  
Presbyterian  
CHURCH OF PORTLAND

Spire

AUGUST 2020

Dear friends,

What a summer this has been! Anxiety has been in the air as the virus has resurged in recent weeks, alternating with glimmers of hope as vaccine trials begin. We are also in the midst of Oregon's glorious summer, with our coveted blue-sky days to lift our hearts.

The church is seeking to respond to the needs of the day on several fronts. In responding to the virus season, our re-opening task group has adopted the guidelines you'll find in the Spire. Our singing, corporate prayer, communion, and inter-generational community, the things that make us value church life, sadly also increase risk for conveying the virus. You'll note that the plan doesn't include a firm timeline, as the timing of re-opening and gathering will vary based on public health regulations. We've included broad timeframes that the group views as hopeful, including the thought that if the way be clear, it would be wonderful to gather for Christmas Eve worship.

In responding to other significant events of the summer of 2020 which have come about in response to the tragic killing of George Floyd, the church Session has appointed a response group to guide the Session and congregation as we reflect on how the broader church and society have not heeded the call of the prophet to "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God." Through reading, reflection, discussion, and a range of responses from protest to prayer, we are grappling with what the church's Confession of 1967 called our own "complicity in injustice," and how faithful discipleship responds to the challenges of this season.

Through all that this summer has held, I remain so thankful for you, our church members and friends, as you have been remarkable in your faithfulness and understanding. Those among us in their later years are teaching us how to remain resilient and hope-filled, and with wisdom earned by years, reminding us that this too, shall pass. The children among us remind us to delight in each of these days we are given, even in the midst of it all. I'm very glad of our church staff as they continue to steadfastly further our church's work and life with commitment and compassion.

When I felt called into ministry, a passage from II Corinthians was at the heart of that call:

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation,  
that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble,  
with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*

In this time when the needs are so great in our community, our society, and our world, my prayer is that you would know God's comfort, and that together, we would extend the compassion of Christ to all who are bearing the weight of this heavy season. We persevere in faith, trusting that God has yet a future and a hope, for us, and for all the world.

Wishing you strength through these days,

— Audrey



Rev. Audrey Schindler  
Beth Nakamura/The Oregonian

## Church Financial Update!

As the church continues through this virus season, we are grateful to members and friends of the congregation who have kept their support strong through the summer. While stewardship pledges are being fulfilled, the church has had to keep its parking garage closed to the public, as there is not yet sufficient demand for parking downtown to cover the cost of staffing the parking kiosk. (A smaller number of monthly parkers continue to use the garage). The parking garage usually generates about \$180,000 annually in support of the church's life and work, so the Session is taking this into account in planning for a lean year ahead.

As church members are finishing their capital campaign pledges this fall, those for whom this is possible are encouraged to consider increasing their gifts to the church's ongoing work, perhaps continuing to include an amount like that which they gave annually to the capital campaign, directing it to the church's work in the year ahead. We are aware that some members have curtailed circumstances in this time, so are glad of additional gifts that others might share in this season. Please be in touch with our Church Business Administrator, Marc Lavender ([cba@firstpresportland.org](mailto:cba@firstpresportland.org)), or Elders Bill Nelson and Jon Bates if you would like further detail on the church's finances. And thanks again, so much, for your continued faithfulness to First Pres!

## Thanks to Bonnie!

Bonnie Garcia is retiring at the end of the month after serving for the past five years as our CBA, the Church Business Administrator. We are grateful for her good work in this wide-ranging role, which includes church finances, facilities and staff. Bonnie has background as a spiritual director, and has brought gifts of faith and spirit to this role. She will be much missed. She is retiring to a new home in Springfield, Oregon, and we wish her every blessing for a well-earned retirement! If you would like to contribute to a parting gift for her, you may designate gifts for this both in our online giving, or by noting on your check that the gift is for Bonnie's farewell.



Bonnie Garcia retires this Summer

## Congratulations to Brenna!

Congratulations to Rev. Brenna Dykman, who passed her examination for ordination at the Presbytery of the Cascades with flying colors. Brenna is one of the first ministers to have this trial for ordination at a meeting happening online by Zoom video-conferencing. Brenna is a graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary, where she earned three Masters degrees, and has previously served in chaplaincy and in ministry in Hong Kong. We are glad to have her on our pastoral staff as our Interim Associate Pastor, working in pastoral care, Deacons, Mission, and now additionally with youth and adult education. Brenna's ordination will take place on Friday, September 4; it will be live-streamed (with details to follow). Please join in wishing Brenna well on this milestone in her ministry!



Brenna Dykman, Interim Associate Pastor preaching on Sunday, July 26th

## Live Streaming Worship Service — Upgrade Coming Soon

Since March, many of us have been worshipping on Sunday mornings by tuning into our live streaming service. Given the importance of this service to members of our congregation and to others new to our church who have been tuning in — and the fact that it looks like we will be worshipping by live streaming for the time being — the Outreach and Building committees have worked together on a proposal to upgrade our existing cameras to higher resolution ones. We will be working with Delta AV to purchase and install the new cameras, the same company that recently worked on the technology upgrades in the Whitman Room. Funds for the new cameras are part of the Capital Campaign funds set aside for Outreach projects. We should have the new cameras installed by early fall and hope everyone will see an immediate improvement in picture quality.

## “One Church, One Book”

The Racial Justice Response Group recommended and was approved by the Session to use Ibram X Kendi’s book *How to be an Antiracist* for FPC’s ‘One Church One Book’ initiative. Kicking off on August 1st, we are inviting all members of the church to read the book over the next two months and participate in discussion groups in early October. Free e-books and audio recordings are available through the Multnomah County Library ([multcolib.org](http://multcolib.org)) for those who have accounts. The church will also have a number of copies for members to use.

The recommendation comes with the following objective:

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we affirm that ALL human beings are made in the image of God and hold equal value, worth, and dignity (Genesis 1:1-31). We have differences, but God celebrates our uniqueness (Job 38-41). Jesus ministered among every strata of society, and called for the inclusion of all people in God’s Beloved community (Acts 10:34). Both our theological convictions and the Biblical witness compel us to reject every form of injustice, and to speak out against any practice that dehumanizes others. To this end, the Session invites every person at First Presbyterian Church of Portland to consider taking part in a church-wide study of the book *How to be an Antiracist* by Ibram X Kendi to learn and grow in our understanding of systemic racism. May we grow more faithful in the way we relate to one another in our community and beyond.

For more information about this initiative, please contact ([bdykman@firstpresportland.org](mailto:bdykman@firstpresportland.org)).

## How to Avoid Phishing Schemes

One of the pitfalls of the internet era is found in phishing schemes, where unscrupulous people impersonate another person to try to perpetrate a scam. Churches including ours have had scammers adopt fake email addresses, sometimes purporting to be from ministers or other church staff, asking church members to purchase something, often in the guise of helping those in need. If you receive an email that appears to be from one of our staff asking you to purchase something, please do not click any links, and delete the email – or you may wish to forward it to our Church Business Administrator, Marc Lavender, at ([cba@firstpresportland.org](mailto:cba@firstpresportland.org)). Thank you!

## Calvin Library “WebLinks”

### Resources

The Calvin Library is not physically accessible right now due to COVID restrictions. However, the Library Page on the Church website provides “WebLinks” to many resources accessible via the Internet.

Below are directions with several screen shots to help you understand how to access these resources. To access the Calvin Library on your mobile phone, visit (<http://www.firstpresportland.org>).

- On the right upper corner, there are three small white lines. Click on those lines.
- A gray box of “page options” appears. Click on “About Us”.
- A white box appears. Click on “Resources”.
- The “Resources” page appears. Scroll down to “Calvin Library”. Click on the blue box titled “Online Library Catalog”.
- The page below should appear. Locate the pink tab “Web Link resources”. Click on it.
- Then a list of Web Resources from the Presbyterian Church USA will appear. (Please see screenshots below.)



## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

### Faith Formation with Children & Families, Youth, and Adults— New Staffing

For now, the search for a new Director of Christian Education is on hold, as we await more clarity on the budget in this uncertain season. But we're delighted that two of our pastors have passion and heart for taking on parts of this role that are crucial in the life of the church. Rev. Brenna Dykman will support youth and adult education, and Rev. Carmen Goetschius will provide faith formation, working with children and their families. Please join in encouraging them as they take on these additional roles to strengthen the life of the church!

### Open Circle Resumes in September

Open Circle will not meet in August, but we continue to encourage and support each other and the church community through prayer. Please send your weekly prayer request requests to Karol Buxton at: (kkbuxton65@gmail.com) by midnight on Wednesdays. Expect to see Open Circle Prayer Request emails on Thursdays.

Open Circle will **resume meeting on Thursday, September 10**, in accordance with the Session's guidance on social distancing requirements. (We may continue with Zoom, gather in-person, or use a hybrid of the two). Regardless of how we meet, we will continue our study of *Loved Carved in Stone: A Fresh Look at the Ten Commandments* by Eugenia Anne Gamble. It will be very important for all participants to read the lessons before the meeting. To obtain a copy of the book, please order it at: ([www.presbyterianwomen.org/shop](http://www.presbyterianwomen.org/shop)) or by calling (800) 533-4371 (Monday-Friday, from 9 am to 5 pm, Eastern Daylight Time.)

When Open Circle resumes in September, meetings will begin at 10:30 am (instead of 10 am.) Look for reminders in email, the bulletin and other church communications as we draw closer to the start date.

### Books Hand-Delivered to Children and Youth

The leadership of FPC is committed to the faith development of our children and youth. We affirm that Christian discipleship includes a commitment to loving others as Christ commands. In recent weeks we have been reminded that racism still exists in our community, country, and world and as disciples of Jesus Christ we are to reject and actively work against this. To this end, the children and youth of our church have been gifted age-appropriate books that encourage them to recognize the unique value of every human life. These books were hand-delivered by wonderful volunteers and though we cannot gather and meet in ways we are accustomed, our hope is that this small gesture reminds our kids of just how important they are in God's family and the First Presbyterian Church.



### Join the Sound/Streaming Team!

Are you interested in helping with sound and streaming services for our church? Our present team consists of four members who trade off each Sunday, so this is not an every Sunday commitment. We will be upgrading our video system soon. Some experience with a soundboard or video equipment would be helpful, training will be provided. To learn more, please contact Murlan Kaufman ([murlankaufman@aol.com](mailto:murlankaufman@aol.com)).

### Tuesday Women's Book Club

The Tuesday Women's Book Club will meet on Zoom on Tuesday, September 8th from 11 am until noon. You will receive a Zoom invite from Jan Mittelstaedt one week before. The agenda includes voting on the books we will be reading for the 2020-21 season. Happy Summer Reading!"

### Labor Day Retreat Postponed

With restrictions on gathering still in place this summer, we have had to postpone the church's traditional Labor Day Retreat this year, and hope to find ways to gather for fellowship and renewal once gathering is again possible. Our thoughts are with the Menucha staff in this challenging season.

## Open Circle Support for the Rose Haven Shelter

The Rose Haven Day Shelter for Women and Children continues to serve the needs for those experiencing the trauma of abuse, loss of home, and other disruptive life challenges. Due to the COVID safety guidelines, limited donations are currently allowed. The donations list is updated each week on the Rose Haven website. The current needs are: women's leggings and summer tops (all sizes, new or gently used), women's underwear (new, sizes 5-9), body wipes, tents and sleeping bags (new or gently used). The website updates the Shelter's needs and schedule to deliver donations each Monday: (<http://www.rosehaven.org>) -- click on "I wish to help" (red box) -- click on Shopping Bag icon (Donate Supplies). If you have items to donate, but are unable to deliver them, please contact Cindy Finch ([cindyloufinch@yahoo.com](mailto:cindyloufinch@yahoo.com)) for assistance.



## Menucha Hiking Day Passes

Come park at Menucha and enjoy our trails for \$40 per car. Plan accordingly - no food or restrooms are available with a Hiking Day Pass. Payment must be made prior to arrival. Hiking days are Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays only. Call ahead (please no drop-ins) to purchase your day pass and schedule your hike to make sure we have the front gate open for you. (503) 695-2243.

## Stephen Ministry Training Starts in September

Are you interested in helping others by serving as a compassionate and faithful confidential listener? FPC is restarting a Stephen Ministry program; training begins using Zoom in late September. Stephen Ministry equips and empowers lay caregivers—called Stephen Ministers—to provide high-quality, confidential, Christ-centered care to people who are hurting. This program will assist our pastors in following up with persons after they have dealt with the initial period of crisis in their lives. Find more information at ([StephenMinistry.org](http://StephenMinistry.org)). Get answers to your questions and an application to enroll in training from Janet Leatherwood at ([Dmjslwood@comcast.net](mailto:Dmjslwood@comcast.net)) or Bill Resley at ([kayak500@gmail.com](mailto:kayak500@gmail.com)). Applications are due in August and will be sent to Pastor Brenna.

## A Great Cloud of Witnesses

—Greg Homza, *Director of Music Ministries*

Back in late June, I attended the Presbyterian Association of Musicians (PAM) annual worship & music conference in Montreat, NC – virtually, of course. While it would've been nice to experience the fresh air and sweeping views of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and worship (and swap yarns) with people from across the country, it was not to be this year. Somewhat ironically, the theme for this year's conference was "A Great Cloud of Witnesses" (from Hebrews 12:1). I suspect that was chosen long ago, but how appropriate it was since we were all experiencing the conference together over the magic of the internet. When I registered, I didn't quite know what to expect... honestly, I did it mostly to support PAM. But from the first note of the first hymn at the first online worship service, I knew it would be a special week, and it was. Mel Bringle, the Routley lecturer (and chair of the Glory to God hymnal committee), was particularly inspiring. She reminded us often that even though we're not physically together as church, God is still with us, wherever we are.

In other news, you will notice someone new on the organ bench for the Sundays in August! I am very grateful to the Personnel Committee and Session for granting me a 5-week renewal leave, during which my friend and colleague Joseph Pettit will be leading music for worship. Joe studied organ and church music at Pacific Lutheran University and voice at the Academy of Ancient Music Amsterdam. He was Kantor of Norway's historic Røros Kirke with its Baroque organ from 1740. He has appeared as organist with the Seattle Symphony and the Honolulu Symphony, and has been adjunct faculty at Pacific Lutheran University, the University of Hawaii, and Hawaii Pacific University. Joe is currently tenor section leader at First Congregational UCC Portland. I know you will enjoy Joe and his musical offerings. If you would like to send him a note of welcome or thanks, you can email [music@firstpresportland.org](mailto:music@firstpresportland.org) or send to the church office by postal mail.



Joseph Pettit will be leading music for worship for the Sundays in August!

Grace and peace and health to you...

See you in September!

## Exciting news for Menucha!

We have been blessed with a substantial and transformational gift - \$100,000! An anonymous donor has enabled us to complete the work started with our fundraising efforts in 2019 and also purchase new beds, mattresses, and all other furnishings to completely transform the Wright Hall bedrooms. While the designated gift can't be used to cover our fixed costs or make up for lost revenue, we've found that it's had a positive impact on everyone who loves Menucha.



## Sustaining Menucha

As you can imagine, the efforts to keep people safe from Covid-19 have struck at the heart of what we do at Menucha. Our last guest group was in early March, and it's still unknown when it will be safe to fully open. To date, 118 guest groups have canceled, and we also have needed to cancel all but two of our own yearly programs resulting not only in lost revenue, but a large number of refunds.



Through all of this, we know our mission to enrich lives will be needed even more once it's safe to gather. The Revive and Restore Menucha campaign represents a bold effort from the Friends of Menucha Foundation to sustain Menucha through these challenging times. The goal is \$375,000 to cover fixed costs and retain Menucha's core staff. So far, we have secured over \$85,000 in donations from folks. Along with developing new options for revenue, much of our focus will be on ensuring a successful campaign so we can remain a healthy partner and asset for FPC.

While we have no control over the virus or state mandates, we can steward Menucha to give it the best chance for survival and for resuming its important mission. To do this we'll need everyone's help!

## Menucha is Open for Weddings

Could there be a more beautiful place for a wedding? The pandemic means that our usual gatherings of up to 140 people are on hold, so the silver lining for us is being able to say "yes!" when folks call about having a wedding here. Our new wedding webpage ([menucha.org/weddings](http://menucha.org/weddings)) has photographs showing beautiful spots for indoor and outdoor ceremonies. The newlyweds featured in many of the photographs are FPC members Sally and Jerry Fish's daughter Natalie and her husband Michael Hatheway. The webpage also addresses staying safe in these pandemic days and pricing. Cost ranges from an elopement (4 hours rental with maximum of 15 guests) for \$2000 up to full-day wedding (12 hours with maximum guest count determined by Multnomah County phase we're in) for \$3000 - \$3500 depending on what day of the week is booked. This is a limited time offer - now through the end of February. Thank you for spreading the word to anyone you know who might be needing a very special place for a very special date. Call Lauren Deming or Lori Nance to schedule a tour. (503) 695-2243.

## Menucha Personal Retreats!

While we can't have our Labor Day Retreat at Menucha, we can come as individuals and households to enjoy rest and refreshment in a place that nourishes body and soul. Menucha has always offered personal retreats in one building called The Hideaway; now we're offering personal retreats in Creevey, Beam, Lindsey, Ballard, Boyd, and the Barn as well. Wright Hall may be available depending on the scheduling of its ongoing renovation projects. Cost is \$110 per night, per room. A room can be shared by up to 4 persons who live in the same household. We encourage guests on personal retreats to sign up for three wonderful Menucha meals (dinner, breakfast, lunch) at a cost \$45 per adult, \$23.75 per child age 7-12, free for kids up through age 6. Meals will be packaged individually for pick-up at the dining room window. Then guests may choose to eat at tables on the terrace, picnic tables near the pool, a shady spot on the lawn or back in their own building. About the pool: We regret that we are not allowed to open the pool until Multnomah County reaches Phase 2 of pandemic re-opening. Masks, social distancing, and other safety measures are required for the safety of guests and staff. There's full information about pandemic precautions on our website: ([Menucha.org/programs/personal-retreats](http://Menucha.org/programs/personal-retreats)). To book your personal retreat, please call Christine or Mary Anne in the Menucha office at (503) 695-2243.

# Regathering Plan for First Presbyterian

The church's governing body, the Session, has appointed a **re-opening task group** to guide the church in future months to determine how to safely re-open the office, meetings, and eventually worship. They will rely on state and county regulations, health authorities and Presbytery guidance, to safeguard the health of our congregation. As restrictions on gathering lift, the Session will use discretion in deciding when it is wise to again worship together in person.

**CRISIS STAGE:** During this time, beginning March 15, the **church was closed** with limited staffing and worship and programming online.

**STAGE 1 CRITERIA:** *Downward trajectory of COVID-19 cases reported within a 14-day period. Downward trajectory of positive tests as a percent of total tests within a 14-day period. Adequate hospital and treatment capacity with decreasing numbers of infected healthcare workers. Adequate personal protective equipment, testing, tracing, and tracking capabilities*

- **The church campus is closed** except for staff and congregants performing essential church business. Others allowed into the building by appointment. Masks should be worn upon entry to the church, in common areas, and when there is more than one person in the office. Surfaces will be sanitized regularly. Visitors asked to sign in for contact tracing.
- **Continue offering online worship services only.** Life rituals (weddings, funerals, baptism) kept to 10 individuals including clergy in attendance if held at the church
- **Committees and groups continue to meet online.**
- **No youth, children, family activities in the church or mission trips.**
- **Outdoor activities are allowed if size, masks, and distancing are followed; access to the building is not permitted.**
- **Hopeful timeframe:** through fall of 2020

**STAGE 2 CRITERIA:** *Peak has passed according to state health officials*

- **Online worship continues**
- **Small meetings (10 people or fewer) can take place** in-person; protocols for sanitization, sign in for contact tracing, and meetings are in place.
- **Hopeful timeframe:** late fall 2020 or early winter 2021

**STAGE 3 CRITERIA:** *No resurgence of the disease; all indicators continue decline per federal and state criteria. No government orders are in place.*

- **In-person worship resumes** with significant safeguards; no communion elements passed, for offering, people put offering in box at departure, ministers will not process at the beginning of the service, no congregational singing or unison prayers unless public health understanding changes.
- **Follow protocols recommended by health officials for contact tracing, distancing and mandate use of masks.**
- **Hopeful timeframe:** December 2020 if possible or early 2021

**STAGE 4 CRITERIA:** *No resurgence of disease. Disease is still present. No vaccine*

- **Worship in-person** with relaxed safeguards, but adequate spacing for both choir and congregation.
- **Hopeful timeframe:** beginning between April–August 2021

**STAGE 5 CRITERIA:** *Vaccine available. No resurgence of the disease; all indicators continue decline. No government orders are in place*

- **All normal practices may resume** as directed by the church Session.
- **Hopeful timeframe:** Autumn 2021

We ask your prayers for the church as we continue through this extraordinary season, and as we await a time when we can gather back together.

Re-Opening Task Group: Joyce Evans, Jon Bates, Cam Birnie, Bill Nelson, Fran Page, Brenda Peterson, Mary Priedeman, Russell Smith, Steve Snodderly, Pete Vanden Bosch, Amy Wood, Bonnie Garcia, Marc Lavender, Church Business Administrator, Audrey Schindler



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## **Maddy Ross Wins National Voice Competition**



FPC Music Assistant and soprano Section Leader Madeline Ross was named a national champion!

Last month, FPC Music Assistant and soprano Section Leader Madeline Ross was named a **national champion** in the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) National Student Auditions! The competition was supposed to be held in-person in Knoxville, TN, but was instead held online via YouTube. NATS invited competitors to submit five song selections via video, which were reviewed by judging panels for the Regional, National Preliminary, National Final, and Grand Final rounds. Maddy created her videos back in February and had been crossing her fingers ever since! For the Grand Final, she was asked to choose just one of the videos, and chose a German language art song titled “Amor” by Richard Strauss. The video of the full event (including all 14 categories of singers) can be found at the link below. Maddy’s winning performance in the Advanced Classical Treble Voice category begins at 3:10:45. If you’d like to see all of the videos she submitted for the preliminary rounds, you can find them on her YouTube channel, also linked below. Congratulations, Maddy!

NATS National Student Association Finals –

<https://youtu.be/LCVoHYpQKEU>

Maddy’s YouTube channel –

<https://www.youtube.com/user/madLross>