



THE SPIRE

JULY 2020

The Presbyterian Church in Westfield, NJ

From our Senior Pastor

Dear Friends who are The Presbyterian Church in Westfield,

“With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fulness of time, to gather up all things in him, things on heaven and things on earth.”
~ The Letter to the Ephesians

I have been reflecting on these words from one of my favorite letters in all of scripture over the past several weeks. The phrases “wisdom and insight” and “fulness of time” and “gather up all things” have been co-mingling in a veritable fugue. On some days I have been convinced it is all bunk. On other days the passage has given me great hope. At the end of the day, these words have given me room and space to name how much I miss you all, and how deeply I wish we were able to *regather* in the halls of the buildings we use to learn, connect, serve, and most important, worship.

Our Session has been working with leadership teams for some weeks now to gain “wisdom and insight” into the mystery that is regaining access to our buildings in ways that can be safe for all. It is an immense challenge. To accomplish this goal our Session has formed a new task force made up of ministry team leaders to explore specifically if and how we could safely resume in-person worship out of doors. This team (Lisa Black, Amy Cummings, Ethan Harris, Barbara McLaughlin, Courtney Nemec, and Michael Quinlan) will be working closely to bring a report to Session in early July with specific guidelines for regathering and to provide Session with the tools necessary to assess whether a group satisfies these guidelines when seeking use of space. In establishing these guidelines, these leaders will continue to abide by the NJ government guidelines for stages of reentry (we are currently in Stage 2), and the accompanying guidelines adopted on June 10th by our own Presbytery of Elizabeth that can be accessed online at their website: elizabethpresbytery.org.

The circumstances around regathering can get overwhelming rather quickly and there are many variables to consider. I ask for your prayers for this Task Force and our Session as we continue to work to discover when “in the fulness of time” we will be gathered together in person once more.

Until that time, we will continue to connect over the phone and through social media, including our remote weekly worship services.

Yours in service,
Jeremy

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Worship Commission

The Worship Commission is so grateful for the efforts and devotion of our Worship leaders, Jeremy, Cindy, Paul, Kevin, and Amy. They have provided us with wonderful online and printed worship services and devotions that have attracted many people to the word of God and are sustaining us through this unusual time. We look forward to all they are led to share with us in the coming months.

We want to thank them for all the time they have put into their preparation for their part of the service or devotion and then the time they have put into their presentation. Because we do not have any editing equipment or software each presentation has probably been taped several times until each of them has perfected it to their satisfaction.

Bringing the service to life, truly takes a Village. Thank you to our choir members and band musicians for the time and effort each of you have put into your music presentations. Thank you to Paul and Kevin who merge the recordings together with any additional organ, piano, or keyboard music into the beautiful musical pieces we have enjoyed.

We are grateful for the efforts of Lou Ann Kaplonski and Betty Born who create the weekly worship packets and Bill, Carole, and Steffie Cook and Jane Collins who deliver the packets each Friday. They are key to our ability to stay connected with our members who have no electronic access. We thank each of you very much.

None of this could have been achieved to the quality it has without the help of some skilled members. Thank you Brooke May and Mike Canavan for your time and help in working with our leaders to provide the best online quality experience, for identifying technology to improve the quality with less effort and for tracking visitors to our online services and sites as we continue to embrace online worship. All of these changes required that web site changes. Thank you Linnette Cierpial, who volunteered to return to work part time, updating and improving of our site.

Our heartfelt thanks to each of you for helping us to build connections to the online world and the people in it and giving us the opportunity to spread the word of our Lord Jesus Christ in this new environment.



Notwithstanding our current circumstances, spring sprung, Easter came, summer came, and there will be Light that will emerge. Social distancing does not mean spiritual distancing. God has promised in Jeremiah 29:11 that He has a plan for us. Whether in a contemporary church setting, a traditional church setting or an online church setting, we're still church. While we exited the church doors, we did not 'leave' the church...**we ARE** the church, and we still seek ways to show that to others.

WAYS TO GIVE TO PCW

Online Bill Pay - EasyTithe - Givelify - Zelle (designate fund)

Cash - Check

*Or on the PCW website: westfieldpc.org,
click on "Give" tab, and follow the directions.*

From Our Music Director

Thank you, choir!

The only certainty in life is change, and we've all had our share lately, that's for sure. In worship planning, we've worked hard to infuse with meaning our worship through online platforms, while at the same time achieving some continuity between worship "before" and now. I've been asked how the choir recordings that you've heard in these recent months were made - a common question is "were those recorded 'before'?" No, we've made those recordings since we began our pause from gathered-in-person worship. The short version of our process is: 1) I make a "master" recording of the parts in a given song; 2) choir members (each using the "master" to ensure consistency) make individual recordings of their parts and send those to me; 3) through a computer program I do my best to combine all of the individual tracks and hopefully help us to sound as though we're singing together in person.

Thank you, choir, for - continuing to raise your voices in song, all the time, gathered in one time and space or not. I know that Kevin and the wired band have used a similar process to record music for worship -- thanks also to Kevin and the band for all of your music.

I know that we've all had to make many changes in how we live our day-to-day lives. While it is true that our congregational life might look different in its outward appearance, it is very much the same in that we continue to teach and learn together, worship and pray together, care for each other and our community (near and far) together, and enjoy each other's company -- in fellowship and meetings -- most often virtually -- but enjoying just the same. I'm always glad to be part of the PCW community, and look forward every day to living out our mission with all of you. Thank you everyone for walking together through this chapter of our church life.

All best wishes for an enjoyable and healthy summer.

Peace be with you.

-Paul

Rev. Cindy Bowman

Dear PCW family,

As I write this last Spire article, I have recorded my last devotion and worship service and I am waiting to greet some of you on Sunday, the 28th. I struggled with what to say to all of you in worship but all I can say to you now is THANK YOU. Yet that doesn't adequately express my feelings. I am so grateful for those of you who have shared your lives with me and together we have participated in ministry. We have laughed, cried, questioned and worked hard to forward Christ's ministry through our efforts. Over the last 5 years we have worshipped, prayed, learned and grown together as boards, commissions and groups. I have been inspired by your faith in Christ, impressed by your commitment to the tasks placed before you and touched by your kindness and care for me and for those you ministered to.



To the Senior Network, I am so thankful for the church painting but even more for the relationships we have developed over the years. You have brought much joy to me and to others. To the Board of Deacons, thank you so much for the painting and all the cards and notes. To all the PCW members who have encouraged, supported and cared for me, I am so overwhelmed by all your kind words and gifts. I am humbled that Christ has used me in so many ways to touch your lives.

As we now minister in different places, I will cherish the relationships that were developed and pray that God will continue to use PCW in the future for God's glory.

Thank you for the ministry and friendships we shared. With a grateful heart and may God's blessings be upon you.

- Cindy

PS: I want to thank you for coming by on Sunday for the 'drive through' to say hi and goodbye and wish me well. It was so nice to see so many of you, even through our masks!! Thank you so much for the gifts, the kind words acknowledging God had used me at PCW to touch so many of your lives, and the many cards and notes. I am so grateful for all your kindnesses and support. I will cherish the time I had with you and pray that God will continue to use you for His glory.

Clothing Drive Sets A Record!

Our sixth and final truck picked up the remaining bags from the Clothing Drive last Thursday! (In our previous clothing drives, we only filled half the truck!)

Many thanks to everyone who donated or volunteered and moved bags during the last five weeks! The amount of donations exceeded all expectations. Thank you, we are incredibly grateful! More than 50 youth and adults helped during the 5 days of gathering bags and 4 days of truck loading. A big thank you also goes to LouAnn and Jim whose assistance was critical. This was truly a team effort. Each and everyone of you are a blessing!

Rest assured that every penny raised through the Clothing Drive will be put towards food purchases for our Agape Community Kitchen guests in Elizabeth. We hope to restart Agape soon. Stay tuned for our exciting plans!

- Janet Smith



Faith Formation

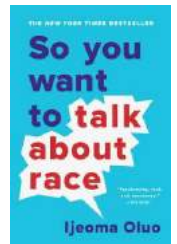
Virtual Vacation Bible Camp 2020 (VVBC 2020)

We are excited to provide a unique Vacation Bible Camp experience for our church and community this summer with “Emmanuel - God With Us”, July 5th (kick-off night) - July 9th. Packets of crafts to coordinate with Bible stories of people who were isolated and alone, but always had God with them will be provided to all participants as we spend a week together with evening Zoom meetings. We will have all of the elements of our usual vacation bible camp with stories, crafts, music, mission and lots of fun, but this summer the children and their families can participate no matter where they are. We are grateful to all of our volunteers who will be helping with Bible stories, crafts and music to create a wonderful VVBC experience for all!



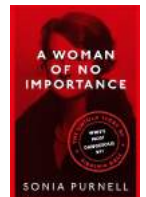
Summer Zoom Book Group

In response to the discussions on racial equality, social justice and the need for education and change, Faith Formation will sponsor a book discussion in mid-August on the book, “So you want to Talk about Race?” by Ijeoma Oluo. Everyone is encouraged to participate. Books are available through Amazon, but can also be ordered through the Town Book Store. We will schedule a Zoom meeting in August to discuss. Any questions, please contact Lisa Black, lmb.blacklaw@gmail.com. We look forward to having more discussion and education opportunities in the fall to keep the discussion going and to live out Christ’s call for us to love one another and “do justice.”



Lunch and a Book

The summer book is, “A Woman of No Importance” by Sonia Purnell. It is the true story of a Baltimore socialite who joined a spy organization during World War II. We will discuss this book in September (hopefully). It is available online and can also be ordered through the Town Bookstore.



Sunday School programs for children and adults will continue through the summer

Adults:

- Questers continues to meet each week, led by Nancy Smith
- Serendipity is led by Robin Hoy

For Children:

Lessons and crafts are on the church website for children each week.

We hope you will consider participating in these programs that will help you grow in your faith and community. Socially distanced isn't socially absent - we are still a community of faith!

Weedy Workers

A dedicated group of workers has been weeding, mulching and pruning our beautiful campus this spring. Special thanks to all of our Weedy Workers - Jane Francz, Nancy Smith, Carolyn Fleder, Leslie Bischoff, Donna Vassel, Bruce Vassel, Hans Polak, Lisa Colao, Pam Kolb, Claudia Heffner, Logan Elfstrum and Lisa Black. We will continue through the summer every Saturday morning from 9:30-11:00.

Please join in - there are always weeds to pull and friends to make. Contact Lisa Black for more information:

lmb.blacklaw@gmail.com



Thank you to everyone who continues to keep our campus beautiful!

YOUTH

Congratulations to PCW Seniors! Look for a senior video coming soon to PCW Youth social media.



All youth: Please continue to check all PCW Youth social media. We will post updates if it becomes safe to gather as a community.

If you need anything please reach out to Courtney Nemec 908-400-1787 or Emily Parkinson 908-313-9347.

PCW Youth is continuously praying for all of you. We miss you and love you!

Theology Discussion Group

Join our Next Discussion

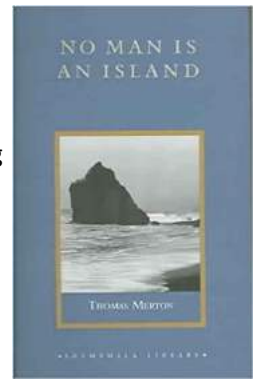
We invite you to join us as we read and reflect on Thomas Merton's *No Man Is an Island*. We will be reading this book throughout the summer and will meet via Zoom beginning on Monday, September 21, 2020, 7:30-9pm. Beginning in October, we will meet on the first and third Monday evenings from 7:30-9pm of each month, reflecting on 2 chapters during each meeting.

"This is a powerful, classic work by a deeply thoughtful man of God. There are many topics beyond hope, of course. But at the core of the book is a longing for God, a longing that is powered by the hope Merton has in God. You finish the book feeling challenged, enriched, and eager. Each of the sixteen essays, on such topics as Sincerity, Mercy, and Vocation, have a hopeful quality about the human spiritual life. There is an assurance here that comes from the faith of the author, which of course stems from the God of his faith."

Merton was a Trappist Monk who deeply followed the traditions of Christian Catholicism. He studied, taught and inspired a broad following of seekers in the mystical elements of following Christ. He believed that, for the most part, Christianity had forsaken its mystical tradition in favor of Cartesian emphasis on "the reification of concepts, idolization of the reflexive consciousness, flight from being into verbalism, mathematics, and rationalization." Eastern traditions, for Merton, were mostly untainted by this type of thinking and thus had much to offer in terms of how to think of and understand oneself.

Merton found many parallels between the language of these Christian mystics and the language of Eastern philosophy.

Look for announcements of dates and times in the Friday e-blasts. All are welcome. Please contact Alan Smith (alandsmith518@gmail.com) for more information.



NJFO—Planning for Post Covid-19

A moderate plan that focuses on the safety of patrons and keeps in mind the financial challenges of COVID-19 is in the works for the New Jersey Festival Orchestra's 2020-21 season, the orchestra's director said.

While coronavirus cut the last season short, Music Director David Wroe said, the NJFO is in identifying concept plans for the next season, selecting specific music and identifying soloists.

"I am of the strong belief that arts are an essential part of the fabric of our society — bonding people in solidarity and creating a culture of mutual empathy and understanding to form a collective community spirit," Wroe said. "I cannot imagine a time when a catalyst such as music is more needed. It is with this motivation that we at the NJ Festival Orchestra are resolute in planning for the future by presenting a 2020-21 season."

The season, he said, will be more modest than usual due to the financial challenges COVID-19 has presented.

"Realizing dreams are built upon the backbone of a sound operational plan, we have recognized the unprecedented financial pressure the pandemic has inflicted upon individuals and companies, thereby limiting the life blood of an orchestra such as ours — revenue through donations and ticket sales," Wroe said.

When the orchestra is permitted to play for audiences, he said, it will ensure the audience is safe.

"We are presently designing a comprehensive concert protocol which incorporates CDC guidelines to hold a large gathering," Wroe said. "Sterilization, social distancing, personal protective equipment, and instantaneous temperature taking are all strategies under consideration."

Among the performances set for the season is the NJFO's "Opera's Ultimate odd Couple," which is to feature the coupling of I Pagliacci and Wagner's Die Walkure (Act 1)," Wroe said.

February 2021 will see a multi community commemorative concert to, simultaneously, remember those lost to the pandemic and celebrate the front-line workers," he added. "These are just some of the exciting plans in the pipeline for NJFO's devotees."



Happy Birthday!

July 1
Kuebler, Stevie
Yucetepe, Erin

July 2
Enes, Jean

July 3
Murtishaw, Susan
Case, Meredith
Hannah, Jessica

July 4
Embry, Jesse
Fitzhenry, Michael
McGrail, Jasni

July 5
Hein, Gail
Purachev, Greg

July 6
Hanscom, Beth
Ringk, Barbara
Peterson, Erin
Shpunder, Tyler

July 7
Kleespies, Paul
Dackow, Kirk

July 8
Burslem Jr, Bob
Smith, Holly
Falzone, Garrett
Stravach, Matthew
Festa, Jenna

July 9
Manning, Todd
Cook, Melissa
Connor, Jonathan
Campbell, Alexa

July 10
Bonsall, Bill
Smith, Emily

July 11
Shpunder, Lisa
Ward, Daniel
Quinlan, Siobhan

July 12
Haag, Andrew
Donatelli, Phillip

July 13
Robinson, Ann
Cook, Susan
Venturino, Coral
Koetje, Noelle
Yang, Kelly
Ciotti, Charlotte

July 14
Doyle, Linda
Stravach, Samantha

July 15
St. Laurent, Marcia
Kefalonitis, Barbara
Falzone, Donna

July 16
Lung, Olivia
Hoy, Chris
Knauss, Avery
Peterson, Austin
Fiory, Brenna

July 17
Bredlau Jr, Peter
Heber, David
Kehler, Jackson
Kehler, Laurajane
Kehler, Will

July 18
Potok, Rob
Williams Jr, Don
Fraitess, Chris
Perry, William
Howell, Genevieve

July 19
Palia, Carlene
Chen, Patricia
Bungerz, Danny

July 20
Lau, Jim
VanWyk, Amara
May, Gregory

July 21
Smith, Bob
Purachev, Katherine
Purachev, Laina
Kim, Alexander

July 22
Straight, Marylyn

July 24
Horner, Barbara
Sawers, Abigail

July 25
Farley, Audrey
Wheaton III, Rolla
Loggie, Connor

July 26
Tittle, Sharon
Pollino, Gary
Mora, Angelina

July 27
Hannah, Dave

July 28
Hein, Al
Kehler, Doug
York, Steve
Singleton, Tina
Morano, Gregory
Demers, Abigail

July 29
Colao, Steve
Thomas, Barbara
Enders, Abby

July 30
Bigelow, Amanda

July 31
DeMartino, Tony
Yang, Jeffrey
Heim, Nina



If you don't see your birthday listed, please contact the church office. We will be happy to add your name to the Birthday list!



THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN
WESTFIELD

140 Mountain Avenue, Westfield, NJ 07090

Sunday Worship Schedule

Reflection and Prayer every Sunday
at 10am on [Facebook Live](#).

facebook.com/PCWestfield

Sunday School

Visit our online Sunday School for lessons, crafts and
activities— available any day of the week!

westfieldpc.org/sunday-school-lessons/

Do you have news to share?

If you have great news to share with PCW
such as, an engagement, anniversary,
adoption, baptism, birth, etc., please email
a picture and a short paragraph to
spire@westfieldpc.org to be featured!

We'd love to celebrate with you!

CONTACT US

westfieldpc.org | wired4worship.com
908-233-0301 | Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm



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