



April 30, 2020

Presbytery News

Homestead Presbytery Guidance Regarding Resuming In-Person Activities of Churches in the Days of COVID-19

The Leadership Team* of Homestead Presbytery met on Monday to discuss the reopening of churches within our bounds. After prayer and a good amount of discussion we offer the following guidance:

That no in-person worship takes place until such a time that there is additional guidance from government, medical community, and health officials.

This guidance is based on recommendations by the Office of the General Assembly PC(USA) and in the White House guidance document, "Opening America." <https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/#criteria> The White House document states there must be a decrease in COVID-19 cases for a minimum of 14 continuous days and assurance from state health officials that Nebraska has achieved Phase 1 category and have entered Phase 2. Nebraska has not yet reached that goal. State health officials say that the peak of the pandemic won't hit Nebraska for another week to two weeks. The Leadership Team will continue to offer guidance to the congregations in Homestead Presbytery as new information becomes available.

These are not easy times. Life has changed as we know it. Change is happening at a much faster pace than most any of us have ever experienced. Grief is abundant. Hope is not yet tangible for us doubting Thomases. We want to do what is right, not only for ourselves, but for our community, country, and world, but there are so many different voices speaking to us. Faced with these challenges every day, I have appreciated my colleague's, The Rev. Aisha Brooks-Lytle, executive presbyter of the Presbytery of

Greater Atlanta, words in an article from the Presbyterian News Service: *Flattening the curve means keeping churches closed for now*, says (https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/flattening-the-curve-means-keeping-churches-closed-for-now-leaders-say/?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Daily+Coronavirus+briefing+and+News+from+the+Presbyterian+Church+%28U+S+A%29&utm_campaign=Covid-19-daily+news+-+April+24%2C+2020)

“The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth to encourage them in their midst of differences on whether or not it was a good idea to participate in a practice that was offensive to some and not a big deal to others. He offers a prophetic word that holds true for us as we strive to be a prophetic witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul reminds us that ‘all things are lawful, but not all things are beneficial. All things are lawful, but not all things build up (1 Corinthians 10:23).’ Friends, it may be lawful to begin to open the doors of the church, but it is not beneficial for churches to open at this time when we think of those who could be put in harm’s way due to the coronavirus.” In summary, Brooks-Lytle writes, “Church, keep doing what you have been doing by praying, offering virtual services, being generous to those in need, and flattening the curve by staying at home.”

Please continue our effective efforts at distancing. Our governor has asked us to continue to stay home, and it remains crucial. We are in this together, and everything we do now in the name of safety and prevention—in this case, staying away from each other—affirms the importance of community. We also need to consider what first steps toward selective re-opening might be, when that time is right. Presbytery leadership would like to think with you about that over the coming weeks. Two helpful resources to assist in our thinking about and planning for in person worship can be found in these links:

24 Questions Your Church Should Answer Before People Return

<https://kenbraddy.com/2020/04/18/20-questions-your-church-should-answer-before-people-return/?fbclid=IwAR0ibnVAjEw5JSoJFm9GjM9be50-s3liwIHmX0tNXICWXUgTtcxy2fTMSDY>

RETURNING TO CHURCH – Ministry during the COVID-19 outbreak Wisconsin Council of Churches

<https://www.wichurches.org/2020/04/23/returning-to-church/>

In this season of Easter we celebrate new life. The last several weeks have been filled with a lot of loss, pain, grief, and changes that we don’t like. We see, feel, experience, and internalize this every day. But! We have also discovered new ways of being the church together, different ways to serve and give, and maybe even a renewed understanding of and commitment to being in community, with each other, our neighbors, and our Creator. Thank you for all your work, efforts, faithfulness, selflessness, creativity, and commitments. I join you in thanking God for these gifts: God is Good, All the Time, God is Good!

Stephen Earl
Interim Executive

From the Church Vitality Committee

There is a song that seems appropriate about now *"We Are The Church"*. I'm guessing you remember it; *"I am the church, you are the church, we are the church together....The church is not the building...the church is a people."*

At the Vital Congregations gathering hosted by our Presbytery earlier this year the comment was made; *"The 21st Century Church is going to look more like the 1st Century Church than the 20th Century."* How exciting!

Between the song, the thought of the 1st Century church and the world we're all living and worshiping through right now - we should be asking some key questions. Like; *"What's Next?"* Or *"How will we be The Church tomorrow?"*

One thought, continue to dig down, use the gifts of all The Church (every person) to go and make disciples. It's all that easy, and it's all that hard. So, let's start the conversation and then get out there, even if it means getting creative with doing things virtually for a while.

"Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" I Corinthians 3:16

Chris Hansen
Co-op 513



Presbytery
ASSEMBLY

In these times of social distancing, we have decided that for the safety of everyone, the May 21st Stated Meeting will be conducted via Zoom. We will be having a walk through of the program prior to the 21st for those who are new to Zoom or would like a little practice before the meeting so **STAY TUNED** for more information on that! Make sure you register below! If you aren't registered we won't know to send you the Zoom link for the meeting!

[Register for Presbytery!](#)

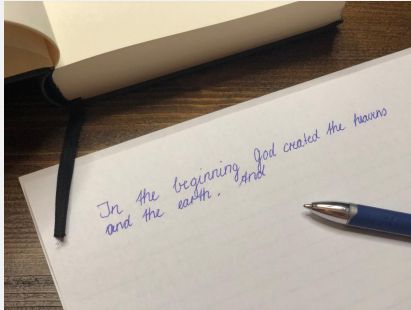
FRAUD ALERT - URGENT

There is a scam email being sent to Church members asking you to purchase gift cards. Members at Westminster have been victim to this scam.



Please **DO NOT RESPOND** to it! It is a fraud attempt.

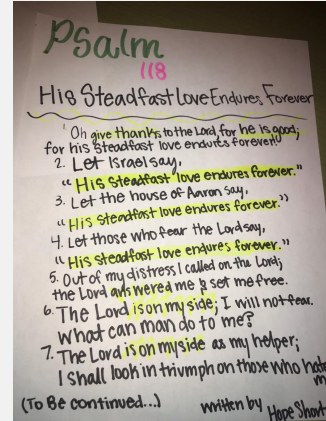
Be assured that a Church staff member will **NEVER SOLICIT YOU** in this manner.



Creativity Amid Chaos: The Nebraska Corona Bible

A project both daunting and intriguingly simple: People all across the Cornhusker State are copying the whole Bible in their own handwriting. Envisioned as a means to stay connected beyond the digital divide, the Nebraska Corona Bible will be a time capsule of these unprecedented times and a powerful testimony of hope amid this crisis.

In order to write the whole Christian Bible using individuals' handwriting or calligraphy, we are looking for 1,189 writers who each commit to copy a chapter of the Old or New Testament. Contributors are also welcome to add a short personal commentary, illustrations or artistic interpretations to their passage. Thus, the Bible is re-created in light of our questions and fears, but also our hope and trust as a testimony to this time of crisis ([Read entire news release here](#))



To participate or learn more, please check out the website www.nebraskacoronabible.com and sign up today for your favorite text.

Contact:

Rev. Thomas Dummermuth
Eastridge Presbyterian Church
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402-817-9642

Weekly Homestead Zoom Forum



WEEKLY ZOOM FORUM

FAITH, NOT FEAR.



Click the video above to watch yesterday's Zoom forum. They happen weekly on Wednesday's at 1pm. Click the link below to register. You will receive a confirmation e-mail from Zoom with the link to connect to the meeting.

Register
now!

Weekly Prayer Requests

Steele City

With our sister churches in the local community and across the Presbytery, we remain closed to gathering for worship during the pandemic. Pastoral care is provided as personally yet safely as possible. We look forward to reengaging in worship and fellowship as soon as possible, without endangering our more vulnerable members. We pray that God's preserving hand protects our small congregation and community.

Homestead Presbytery

840 S. 17th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508

Monday-Thursday 9:00am-4:00pm

Friday 9:00am-12:30pm

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