



\*\*Earlier edition had the wrong scripture noted below.

*May 14, 2020*

## Presbytery News

### **"be wise as serpents and as gentle as doves" - Matthew 10:16**

Like everyone else, not in my wildest dreams could I have ever imagined life as we have all known it for the past two and a half months! In ever so many ways, I feel very blessed isolated in my villa. Yet social distancing, covid-19, hunker down, self-quarantine, testing – testing – testing, longing for Clorox wipes and toilet paper fill all our minds; to say nothing of working at home – or no work to go to – food scarcity – contamination. Think of all the new words we've added to our vocabulary! And the tears, the sadness of realizing the terrible reality of deaths in the thousands – daily! The efforts to find a "bright spot" – joy – a moment of grace in the midst of these days.

Without doubt, one scripture verse I am living by these days is the instruction from Jesus in Matthew (10:16) that tells us to "be wise as serpents and as gentle as doves" as we go about our days – including addressing the question "When can/should we resume in person worship in our churches?"

As moderator of the Disaster Team for our Presbytery I have had the opportunity to attend several webinars and zoom calls talking about the "when" of resuming worship in person. And the suggestions vary from "absolutely no in person worship until the building is professionally cleaned and attendees have preregistered to attend, coming with nothing except their offering (to be collected at the door) and their car keys in their hand where they will be masked and sitting six feet apart" to "open the doors and holler everybody come in."

I think the answer is somewhere in the midst of those two extremes. And the answer will vary depending on the location of the congregation/church; the level of the covid-19 virus in the immediate area; and other personal considerations that each session/congregation/pastor will need to make after prayer, conversation (talking AND listening), and prayer again.

I have been asked to share some additional thoughts I have gleaned in these meetings with you – beyond the excellent resources we are trying to keep current on the presbytery website. If you have NOT yet checked those out, please do so and include them by sharing with all people involved in conversations

regarding when/how/if your congregation resumes in person worship. And remember, the Disaster Team stands ready to help with resources and referrals as needed – please be in touch!

Some other things I've heard this week that I think are significant, include:

- \*\*\*communicate, communicate, communicate with the congregation – keep people aware of plans being discussed – with the clarification that times and situations may change the direction or timing of future actions
- \*\*\*make friends with the Emergency Manager of your town or county – they have the most current “official” statistics about an area and are an excellent source of information – that’s part of their job, not to tell you what to do but to give you facts
- \*\*\*remember that testing may provide important information FOR THE MOMENT, but the testing is not yet widespread; results take time to be read and reported (and the status of someone could change in the meantime); and testing should not be the only factor in a decision to return to in-person worship
- \*\*\*realize that “one size does NOT fit all” in this situation. Just because so and so has resumed in person worship, it may (or may not) be time for your congregation to do so as well. Do not be pressured into “joining the crowd if it is not the time.”
- \*\*\*this is listed on some of the resources elsewhere, but I am hearing repeatedly “check with your insurance carrier” for any unexpected restrictions – this was not one I would have thought of, so mention it as it seems to come up often
- \*\*\*realize that for MOST (but perhaps not some) congregations, in person worship as it was in February, 2020 will likely not be a reality for some time – perhaps for a long time. That does NOT mean there will not be in person worship, it simply means it may look different than before.

In closing, I am reminded of one speaker’s conclusion that the covid-19 virus is no less deadly today than it was the first day anyone heard of it. However, we are understanding more and more about it all the time AND we are adapting and modifying our lives to live within the restrictions of this time. Which brings me back to the scripture I began with – may we do so, living as wise as serpents and as gentle as doves.

Blessings,  
Sue Babovec

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## From the Church Vitality Committee

In these troubled times we are searching like never before for the one thing which seems to elude us at this moment in history. It does not seem to be within our reach. The constant flow of bad news, the uncertainty of what normal is, and the physical distance between us all adds to the absence of this one thing we all need. Yet, it is with us always.

A sense of peace is what many of us are searching for and the good news is it is with us always in the form of the Holy Spirit. “Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” John 20:21-22.

And the best news of all the Holy Spirit allows us to look past our own insecurities and break our preoccupation with ourselves and frees us to serve neighbors, according to the PCUSA website. And this is especially true today throughout our

country as we hear story after story of people looking out for their neighbors, people volunteering to take care of strangers, and all of us making sure our extended families have their needs met. At my church it has seen us delivering Easter yard signs to members, the youth director developing fun videos, the minister finding a way for us to be included in the worship service and most of all, us looking out for each other in a more intentional way.

As we celebrate Pentecost, we are reminded that although we are distanced for safety, we are united in the presence of the Holy Spirit with us. Until we can be together again, please remember you are loved, and with the Holy Spirit, you are never alone.

Doris Martin,  
Elder at First Presbyterian Church, Beatrice

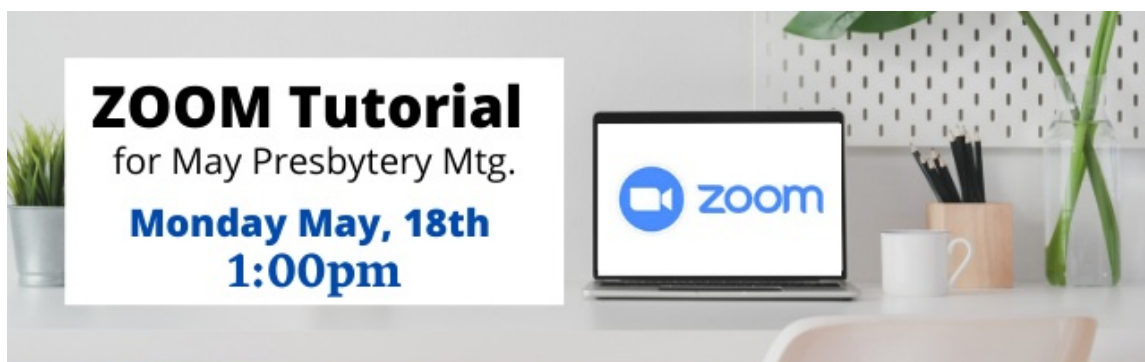


## Presbytery ASSEMBLY

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.**

Make sure you register below for Presbytery next Thursday the 21st by clicking below! If you aren't registered we won't know to send you the Zoom link for the meeting!

[Register for Presbytery!](#)



We will be having a walk through/tutorial on Monday, May 18th at 1pm. of some of the Zoom features you will need to know how to use for the Presbytery meeting. You can register for this by clicking the blue button below. Don't worry if you can't make this one...we also plan to log in about 30 min early on the day of the Presbytery to be available for any last minute questions.

# Ministry Leaders Summit

May 26,  
9:00 AM – 11:00 AM CDT  
Zoom



Join Ministry professionals across denominations and positions for the 2020 Ministry Summit presented by Leadership Harbor, in collaboration with Great Plains Small Church Connection, the Presbyterian Pastoral Care Network and Ministry Leadership Institute. **This free event** will provide paid and volunteer leaders across various ministry areas an opportunity to learn and then discuss how we're leading during this new time in our world and ministry.

Pastors, Worship Leaders, Tech/AV Teams, Childrens, Youth, Young Adult Ministry Leaders, Bible Study Leaders, Office Staff, ANYONE who works (paid & volunteer) in your Church setting. Big Church, Small Church and Everything in between!

[Register and Learn More](#)

## Leading in Tumultuous Times

**Online Series**

Attending to one's leadership is more important than ever in this time of adaptive challenge and change. Equally important is staying connected to our spiritual source—the two go hand in hand, actually. Join us for a series of month-long online leadership courses, where we'll explore our own spiritual formation as leaders, adaptive leadership and leadership in general, and what it is to be a wise leader.

*Challenge* *better* *Overcome* *Survive* *Leadership* *Innovative* *Learn* *Progressive* *Responsive* *Improve* *flexible* *Solutions* *Transforms* *develop* *EVOLVING* *Modify*

OPSF is offering fully paid scholarships for the June online Adaptive Leadership series.

Only 12 available so sign up today! Scholarships for the June series are available to all Pastors & CP's in our 13 state region as well as all PLR participants .

Be sure to mark your registration "OPSF" or "PLR" with the "Organization/Affiliation" dropdown on the registration form to receive the scholarship.

[Register Now!](#)



**PRESBYTERIAN  
DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE

**URGENT: COVID-19** devastation escalates.  
**YOUR HELP IS NEEDED NOW**



In some communities, churches are barely making ends meet. They're facing the reality of running out of money. They worry about how they're going to pay their bills — much less support a pastor or provide critical services in their neighborhoods.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) is here to help — again

In the PC(USA), we are blessed that Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, our disaster response ministry, is already at work with presbyteries and its network of partners to rush critical aid to those who are suffering as a result of COVID-19. Thanks to the longstanding generosity of the whole Church, through gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing and other gifts from generous Presbyterians and congregations, PDA is providing vital provisions where needed — food and water, hygiene and sanitation supplies, training and more.

If you are able, please help us [Give](#), Act and Pray now.

**GIVE:**

- Support Presbyterian Disaster Assistance's emergency response and long-term recovery work as well as ministry continuation funding for congregations experiencing great needs during COVID-19 by making a gift today. Designate gifts to E052197 – Matthew 25.
- You can also give by phone at (800) 872-3283.

**ACT:**

- Wash your hands and stay at home. While we value the ministry of presence, currently the best way to care for others is to observe good hygiene and

physical distancing.

- Celebrate the life-sustaining, generous engagement of congregations across the nation who are serving communities made more vulnerable by COVID-19's impact on their lives.
- Repudiate the hateful, racist actions and expressions that have targeted siblings of Asian descent during this pandemic.

**PRAY:**

- Seek comfort and hope in the Risen Lord who is always with us, sustaining and supporting us through every season of life.

Thanks in advance for your generosity.

In faith,

The Rev. Dr. Diane Givens Moffett  
President and Executive Director  
Presbyterian Mission Agency

## Sanitizing After Services

- [EPA List of Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2](#)
- [CDC Cleaning & Disinfection for Households](#)

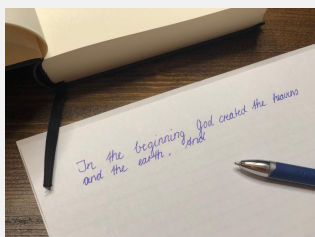


## FRAUD ALERT - URGENT

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.



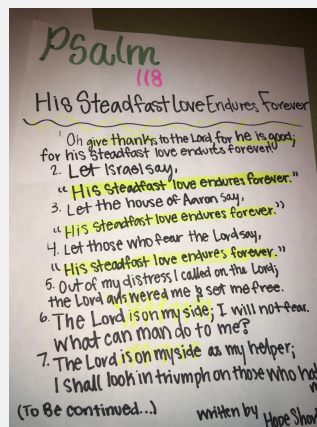
## Creativity Amid Chaos: The Nebraska Corona Bible

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.

To participate or learn more, please check out the website [www.nebraskacoronabible.com](http://www.nebraskacoronabible.com) and sign up today for your favorite text.

**Contact:**

Rev. Thomas Dummermuth  
Eastridge Presbyterian Church  
tdummermuth@eastridge.org  
402-817-9642



## Weekly Homestead Zoom Forum



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](#)

# Thurston

Like everyone else we are in a time of suspended worship. Most of our congregation has no access to electronic communications. As such – Pastor Charity is mailing out print copies of her sermon information each week. We do not know what this prolonged absence will do to the already weak state of our congregation. We trust in the providence of God and keep on keeping on.

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## Homestead Presbytery

840 S. 17th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508

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

**Friday** 9:00am-12:30pm

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