*The recorder of these notes apologizes that they flip back and forth from first person to second person. That is the nature of trying to get lots of info quickly.*

Zac Wolfe is moderating today. **Share something good, something not so good, and a God thing**.

Suzie Harder –

* Good thing: a neighbor stopped by to visit and their offspring/young person wanted to do something of service related to COVID19;
* Not so good thing: notification on phone that we were supposed to be in Illinois to see grandchildren and were not able to go and that made me sad;
* God thing: As the weather gets better seeing the children out drawing on the sidewalks and some of the messages are beautiful tributes to Caregivers.

John Duling –

* On Easter Sunday the first family gathering on Zoom with all grandsons and their families – a delight; on for about an hour and a half – on Facebook grandson made a rainbow of legos, and we could see him creating the rainbow in the background; not so good –
* Facebook posts that are just aggravating, one of which said this COVID19 stuff is all a hoax;
* a God-thing = a breath – a group of us who study Bible together have been checking in every week.

Jimmy Shelbourn –

* about 6 weeks ago our grandniece gave birth via caesarean section to a very, very early baby (1 lb 1 oz). The umbilical cord was kinked so the baby wasn’t gaining. Cade is now three lbs, almost triple from birth weight. Don’t know about all neurological stuff yet, but he is coming along.
* Another cool thing was that for earth day our green team chairperson at Westminster was asking Lincoln churches to ring bells at 10:00 (on Easter rang them at noon, but our choir director is busy moving now, so Jimmy got a remote lesson on how to ring the bell and how to play a melody with the bells) so Jimmy played all things bright and beautiful on the tower bell. A few people came to the parking lot to listen who knew he was going to do that.
* not-so-good thing: Just before the shut-down I had a wellness check with Dr. and I’m on medications for blood pressure and rheumatoid arthritis. I need my scripts reordered, and Drs. don’t want to see patients these days.

Tom Osborne –

* One of the pharmacists in Auburn was in cahoots with someone who was selling drugs on the black market. They had planned to fire bomb the other pharmacy in Auburn to get rid of the competition so he could ship his extra drugs to the partner in the East. Tom used to do business with him, and he can’t believe he was going to do this. Last Wednesday the FBI came and took his computers. Monday I had to get a couple of scripts filled and he was there and he filled my prescription, so Tom asked him about it. And the pharmacist said everything would be fine, but the next day the FBI came and arrested him and the pharmacy is closed. The other pharmacist in town belongs to the Nebraska City PC. We are blessed that the plot did not come about and he was saved from the injury and damage that was planned for his business. So now Cody is my pharmacist, and everything will work out fine in the end. It shakes a small town culture a bit. (This story included all: the good, then not so good, and the God-thing in that all will be well in the end)

Jim Splitt –

* Sunday there was a gentleman in the church from Wayne who had gone into hospice care. Jim was able to get in to the ICU and share communion with the family. The whole thing was surreal. In this particular situation, for this family and in that setting at that time, it was pretty cool. That person has now left the hospital to have hospice care at home.
* A sad thing was a head-on collision of the aunt and uncle of a session member. They are okay, though the driver of the other car was killed.

Kathleen Splitt –

* good thing: We were able to take the screen out of my dad’s window at the care center (assisted living) and he could have his dog sit on his lap for a while as we visited through the window.

Sue Babovac –

* Maybe Kathleen’s story is my God thing). Kathleen’s dad has known me longer than anyone in the Presbytery, because our dads were high school friends.
* Definitely a God thing: choir director, Anita Elliot, sent an email of youtube music and we did virtual singing, everything from Abide with Me to a really funny Walk A Little with Jesus to the Lord’s Prayer sung by opera singer, Andre.
* Today is earth day, so I cached in on that with my grandkids in Alaska who I am tutoring, and I got to sing with the 15 month old. We tied earth day theme into lessons today.
* Negative is the news of so many who are pushing to open up soon, and the news that Missouri is suing China.

Duane Bentzinger –

* I am amazed at how many people are tuning in for online worship.
* We had vacation plans to see our family, but will likely have to cancel them all.
* God-thing: a gal from Pawnee City was one of the first to be diagnosed with COVID19, and she is finally recovering, though she was has been ill for 17 days.

Dennis Hett –

* I’ve been dabbling in watching the services online. The Heritage church is pre-recording and patching it together and having different families recording parts of the service and sharing it. It is intergenerational and includes members of the congregation in worship leadership

Darin Bentzinger –

* Not-so-good thing: I don’t like doing an online service in an empty sanctuary.
* The Presbytery supports a Great Plains Small Church conference, and we’ve had to move it to the fall now, and there is overlap, to put it mildly. It will be the 21-23 of September. The positive from that is (we’ve been doing zoom for three years) we are starting to expand our work to include a pastor’s conference summit at the end of May via Zoom, and add a zoom element to the conference itself (in September, if recorder understood correctly).
* God-Thing: My daughter has been with me for the past two months. We are both ready for her to return to school. Bandwidth is an issue, so we have our moments of Daren shutting his mouth and walking away and saying, “Okay, I’ll do that later.” *The God thing is that we haven’t killed each other.* She is actually coming to dad for advice and input. We found out some good news. She has been serving a full time internship, and she was going to do that for the summer ($10,000). They are going to continue that, but cannot fly until June 7th. So pray for us, and I’ll pray for your normalcy.

Doug Hileman –

* We received a post card from a cousin in California, and he is missing hearing from us.

Jane Holtzclaw –

* My dog is loving me being home a lot and we are walking a lot. She has a thing about other dogs and if there is ever another dog she goes ballistic, so I’ve been trying to train her. Lots of opportunities are helping with her training.
* God moment - Zoom meetings have their down sides and frustrations but it is allowing people in our congregation who wouldn’t be able to participate to participate in worship, and in Bible study that they wouldn’t have been able to participate in otherwise. This forced stepping out of the box will bring us out of this with new ways of reaching out and being church.

Stephen Niles –

* I had a TIA on Easter Sunday. I have lost about 3 hours of that day, but I am doing well now and watching blood pressure and dealing with medication. I have an appointment in July to deal with some accumulation of plaque. People have reached out and that is deeply appreciated. I’ve gotten a lot of cards from former parishioners in South Sioux City.
* Last week we had a visitation at the funeral home. At graveside we had only family under the tent. The ten people limit was stretched a bit, but we made it work.

Heidi Wallace –

* good thing: local school district announced their plans for graduation and board is supportive of having baccalaureate, so we are working on figuring out how to do that virtually. Learning to live in this new normal is a challenge, but a good thing.
* God thing, a beautiful bunch of volunteer flowers in my yard this spring. For someone without a green thumb the fact that they were volunteer was a blessing.

Karen –

* best good thing is this is my last week of my disciples history and polity class and I cannot wait. It has been so much work. I have to do the final this week and that is done. Then I will feel like I have this craziness a little relieved. But now I anticipate we will be figuring out re-entry.
* I’ve connected with a zoom group of writers, and I am trying to make room for some writing that isn’t all the stuff I do for church.

**Share one thing you have found that you enjoy, and one thing that you just don’t like about this new normal.**

Zac –

* I’m the cook of the house, and I have found that I am tired of cooking three meals a day for the entire family. I miss being able to go out with my wife, or friends or just to throw a can of soup in and call it good.
* But what I have really come to enjoy is worshipping with my family, and I’ve come to appreciate my wife who has to deal with a lot that I didn’t understand before.

Tom Osborne –

* I am feeling like I am getting to know all of you in a much more personal way, and I am putting your names and faces together. This has been valuable to me to feel connected to all the pastors in our presbytery, and maybe we should continue this after we go back to whatever normal is.
* What I don’t like is trying to continue to adapt at my age to all this technological stuff. I think I do pretty good, and my grandson’s friend was very impressed that grandpa was into the tech stuff, but I feel really stressed. Some people want me to put a picture of the bulletin up while I am doing worship, but I haven’t got a clue how to do that. (Lots of people agreeing with both like and dislike)

Suzie –

* agree with Zac about the preparing three meals a day. Now that I’ve been retired I haven’t had to do that, but now I am having to do it again during pandemic.

Jimmy Shelbourn –

* chief cook in our house, and I’ve used all the standard recipes.
* We have a dog that loves Animal Planet and watches it intently. While we were watching worship the dog was all stretched out on the floor……he doesn’t have the same attention for dad that he has for Animal Planet.

Duane Westing –

* My neighbor across the street (I’m on the edge of town) a young guy built a fence and he has two heifers and two bottle calves. I just love going over there and enjoying them.
* Negative, I’ve never been able to take days off and be at home. I really miss getting away from work. My office is at home, and I get calls from ministerial finances, and that is a big part of every day: helping people financially.

Sue Babovec –

* I like cooking, so I don’t mind. Of course, I ‘ve been doing it since I live alone.
* I miss grocery shopping. I know I am weird about that.
* I am enjoying sitting out on the patio which is protected from the weather.

John Duling –

* Fun thing that I have liked: Kathy and I like to do creative things in the kitchen and that has been an intimate time together. I’ve been surprised at how much more often I have to go shopping for coffee. I have my Keurig pods and usually those last me a while, but they are going faster these days. So I’ve been grinding the coffee and putting it in the pods. I find that frustrating.
* One of the God things was having zoom with our family. But we had intended to take an auto trip to see family in NY, and now that doesn’t look very practical. I am wondering what all this means and what the new normal may be like. We are going to do some calling with folks from the church.

Jim Splitt –

* I participate in AA, and though I usually don’t share that, I’ve connected with a group in Indiana. How cool it is to be with some folks who are really close friends back in Indiana. That has been exceptional.
* I am improving on my hammered dulcimer and that has been kind of fun.
* And I miss the coffee group, though I don’t drink coffee, but there are two groups I ordinarily go with, and I have missed that since it isn’t happening anymore. So in a small town there is a lot of conversation about what is going on, and I really miss that.

Doug Hileman –

* coffee always gets my attention. Our pot broke a while back, and I said we will just hold off on buying. I found freeze dried coffee. It is absolutely the best coffee ever. I am amazed at it, and drinking three pots before lunch.
* I have really enjoyed learning the various apps to record worship. I am enjoying seeing what other folks are doing.
* I am feeling a lot of pressure hearing what other folks are doing. Pastors are putting on daily thoughts, and I am overwhelmed with that. I can’t keep up and do that now, though I might have at one time. I am feeling like I am not doing enough. I just can’t do all that. I am wondering what should we be doing?

(Zac said: A lot of us are feeling that way, pressured by being compared to one another.)

Jane:

* A couple of weeks ago I suggested starting a group as a means of providing pastor-to-pastor support. I’ve been thinking about that for a while. I need to be connected, but that isn’t necessarily happening. I am thinking this may be the time to make that happen. I want to know what you all would find that adds value. I’m interested in some feedback. What would be helpful? If we can pull something together in small groups of 6 – 8, a small enough group that there can be some real discussion, problem solving and connectedness.

*Doug, I am interested, but I would want everyone in the group to agree to confidentiality. I won’t be a part of a group that doesn’t honor confidentiality.*

Jim: I would jump in on that. I work with the state patrol as chaplain. I am doing a state wide support group tomorrow night. Peer support for anyone who is a care-giver of any kind is to develop professional relationships. Pastor to pastor or trooper to trooper or whatever where you have two or three people in your support team. This is something they are saying is that those who are in peer support groups are surviving better. Lilly Foundation studied this and their finding reinforced that truth. I would support Jane in doing that. I have tons of resources because I went through the training for state patrol peer support.

There are a few interested in this. Jane would like to pursue the idea, something along the lines of peer support, problem solving would be more beneficial that bible study or something like that.

Stephen Earl said that Jane and he talked about it yesterday. What would be helpful is if you are interested type your name into the chat box, or you may email or call Jane.

Darin – my wife is in such a group, and what is helpful is that they are friends. They all do church together and have other connections, and their group has been doing zoom even though they have moved to other parts of the country.

Heidi has this (small support peer group) on the Lutheran end of things. I would love something on the Presbyterian end of things!

Zac thanked Jane for bringing that to the group.

Sue – a heads up – we will be getting an email from the Presbytery announcing **a webinar sponsored by the PDA and disaster team of the presbytery. This will be for church leaders as well as pastors. It will be Tuesday evening, April 28th at 7:00. It will be a zoom call.** Kathy Riley and John Cheek and Suzanne Mallory. They are all trained with PDA and do seminars on resiliency and disaster response. They usually do it on site. Kathy says they will talk a few minutes on self-care, how to take a day off when you are already always in the house. They will also be open to questions typed into the chat box. But they have plenty to share if we don’t have questions to ask. It is funded by OGHS, etc. It is a gift from the Presbytery Disaster Team to you. It will be recorded from the Homestead platform. There will be registration for this. Jesalyn will be sending that out by email today.

Darin – A question for brother Earl. Our session meeting is tonight, and we will be looking to presbytery to know when we can begin meeting as a congregation again. Will the presbytery make a statement about when that will be okay?

Stephen Earl: The Presbytery has not made any stand about this, and we have offered guidance based on GA. Whatever directives we are getting from the government, we encourage you to obey.

Darin just wanted to know if Presbytery will advise us.

Stephen says it will be a topic of discussion at council next week. His personal opinion is that we are nowhere near the time when churches should be meeting. We need to get through April and the middle of May before we start talking about this.

Suzie – speaking as a retired nurse and former infection control person, I want to encourage us not to be in a big hurry about gathering. There are still a lot of questions about what rural Nebraska is going to be like. I think it would be wise to hold off for a little bit yet.

Stephen: I just talked to my colleague in Central Nebraska about what Grand Island is going through and the potential to bring it here.

Someone (maybe Zac) reported that University is still talking about having all classes online this fall. There are big entities bigger than our churches that are saying we may not be able to gather for the rest of this year. It causes a lot of anxiety, but we need to just keep talking.

Stephen: we are looking at the possibility of offering technology grants to churches, maybe as much as $1500 for churches that need technology upgrades for such a time as this.

Darin closed us in prayer.