**March 26, 2020 Homestead Presbytery Zoom Forum**

Stephen Niles started us with Prayer.

**INTRODUCTIONS**

Margaret Sprude – Clerk of Session Westminster Lincoln

Stephen Earl – Homestead Presbytery Interim Executive

Wendy Wait – Gresham Clerk of Session and moderator of Homestead

Sue Babovec – HR; worshipping at Southern Heights when not supplying pulpits, moderator of Homestead Disaster Committee and vice moderator of COM

Steve Niles - Clarkson COM

Heidi Wallace - pastor of FPC and Bethany Luth Lyons

Dennis Hett - HR in Lincoln

Kathleen Splitt – UPC in Laurel and UPC in Belden and co-moderator of CPM

Zac Wolfe (joined at end of forum, pastor at Beatrice PC)

**CHECK-IN; HOW ARE THINGS GOING?**

**Dennis Hett –**

* wife works at home, so we dance well together she is busy with a work project
* usual routine for Dennis is to go to the gym - we’re hanging in and have a wide circle of friends we are keeping in touch with

**Heidi Wallace –**

* We’re still figuring out the best way of doing things, but we are convinced we are the church so whatever we can do in our community is being the Body of Christ
* working with local food pantry
* keeping in touch by checking in with one another and getting words out
* personally I am finding that living alone in a four bedroom house gives me too much time in my head, so trying to find other means of keeping myself occupied

**Stephen Niles -**

* working out of office – it is just 40 steps away, secty and I only ones in the church
* school just extended closure to April 30 to re-assess on the 16th
* just sent session a for a concrete decision from them, probably will follow school
* using a weekly mailing
* this week using e-mail with fewer people
* had a virus in Madison, just down the road from us (community spread)
* New Zion; we’re sending the devotional that we get at the church to with weekly newsletter

**Kathleen Splitt**

* online worship on Facebook
* every member mailing weekly
* cruise on Tuesday with chalkboard – take pictures
* checking into doing backpack program
* playing with a video created with videoscribe software (see it on Presbytery website); the software’s URL: https://www.videoscribe.co/en/ This is the one I am playing with for a 7 day free trial. I believe it is not the only software of its kind, but I have not explored any others to know that for sure.
* Laurel ministerial may do a virtual Easter service

**Stephen Earl**

* Did anyone see the most recent communication from J Herbert Nelson? It encourages everyone to do communion and a variety of ways to do it.
* many things are being posted on Homestead website, but not repeating anything that is on national site
* Enlighten is a resource – a church that does small video-clips

Stephen directed US to PCUSA resource page has instructions on how to use and get on different INTERNET platforms for posting worship videos, devotions, etc.

**Sue Babovec**

* collecting resources and putting them on the Homestead Presbytery website on the COVID link
* Disaster Team is going to be checking in to see what needs there are, and post them to see what can be done about it. So don’t be surprised when you get a call.

**Wendy Wallace**

* Not doing anything really in Gresham, but York Pastor (Mike Eickoff) had a youtube video devotion
* maybe will do a personal mailing
* not many doing technology here

**Margaret Sprude**

* continuing to put our worship service on our website and not doing anything different with that but continuing it
* PW women have sent some things out from the Bible Study to each of the women;
* circle leaders are checking in on everyone weekly
* everything is shut down including preschools larger than 10, and we have the largest preschool in town, so not sure what we are going to do about that
* Village Inn shut down last night so can’t go for my birthday
* I’m organizing a going-away party in the parking lot for pastor that is leaving
* stepped up weekly mailing including some of the Presbytery PW stuff
* Prayer list is a little more active
* “I’m living by myself, but we moved here two years ago, so I am organizing the things that haven’t been done since moving in, because I don’t like clutter.”

**Stephen Earl**

* is anyone doing anything about giving blood during this pandemic – that is encouraged?
* Laurel church scheduled a blood drive on April 10th. This was already scheduled, and they have made some adjustments for the social distancing and COVID19 concerns, so it will be inside the building rather than in their bus, and they will need to be hosted by a member. The session members and both pastors (Jim and Kathleen Splitt) agreed that this is a ministry we can do....a no-brainer!

**WHAT ARE YOU DOING ABOUT STEWARDSHIP?**

* Stephen Niles - in our communications encouraging folks to continue their giving, only a handful who give through electronic means
* Kathleen shared about an email she received this morning: GENEROSITY by LIFEWAY is responding to the Pandemic by offering a free service with no strings attached for 90 days. This is a service to set up online giving for individual congregations (Lifeway is a company that puts out WORDSEARCHBIBLE, and internet software theological library that I have used for over 20 years and though their theology is more conservative than mine, they are trustworthy and honest and this a genuine gift. They say that it is a relatively simple process and only a few questions need to be answered and they will get us set up though our local banks. – URL: https://lifewaygenerosity.com/coronavirus
* Wendy – not taking any offering, do not have automatic giving; we are blessed and have adequate resources for the length of this social distancing
* Heidi – reminded people in the initial letter that went out from session that they could mail in their offerings – many of the people bank with the local bank and could set it up through the bank....we’ll see how that continues to go
* Virtual presbytery staff meeting – Cheryl is working on whether the presbytery can set up a way for the church to give to the Presbytery and identify it for our church and then they may work it out to distribute it. They will not hold on to our money
* Presbytery Foundation also has a way to set up online giving – a link on PCUSA site for COVID19

**HOW ARE YOU DOING PASTORAL CARE?**

* Kathleen Splitt - phone calls and visits through the window at Hillcrest
* Stephen Niles – a phone tree for session members
* Funerals will be less than ten people with a larger service possibly later
* Hopefully we will not get to the place that Seattle and NYC are, so that they cannot bury all the deceased because of the numbers. Stephen Earl has family on both coasts in both cities. Let us keep him and his family in our prayers as well as all who are being affected by this crisis in our country.)
* Wendy sends a group text to people every week
* Wendy sends out cards to let people know they are remembered
* Margaret –phone calls from deacons & pastors – deacons know how to reach each person the best
* Sue – “I am wondering how other clergy are being cared for in this time; that is heavy on my heart in this time (clergy and clerks of session); perhaps I will find a way to help in that area.”
* Ramona Meester is calling all the retired pastors and surviving spouses
* Stephen Earl is hopeful that these forums are a form of pastoral care – encourage colleagues to join once a week on Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m. at least through April – should it be both pastors and clerks of session or would it be better to limit it to just clergy? Feedback is that numbers may make it clear which way to go on that.
* Stephen Niles would hate to see us restrict participation. It would be sad to restrict it.
* Pastors are calling one another as well, and that is encouraged, too, of course.

Disaster Team is considering a forum for small churches; (still in formation stage) – might be a separate zoom; we can do breakout rooms so we could divide based on topic of interest; We are talking about doing a special forum for small churches to discuss the particular blessings and challenges for them.

23 of our 45 churches have 55 or fewer members, and many do not have internet. Sometimes larger churches can help smaller churches and sometimes the smaller churches may need their own forum. Stephen and Heidi both think that would be very helpful. This would be a one-time forum. Wendy agrees it would be a good idea and helpful for them. We could help the smaller churches know about all the resources and who might be able to help us do the technology. We need a little extra help with that.

Zac Wolfe joined us at this point in the forum. Zac is pastor in Beatrice.

Board of Pensions has their own resource page that can be linked through Homestead’s website. Lots of info about EAP program and mental health. Look at it as there is a lot of good stuff to help maintain our sanity in this never-heard-of-before time of ministry.

The recordings of these forums will be posted on the Homestead website for anyone who wishes to watch

If by chance it becomes an issue for a congregation to continue their pension dues, be sure to have them call the Board of Pensions rather than just not pay it.

First Homesteader just came out from Jesalyn as we were on the call. It points to the resource page on the website.

Heidi closed the forum with prayer.