**Homestead Presbytery Forum – April 1st, 2020**

**Introductions**:

Tom Osborne –

* using Facebook live for a midweek devotion service and for Sunday mornings; feeling fine, being very, very careful – conversed on phone with a member whose brother died.

Jimmy Shelbourne –

* Westminster; as of yesterday I’m the bridge pastor after Val’s departure to SD.
* We’re doing fine;
* we’ve come up with some novel things, we used to have a spring cleaning of the grounds. This year the grounds were divided into zones and individual families came at their own time for their own zone.
* recorded chapel chat songs and they are posted daily (12-15 minutes and a bible lesson with it) Jimmy’s songs are getting 70 hits and bible lesson only 30

Ray Meester –

* he is checking into the legality of zoom meeting for presbytery

Kristine --

* doing fine, feeling useless as a pastor last week, but a death in the congregation and there was a funeral on Saturday, kept it under 10 people; the church would have been packed otherwise; mailed the bulletin and sermon to others who would have been there.
* organist and I are going to try a Facebook recording

Jane Holtzclaw

* parish associate and FPC Lincoln
* taping Sunday morning worship
* mid-morning zoom communion afterward
* zoom bible studies

Steve Niles – New Zion Clarkson

* doing some devotions daily
* kind of weird with the town closed up
* only Steven and secretary allowed in building
* days are all mixed up without th esunday routine

Wendy Wait – Gresham and homestead moderator

* communication is so important
* not doing anything other than text messaging
* working on a drive-in Easter Sunday service

Dennis Hett – HR in Lincoln

* attending an Episcopal Church in his retirement
* they are feeling at sea because they
* Facebook live for a prayer session
* leading an adult class via zoom
* received a snail mail note from church saying we care and we’re here even though we aren’t open

Jon Ashley – Fremont

* was out of town the first week of pandemic and returned after everything was closed down and church had been cancelled; catching up, feels like we learning to fly an airplane while we are already in the air
* last year’s flooding gave them some tools to manage this new disaster/pandemic
* streaming everything with google meets or zoom for group gatherings
* making some good progress staying connected

Duane Westing – Pawnee City

* been really busy in other kinds of things
* please pray for daughter Annie who is ministering to the homeless in Seattle; surrounded by the virus
* emailing sermons and delivering those who don’t have computers
* lot of people walking so I’ve been able to visit with people who are in their yards so I’ve been able to visit from a distance outside
* working with ministerial
* interchurch ministries of Nebraska has received money to help people
* retirement plans are being made

Heidi Wallace – Lyons (Lutheran and Presbyterian)

* three hours in conference calls this week planning Holy Week, feels better to have that plan made
* allergies are an issue today as Stephen Earl mentioned
* lot of phone calls – a number of people in hospital for surgeries; hard not to be there, but learning to be present as I can be

Doug Hileman – solo pastor in Fairbury

* recording abbreviated services with no music uploaded onto three different Facebook pages
* starting to learn about Youtube and channels, church may get its own channel
* going to be more involved with Facebook Live
* Small group later this week to do a Facebook Live Easter service
* entire congregation divided among deacons and they are trying to call people twice a week
* done some errands for folks who need food delivered, etc.

Kathleen Splitt – Laurel and Belden

* received a phone call an hour ago of the death of a session member’s spouse – totally unexpected, so I am trying to figure out how/if/when to do visitation/funeral, etc.
* sit on porch with the family suggests Doug Hileman
* I am also sending out a weekly mailing to every member of both churches, with digital copies going to those who don’t have internet access
* Recording a worship service (25 minutes apprx) and posting online (Facebook and Youtube)

Rick Martin – pulpit supply Falls City and Humboldt

* talking on the phone mostly with people
* first Facebook live last week
* midweek devotional
* we have a great library of music that I’d like to use, but don’t know how to do that

Karen (Pastor)

* doing a video on Facebook
* send out a newsletter every week both digitally and by mail
* put in some links for music that would fit the theme of the service
* 2nd funeral in two weeks; two very well loved member
* funeral homes are encouraging people to just do a graveside service – but last week there were more than ten so they are being more strict about that
* I’ve added more scriptures but still only 10 or 15 minutes long
* trying to help congregation do their grieving well
* may do a special video about grief

John Duhling – parish associate at Eastridge PC in Lincoln

* working with the deacons to help them make calls
* conversations with deacons has been moving, and John offers a prayer
* for worship we are doing Facebook Live and live streaming
* we’re going to do the virtual communion on Maundy Thursday each at their own table with their own elements – live streaming
* working on getting a men’s group to meet via zoom (fellowship time)
* Stephen Ministers are zooming for training
* do spiritual direction by skype or zoom

Joungnam Lee – Korean Church in Lincoln

* came a year ago to Lincoln, came as senior pastor
* online service from March 15th
* not used to computer things; I don’t like machines, but have to do it now, so every Saturday I worship at church recording it; I use a musical instrument for music
* Sunday morning put on Church homepage
* check how many people are watching online service (last week 77 people watched) 29th: 55; 22: 77
* daughter is graduating this May in Michigan – she has received a job – good news
* on Friday nights 20 -21 Korean students meet, but many have gone home because of the virus

Darren Bentzinger – Panama Presbyterian Church

* doing Facebook Live
* some very positive things with that, so will probably do every week
* learning electronics, love electronics but don’t love Windstream and that is what we have; really having some struggles with the video
* Over half of our congregation comes from out of town
* Katie is going to preach this week as an assignment from school
* going to drive through town and will hand out palms as people come out of their homes – may put a donkey on either side of the vehicle
* going stir-crazy a bit; going fine otherwise
* trying maintain communications
* Congregation has been communicating with each other – very appreciative of that, so we just try to facilitate that by encouraging people to give their neighbors a call
* everyone is willing to help and it is drawing us together as a community

Zac Wolfe – Beatrice Presbyterian Church

* excited and energized by this time ;having fun

Sue Babovec – HR in Lincoln

* for those who can’t go to funerals; encourage congregation members to create a scrapbook page of memories about the deceased – then when we can gather we could have an early All Saints Day to remember those who have died
* Homestead Disaster team is keeping track or people – contacting people
* I’ve been designated as the listener for the grandchildren in school in Alaska

**FINANCES**

The new Cares Act; presbytery is looking into it as to payroll and family leave time *(this note is not totally clear to me as to what was said. Sorry I missed something here.)*

Tom –

* very much aware of the pinch this is going to place on us financially; have already been to the bank and asked about the Cares Program; you need to talk to local bank to fill out forms; it is first come first serve, so don’t wait
* Electronic session meeting to approve going ahead with the application
* It comes as a loan, but can become a grant that doesn’t need to be paid back. They are asking for $5,000

Stephen says the rules and regulations haven’t all come out so not all banks are ready to go with it. The experience may be different depending upon the bank you are using. Please let Presbytery know if you are applying for Federal Assistance.

Jon Ashley – we had a special session meeting last night with this on the agenda to learn about the Cares Act and what is available; session agreed to pursue the application process with the bank; one question we had was “does this payroll protection loan fall into the category where the church needs Presbytery approval?”

Homestead has not taken any regulatory action – no need to get approval from Presbytery

General Assembly says the only time you have to have approval from the Presbytery is if you are putting the property/ as if it were a mortgage

If you have to pay back that loan, the presbytery will be responsible and that is why we want to know who is applying.

Zac wants to know if the Presbytery might get involved to see if there are churches with large endowments who would be willing to help other churches – Stephen says we can explore that when Business and Budget committee meets on Monday.

The Cares Act advantage is that the loans can become grants.

Beatrice has a pretty sizable endowment and Zac would be willing to ask session if they would be willing to help small churches, as a possible grant or loan with a preference for grants. “That is part of being the body of Christ.”

Stephen says it would be easier to do as a grant than as a loan.

Jimmy – at Westminster we have a separately incorporated endowment board/foundation. Session doesn’t have control of what they do. There can be conflict between the session and the foundation.

PCUSA has resources about the Cares Act

Jimmy thinks Westminster will be okay and able to retain the staff.

Jon Ashley – so far March is pretty close to meeting budget, but April may be different; stewardship committee is looking at things, as well as the Personnel committee. Hopefully the PPL loan will provide a bridge if we see our giving drop. We’ll adjust if we have to.

Jon – Melody had the backing of the session to say that all staff are covered through April at least.

**Miscellaneous**

Stephen is going to call each pastor to talk about finances as well as pastoral care. Expect a call. There are 80 calls to be made (pastors, stated supply, CP, etc.)

We will continue Zoom call on Wednesdays at 1:00. Encourage colleagues to join us. Ray is working on the virtual Presbytery Meeting.

Ray will mail out info after the special meeting tomorrow giving instructions of how we will manage the full Presbytery meeting. We may have a practice session prior to the official zoom meeting

GA will most likely not happen in Baltimore because the conference center is being used as a hospital, We may have to have a virtual GA meeting. More news will be coming out as well.

Doug – had a session meeting in social hall and had two to a table 10 feet or more together. Financially we will be okay short term.

Stephen will be inviting several folks to facilitate future calls.

Doug invited Zac to put together an instruction sheet for how to stitch together different videos.

communion – in parking lot with each family bringing their own/ or ordering the individual elements prepackaged

Cokesbury has them

www.

Pastor ???? doing video communion by youtube and everyone supplies their own bread and juice