John Duling – will open building, but will continue the live streaming for a couple of months more at Eastridge. Preschool has been in use. AA is beginning to meet as of the 1st. John is doing some pastoral care at care centers (through a screen or window)

Jane Holtzclaw – session decided to continue as is until Labor Day

Darin Bentzinger – we have been following the PCUSA and CDC guidelines before considering starting up again at the building. Now they will continue doing Facebook live worship and start looking at what kind of a plan they will have to begin again….phased with least vulnerable possibly. Will continue virtual for now until decisions are clear. It is one thing to say we are going t meet and actually meeting: What to do with visitors? What to do if too many come? Temperatures? Sanitizing procedures, etc. Our virtual church has been going very well. Facebook live is what we’ve been doing. This past week we had 91 at worship this week and by end of the day we had 250 hits and seven or eight hundred by end of week. We like that but we know we need to temper that with the need for community. We miss the apostolic church gathering together, being present with each other is essential eventually.

John Duling – we do zoom worship, except a couple of weeks ago when zoom crashed. I have invited my sister to join us and it was the first time in three years that I saw and spoke with my sister and it opened up a family relationship that was so sweet. I fully understand your point, Darin. I crave being with my grandsons. At least with zoom we can see them.

Dennis Hett – I attend an Episcopal church here in Lincoln and I lead an adult class. They do worship on Facebook live and a Wednesday evening free-for-all, a theological bull session.

Duane Westing – Our folks kind of like the zoom. They like sitting in their living room chairs for worship. They also like that I deliver personally the written worship service for those who don’t have internet. There is a Bible Study group made up of an ecumenical group. I am the only one who practices social distancing there, sadly. I sit 10 or 15 feet away with a mask. Others sit nearby and even hug each other; no masks. I think people here are in denial because it hasn’t come here yet. Some store owners wear masks and others don’t. They’ve decided to reevaluate the end of June, so the first of July would be the earliest we will gather.

Zac Wolfe – Beatrice – We had talked about reopening last week. We are aware there are members who are eager to start gathering again. Session decided to evaluate every two weeks, and mostly we are following CDC guidelines. Our doctors practice all the precautions so they think everyone else will also. But we will likely have to spell it out for everyone. We are doing a drive through coffee-hour this Sunday at the normal time for coffee hour. A few people will mask up and hand out coffee and some pre-wrapped goodies. Social Distancing practices are expected. Those who are there will see how they do that. They don’t expect many to drive through. But it will be an opportunity to learn what we need to do when we do gather again. I, personally will not be able to gather until after baby is born. We may have to zoom me into the sanctuary if we begin gathering before then. Wife is quarantined until then. Someone (one of the doctors) said, “We’ll know when it is time and it is safe to go back. If we have to talk about it for an hour, it probably isn’t the time yet.” I don’t anticipate going back until at least the school year. It will be interesting to see what follows from all the Memorial Day gatherings. We continue to figure out how to be and do church without gathering on Sunday.

Kathleen Splitt – Session will meet next week to discuss the future plans. I’m not sure what the Belden session is thinking though I know there are members who are eager to gather again soon. It is a small enough congregation that it could social distance in the sanctuary, but I don’t know if the session will consider it a wise thing to do yet. I think the Laurel session is a bit more reluctant to set a date anytime soon, but I may be surprised. There is just so much to consider, not the least of which is that our janitors are a couple with heart disease and they are not ready to come back yet, and are being very cautious.

Sue Babovec (honorably retired) – I’ll let Suzie tell you about Southern Heights. Conversations I’ve had with clergy in the area ranger everywhere from we are evaluating regularly and not yet opening. Others said they voted not to meet until 6 months at least and will then evaluate again. From Disaster team most churches are in that tension between knowing we want to gather and knowing it is not necessarily safe.

Wendy Wait – I appreciate your team (disaster team) doing what you are doing for the Presbytery, staying connected.

Suzie Harder – Southern Heights, Lincoln – Session met two weeks ago and we are going month by month. I wrote a blurb in the newsletter to let folks know we haven’t forgotten about them and we are looking at (Psalm 119:105) using not only God and God’s word as a light, but also other things that have been given to us: i.e. data and numbers and guidelines from CDC. We will continue our online service and a Wednesday fellowship time. We have been doing communion on our communion Sundays, but since it is recorded not everyone does it at the same time. On Wednesday LeAnn is going to start doing Communion on our Wednesday zoom fellowship call. We are taking things day by day, and since I am a nurse they listen to me sometimes. We are considering what we will do differently for precautions when we do begin. We will have it written up and disbursed to the congregation members. That is one of my things…to plan. I like to have a plan.

Sue Babovec and Susie Harder are also getting a zoom support group for the dementia members,

Stephen Niles Clarkson – I have formally given session my resignation and so we continue to make plans for that. We continue Facebook live and a weekly devotion mailed. This week we are going to meet outdoors, and will continue with that if it works out. There are divided opinions on session and we have decided to wait at least 2 weeks because of the Colfax outbreak. The numbers are going down each day. Health district is switching from daily to monthly reports. I wouldn’t be surprised if we have a push to open up by mid to late June. Have a bulletin table, and offering plates at the door. We will have people BYOJB (Bring your own juice and bread) for communion. I am doing fine. Plans are moving forward with pension stuff; we have a house next door to our son in Omaha, etc. Last night we had a small minority that wanted to move ahead as soon as possible, but the consensus was to wait. Session meets on the 9th and we’ll be reconsidering at that time.

Karen Moritz – I’m serving a Disciples of Christ church which works differently. We put together a reopening task force. We will begin our regular office hours on the 1st, and we tentatively are planning to worship on the 7th. We will send out a letter outlining how worship will be different. We will still do the videos through the summer so they have an option, especially if they have any health issues. We will ask them to wear a mask if they come, and we want to encourage people to stay home if they are in the at risk group. We send out a weekly worship bulletin, newsletter type of thing. We will keep doing all that. Our sanctuary is fairly large and our congregation isn’t very large and probably not all will come so there will be space to distance. And we will need to do weekly sanitation. It will be more like a morning prayer with some scriptures. We will have some special music in place of hymns. I’ve made it very clear that we have to keep watching what is happening in the area. I emphasize safety in all communications.

Wendy Wait – Gresham – We have gone back to in person worship with 24-25 people attend so we can social distance. About ¾ are wearing masks, though some are not. Everyone sits in the same spot each week. We are singing with our masks on. Our offering is left in the entry way. I am doing the bulletins and making sure they are clean, and we leave them on a table. We are not doing fellowship time yet. We will have communion this Sunday for Pentecost and everyone will bring their own elements. I had extra in case someone forgot, but it wasn’t needed. People are being very respectful. We leave the door open. We wipe down the chair lift after each person uses it, and the hand rails. We put Lysol wipes in the bathrooms so people can wipe down in between people. We’ve decided that what is right for us isn’t right for everyone, and that is how we are approaching it. We don’t have any cases in our area. There isn’t a lot of interaction during the week with the people as most work outside the community. The pastor is not wearing a mask. Our session discussed that and they were fine with how it is going.

They are launching a space ship today and I was wondering if anyone has been thinking of what kinds of new things might be launched. I am hoping we can get a vaccine, and I’m kind of holding out for that.

Jane Holtzclaw – I was just thinking to what Sue said last week about everyone taking some time off. I would also put out there a suggestion to think about taking a sabbatical. The longer extended block of time for a month or more is invaluable. And if you have been in a pastorate for many years without that kind of break, it is wise. BoP has some matching funds to help. Lilly Foundation does a major grant that you have apply for.

Sue Babovec – Some of us were on a zoom group yesterday (Leadership Harbor) where one pastor cooperated with a neighboring pastor to have a week off, then following up the next week by trading positions. It was published ahead. These are zoom worship services. J. Herbert Nelson video yesterday talked about self-care for pastors. During this time it is too easy to get into the hero mindset. I love Jane’s sabbatical idea, but maybe you could partner with another church and take some stay-cation time. All members listen to the other church’s worship online when partnering.

Duane Westing – I was wondering how different churches in our presbytery are accepting of folks with disabilities or who are different than the norm of any particular congregation.

Zac says their congregation is more than just about when a person visits, but includes accessibility, and location of bathrooms. Our church was built in the 50s and the building is not very welcoming, and the members just accept that reality and are okay with it.

Jane Holtzclaw – as a person with a disability I am serving a Disciples Church because Presbyterian Churches aren’t very open to a blind pastor who doesn’t drive. I bring it up with our congregation and there isn’t a high awareness of it being an issue. We have a screen who isn’t highly visible, and I suspect there are a lot of people who won’t say so, but cannot see it clearly. The sunlight from the windows bleeds out what is on the screen. Visually oriented worship is a challenge in a lot of our churches. I’ve been pushing the congregation on a capital campaign to make it more accessible and then the lock-down started.

Zac – It is a topic that is especially important now because it is about compassion and empathy. It is like the idea of opening worship for gathering in that opening up too soon says those who are vulnerable don’t matter as long as we who are not so vulnerable can come back.

Stephen closed us with prayer.