**2nd Presbytery zoom forum – 3.24.20**

**Carl Eskridge** - chair of personnel

**John Duling** honorably retired – parish associate at Eastridge in Lincoln

**Duane Westing** - Pawnee City UPC

**Wendy Wait** - elder at Gresham NE Homestead moderator

**Raymond Meester** – Stated Clerk of Presbytery

**Douglas Hileman** - pastor at Fairbury

**Mark Simpson** - Niobrara clerk of session

**Sue Babovec** – HR; vice moderator of COM; moderator of Disaster Assistance Team

**Katheen Splitt** – pastor at Laurel and Belden

**Zac Wolfe** – pastor at Beatrice; moderator of Church Vitality team and New Worshipping Communities

**Phyllis Dreher** – Clerk of Session at 4th PC

**Jimmy Shelbourne** – HR serving as Stated Supply Associate at Westminster in Lincoln

Pam (I did not get who it was whose name appeared as Pam)

After Introductions we shared some of what we did this last week and how it was received.

Wendy

* 8 or 10 elderly don’t have internet, usually have 20-25 in worship. Some have phones, but don’t know how to do anything but call their family members. Wendy had seen a church service that was recorded from a church in St. Joseph, KS and was inspired. (I did not catch if she had recorded a service for her congregation as I had to leave the meeting briefly.)

Douglas Hileman

* have 80 that follow the message and 120 who like or follow Facebook...worked well on Sunday

Duane Westing –

* Emailed a devotional and some other resources, also Facebook.
* Emailing message and delivering it to shut-ins and so forth –
* they appreciate getting it, haven’t heard from the emails

Zac –

* We had online worship, and we had different members of the church record themselves through the week, and uploaded to Google doc, and Zac put it together, and posted it on Youtube.
* people were allowed to contribute a message to the congregation via that medium.
* We had 85 for online worship last week. We average 50-60 in worship, so to have more views is a good thing. A lot of good feedback.
* Zac is willing to help us get something online to send to people.

Duane

* thinking about a conference call with everyone for worship.

Our conversation then turned to Planning for long term?

Doug

* looking at the possibility of being this way for 8-10 weeks based on CDC info this morning.
* We are doing videos of offerings, i.e. One Great Hour of Sharing
* we are dividing up the congregation for telephone calling.

John

* looking minimally to Mother’s Day at least.
* planning to do lectio Divina daily
* during holy week offer special music (Easter) we will tape them and post them on a daily basis during holy week through Easter
* After Easter the daily lectio Divina at least through April and Mother’s Day and then reconsider
* Recording individual offerings for special music
* Did a zoom type of bible study and tried to sing some hymns, but synchronizing everyone didn’t work well, as there are delays and the dealy time varies.
* Our videographer does this as it is his profession. He will meet with individuals for the special music of four to five hours of music – we’re very blessed to have his talents to provide that
* Looking at the theme of “Easter is coming.”

Jimmy

* we are anticipating this will last until well after Easter so we are planning for the long term
* moved a wedding to August 15th from May, and another scheduled for 2nd week in June and hoping it will be possible
* We have three weddings on the first three weekends of August and crossing our fingers for that.

Duane

* will celebrate Palm Sunday and Easter both the first Sunday we are together

Wendy

* Taking it a week at a time
* most session members are anxious to get together again, but no commitments

Zac

* Looking, like Jimmy, and thinking in terms of China taking 5 months to get back to some semblance of normal
* letting the church know we are going to reevaluate every three to four months as we expect this to be for the long haul
* Wondering if it will even be possible to go back to the tradition after this is all over
* looking for a professional website and some sort of e-giving because we are connecting with people who were not a part of our congregation
* have a volunteer who is going to do an online Zoom bible study every week
* we have members who are in Colorado still and staying engaged.

Stephen turned the conversation to what worship is going to be like post social distancing. AN article out of Duke Leadership department about what effect this is going to have on church attendance overall.

Jimmy thinks this is going to be a generational response after this is over. Older folks who survive are going to want to be together to hug, etc. An article “I miss my cubicle. I miss the people next to my cubicle.” etc.

Zac

* Agreed, but there are dynamics that are added when doing worship online, and when we return people may not be satisfied with the traditional way of doing church.
* Now that we have opportunity for families to lead worship and we see different faces and personal messages for the congregation, I don’t see our worship being able to take the same old form.
* We are going to have to re-look at where we are when we come back together

Kathleen

* Romans 8:28 what God may be doing in this time – related to what Zac said. God has promised to bring good out of ALL situations, and the forced opportunity to try new things may be some of that good.

Zac

* this is perhaps a way of God bringing us to a new Awakening

Jimmy

* thinks this is going to be a generational response after this is over. Older folks who survive are going to want to be together to hug, etc. An article “I miss my cubicle. I miss the people next to my cubicle.” etc.
* wondering about what to do for children....

And so the conversation turned to the topic of children’s ministry:

Sue

* some congregations are doing some puppet shows, etc.
* this is an opportunity for us to look at new ways of being together, and also new ways for the building to be used (after school program or senior citizen ministry, etc.)
* The changes don’t have to end with worship changes

Jimmy

* this morning at Westminster we did a children’s program – (this is something he had been doing with the children: Jimmy singing all the old children’s songs such as The Old Man Built His House upon a Rock – Rachel videotaped his songs today, to be posted on youtube, and provided to all SS kids

Duane

* there are lots of resources on Youtube

Mark

* Children’s worship – Martha did a service for adults and then another for the children with stuffed animals in the pew and she talked to them, and she made a point to mention each child’s name

Kathleen

* GenOn Sunday Lift is now free (see https://www.genonministries.org)
* Sidewalk chalk to put scriptures on the sidewalks and streets where people are walking
* delivering Palms for Palm Sunday to homes and inviting families to record themselves waving the palms and share with the congregation
* we are also considering putting together an Easter basket or package of some sort to deliver to homes very early on Easter morning

Zac

* Children’s director records videos for our young people to download, or they can be mailed out if people let us know they want them.
* My wife is doing stuff on apps with her kids

Sue

* Sue downloaded an app this morning so she could connect with her grandchildren – we could help our grandparents use these ideas with their families
* Prompt our families to begin thinking about these ideas we are talking about
* PDA is getting some webinars available for resiliency and stress, Sue will ask if there will be some specific to children

The conversation then turned to the topic of stewardship and finances:

Wendy

* wondered if there is anyone here who has online giving set up
* Southern Heights just put it there
* Ray says the Presbyterian Foundation will provide that service to you
* Jimmy Westminster has had it for a couple of years, and this is an opportunity to push the acceptance of it, so in the next newsletter it will be there to encourage people to use the online giving

Carl

* can encourage banks to use their bank draft

Kathleen

* There is an article in the Omaha Seminary Foundation newsletter from Fall of 2019 that titled 10 Scriptures on Stewardship. I am going to use this article in my letters to the congregation that I am sending every week. This article can be found at Presbyterian Foundation.org/ten-scriptures-for-your-stewardship-theme

Fairbury

* in recorded message invite the offering via mail, delivering to church, etc. can be slipped onto the table somewhere in the church

Niobrara

* sent out the church address to remind everyone about stewardship
* Children’s worship – Martha did a service for adults and then for the children with stuff animals in the pew and she talked to them, and she made a point to mention each child’s name

John

* a resource from his devotionals is YouVersion, a little more conservative, but it is offering prayers for healing, etc. It does offer a very direct pastoral response that can be shared on Facebook or newsletter or website. It is a bible study, with lots of translations.

Sue

* Disaster Response Team continues to get pretty creative in things they are able to do, recognizing this is a whole new kind of disaster than we ever imagined. I anticipate they will agree to be one more contact to churches in the presbytery, just to say, How are you doing? Is there anything we can do for you? We got some fleece blankets for Good Shepherd and they are on their way to a flood disaster area.
* We would like more ideas and send your youtube or Facebook videos or whatever, to Jesalyn so we can share them to our congregations.

We ended with some miscellaneous topics

Stephen spent Sunday morning going around to different churches to see what they were doing. (via internet)

* Is this helpful? yes! We are planning to continue doing these the whole time are sheltering in place.
* have an upgrade for Zoom for the Presbytery so we can do up to ten meetings at one time. We hope to allow churches to use our account in a way that spreads it out more. Watch for more information on that.
* Jesalyn is working hard on our website to create a page that lists our resources and provides links

Ray

* We will be having a special meeting next week to make it legal to have a zoom meeting in May. It is not a done deal that it will be zoom, but I am pretty sure it will be.

Sue

* Ramona is connecting with retired pastors – John got a call from Ramona, and it was a very caring, compassionate response from her, and relieving to listen to her and hear her care and concern for me, my family and our kids. It is an encouragement for our members
* Sue got a call also. She asked if she could be a part of the process of calling retired clergy and their surviving spouses. so far she has left messages or emailed or spoken with them. feedback is that it is appreciated

Ray

* needs contact info for someone who may have been in Niobrara – follow-up will happen

Douglas – we need several weeks heads up if Presbytery is meeting there. No decision has been made yet about that. Giving four to six weeks in advance is not possible at this point.

Watch for notices about next week’s forum as there will be at least one.

Sue closed in prayer