



# The Good News

## of First Presbyterian Church for May 2020

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous!  
Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed,  
for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.  
*(Joshua 1.9)*

### A message from Rev. T. J. Parlette:

William Sloane Coffin once wrote that “In the Holy Land are two ancient bodies of water. Both are fed by the Jordan River. In one, fish play and roots find sustenance. In the other, there is no splash of fish, no sound of bird, no leaf around. The difference is not in the Jordan, for it empties into both, but in the Sea of Galilee for every drop taken in one goes out. It gives and lives. The other gives nothing. And it is called the Dead Sea.”<sup>(1)</sup>

In these times of social isolation, I hope you are finding ways to give – whether that is a phone call to a friend, a note in the mail or picking up some groceries for someone who is at greater risk for this virus than you are. I know first hand that many of you are doing these sorts of things and I want you to know how much those efforts are appreciated. I hear often from people who have been on the receiving end of a simple act of love and hope – so let me give you a virtual pat on the back and say “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

As we all look forward to a time when we can get somewhat back to normal, let me remind you of those words from Alfred Lord Tennyson:

*“Hope smiles from the threshold of the year to come,  
Whispering, ‘It will be happier.’”*

May that day come sooner than later!

Peace and Blessings be with each of you,

*T. J.*

<sup>(1)</sup> William Sloane Coffin, *Credo*, Westminster John Knox Press, 2004, p15.

Contact: Parlette.TJ@FPCRochester.org

## In Search of a Volunteer Treasurer for FPC

As she announced several months ago – Carol Evans is retiring! We are so thankful for the decades of service she has provided to us and it is hard to imagine what we will do without her in the church office. We can’t replace what Carol has done for this congregation for so long, so we are restructuring – dividing up her duties.

As part of that reorganization we are looking for a volunteer treasurer for First Presbyterian and ask that you prayerfully consider assuming this responsibility. Please talk with Carol or any of the members of the Personnel & Administration or Stewardship & Finance committees if you have any interest or questions. This is the position description:

### Treasurer of the Congregation First Presbyterian Church / Rochester, Minnesota Updated 2020

#### Purpose:

To provide financial oversight of the operating, capital and endowment funds of the congregation.

#### Accountability:

The Treasurer is supported by the Stewardship & Finance Committee and is accountable to the Session.

#### Requirements:

1. Member of First Presbyterian Church
2. Willing to serve in this position as a volunteer to the congregation
3. Solid financial background via education, work or other volunteer experience
4. Experience working with a financial advisor to manage an investment portfolio

#### Responsibilities:

1. Primary signer on all congregation bank and investment accounts.
2. Reviews all payables for proper coding and backup prior to signing payment checks twice monthly.
3. Reviews, adjusts if necessary, and approves the monthly and annual financial reports.
4. Attends monthly Session and Stewardship & Finance Committee meetings.
5. Attends quarterly Endowment Committee meetings.
6. Annually, works with the Office Manager, outside accounting contractor and the Stewardship & Finance Committee to prepare the congregational budget and assist with the required accounting audit/review.

#### Relationships & Evaluation:

The Treasurer is overseen on a month-by-month basis by the Stewardship & Finance Committee. An annual performance review will be completed by representatives from the Stewardship & Finance and Personnel & Administration Committees, along with the Senior Pastor.

~ Sarah Edgerton / Finance Committee; Karen Sessler / Personnel Committee

Good News of First Presbyterian Church - 2 - May 2020



## Ministry of Music

John Stender, Director of Music  
Katie Kuisle, Cherub and Calvin Choirs  
Janine Yanisch, First Players

*The aim and final end of all music should be none other  
than the glory of God and the refreshment of the soul.*  
(J. S. Bach)

I hope this finds you all doing more than just OK these days. It's been a blessing to us to be able to produce digital worship services. The process of preparing for them has been an important way for me to stay connected and mindful of what I would normally be doing with my time. The opportunity to look back at these services and see and hear what we've offered has been odd for us. Sincere and numerous thanks are due to **Jake Wright** for diving into the audio/visual abyss. He's been volunteering many hours to figuring this out, editing, and doing what he can with what we have to ensure the quality of this 'new' format. From all of us, thank you, Jake! It's been a pleasure to work with you: a wonderful, yet unexpected, colleague.

I've been reminded that worship can easily extend beyond our comfortably designated Sunday morning expectations. This past Sunday I enjoyed our service later in the afternoon – with a new baby in the house we definitely got more out of it later rather than at the regular morning time. Before, I have mentioned that daily prayer or daily office worship is frequently the vehicle which captures my spirit and imagination best.

May I recommend you peruse the daily prayer services in our *Glory To God* hymnal? Check out pp. 23-38 for some valuable 'stay-at-home' resources which are valid in any time and situation.

There's a lot of reading between the lines that needs to be done to follow the (printed in red) rubrics for these services. To help you get started, I've made some selections for an Evening Prayer service. You can find the worship order I prepared on our website in the bulletins section. Good luck, and blessings to all you worship leaders out there!

~ John Stender



Contact: [Stender.John@FPCRochester.org](mailto:Stender.John@FPCRochester.org)

Good News of First Presbyterian Church - 3 - May 2020



**Susanna Stone**  
Coordinator of Youth  
& Christian Education

## Christian Education and Youth Group News

Happy Spring! We are continuing to provide the following Christian Education and Youth programming. If your family or children need anything else, would like Sunday School resources, or if you have any ideas on how we can better serve the families of FPC, please send me an email!

### Children's Sunday School:

- **Sunday School Storytime:** Check out the FPC YouTube site or FPC Facebook page for each week's "Sunday School Storytime with Susanna." Each week you'll find a different Sunday School lesson, Bible reading, and craft idea aligning with that week's lesson from the Deep Blue Sunday School curricula.
- **Sunday School Packets:** We can put together packets of Sunday School material to send to your children to work on from home. Please let Susanna know if you are interested!
- **Other resources:** Susanna has a variety of other resources available (coloring pages, devotions, etc.). Please contact Susanna if you would like other resources.

### Adult Bible Study:

**Al Depman** continues to send out a creative, thought-provoking, enjoyable weekly email with a short Bible Study topic (and many funny comics). Please contact Susanna or Al if you'd like to be added to Al's email list.

### Youth Group:

**Google Meet, Wednesdays, 5:00-5:30 p.m.:** The Youth Group has been meeting via Google Meet each Wednesday for 30 minutes. Each week we chat, play games, share a quick devotional, and check in on one another. It is SO good to see the faces of our Youth Group students. Please contact Susanna if you need the link to the Google Meet.

If you have any ideas for other ways to connect, please contact Susanna. And as always, please get in touch with any needs, questions, or concerns you may have.

### 2020 VBS: POSTPONED

*Given the current uncertainty surrounding gathering in groups, the Christian Education Committee has decided to postpone our June VBS. We are hoping to provide VBS in some form at some point during the summer, though it might look different than past years' VBS formats. Once we have more definitive plans, we will send out an update. Stay tuned!*

Contact: [Stone.Susanna@FPCRochester.org](mailto:Stone.Susanna@FPCRochester.org); [AlDepman@aol.com](mailto:AlDepman@aol.com)

Good News of First Presbyterian Church - 4 - May 2020

## A message from Rev. Jay Rowland

Shortly before the pandemic reached Rochester bringing its restrictions, disruptions, adaptations, anxiety and fear, I started practicing guided meditations led by Tara Brach (podcast).

I'm learning how to recognize and process (accept) fear and anxiety, which otherwise constrict my spirit (and my breath). I'm also learning to locate where fear/anxiety manifests in my body. In doing this I've become more deeply captivated by the Incarnation.

When God chose to self-reveal in Jesus of Nazareth, God also chose to self-reveal in every human body, mind and spirit. Incarnation becomes personally significant when we realize our inherent potential to meet fear, anxiety, suffering (etc) with acceptance and mindfulness (meditation) rather than be blindly driven by them. Unchecked anxiety and fear traps us in constant reactivity, which depletes our spirit and obstructs our connection with God and one another.

Brach's guided meditations teach me that we can meet God in the breath. We can experience a growing spaciousness, an expansion of heart and spirit, a grounding and centering in God's limitless love which is continually bringing order out of chaos, light out of darkness, life from death.

Contact: Rowland.Jay@FPCRochester.org

*from the FPC Parish Nursing program*

## May is Mental Health Awareness Month



In May we mark Mental Health Awareness Month. One in five Americans struggle with mental illness. This year more than ever we need to be aware of our own and others' mental health. The coronavirus has reduced our normal chances for exercise, social interaction, work, financial stability, and other activities that keep us balanced.

Here are 5 tips for mental health.

- 1) **Accept what you cannot control.**  
Right now even the best-laid plans have gone awry - focus on what you can control.
- 2) **Try to exercise and get outside.**  
Both will help with stress!
- 3) **Stay connected to friends.**  
Try to make time for quality video chat or phone chat as well as text/email communication.
- 4) **Don't be afraid to ask for help.**  
There are video doctor visits and virtual counseling options. You can reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK.
- 5) **Stay in the present, dwell on the positive, and try not to get sucked into the negativity of the news cycle.**  
Look forward to seeing you again at church!

*~ Ariel Boswell / FPC Parish Nurse Coordinator*

Good News of First Presbyterian Church - 5 - May 2020



Janine Yanisch  
First Players  
Director

## Greetings from First Players!

It's been 5 weeks since First Players band rehearsals were suspended due to the COVID-19 virus, and 5 weeks since our 35 young musicians have had the opportunity to make music together. It's all rather surreal.

The other day I stopped by the church to pick up some music and the rooms that usually bear witness to countless songs and notes - many right, many wrong - and sometimes general cacophony that only eager young band musicians can create, were quiet and dark.

The calendar was on the wall in the band room, noting which First Players students' birthdays were coming up. The rehearsal notes from the last practice were still on the whiteboard. The chairs and stands were waiting for the children.

*We all look forward to the day when those chairs are filled and music again rolls out the door and down the halls.*

Until that day arrives, I am offering individual lessons via Zoom. Because there is a time lag and lack of quality sound available on a computer, it does not work to have more than one person play at a time. Thus, no band rehearsals through the computer. The week of March 24, the first week lessons were offered, 7 students had lessons. Next week we will be up to 15 students. Hurray! I believe this gives the students the opportunity not only to continue their musical growth and education, but to know that by making music, however and wherever they are, they are making the world a better place. And that is a beautiful thing.

Our April 27 concert will not happen. Our May "Meet the Instrument" night will likely be postponed. I don't know if there will be a Honkers season, nor if we'll be playing at their June 11 game. But I do know that the music of our First Players beats on!

And maybe, whenever this is over and/or it's safe to do so, we can come together for a First Players recital to celebrate the music we've made during this unique time.

Peace,  
and be well,

Janine (contact: FPCFirstPlayers@gmail.com)

Let's all give a huge round of thanks to everyone involved in producing our live stream worship services - TJ, Jay, John and especially Jake Wright for taking over videotaping the services and getting them on YouTube and Facebook and Juliet Parlette for monitoring the comments and getting the prayer requests to TJ and Jay. The many positive comments we hear about the service confirm our great appreciation for what these people are doing!

Good News of First Presbyterian Church - 6 - May 2020

## A Report from Stewardship/Finance committee

We hope you have found things to do around the house, including the virtual church services on Sunday mornings, or whenever you are able to watch.

These are crazy times and we are all figuring out how it works, but we are still committed to the plans we made for sustaining our mission work, maintaining our lovely facility, and supporting our staff when we did the budget planning for 2020. We have saved some money with the church being closed and no services or meetings or programs, but we still have fixed expenses including payroll and building upkeep and this year's budget was tight to begin with.

As of the end of March 2020 the finances of FPC were as expected with income down, but overall we are on firm ground. HUGE thanks to those of you who have mailed offerings to the church instead of putting it in the offering plate! We also understand that some of you may be facing a change in your finances as a result of the current COVID-19. If you can pay your pledge, that's great; if you can't, we understand.

Peace and all good.

~ Sarah Edgerton for the Stewardship and Finance committee

## Church Family News

### Anniversaries

Congratulations to **Robert and Cynthia Sannes**, who will celebrate their 55th wedding anniversary May 15.

Congratulations to **Robert and Ann Groover**, who will celebrate their 56th wedding anniversary May 23.

Congratulations to **John and Jane Tietjen**, who will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary May 30.

### Birth

Congratulations to **John, Sarah, and Daniel Stender** on the birth of their son and brother, **Benjamin Lester Stender**, April 6.

### Birthdays

Happy Birthday to **Pauli Krieger**, who will celebrate her 92nd birthday May 4.

Happy Birthday to **Donald Wiegert**, who will celebrate his 90th birthday May 6.

Happy Birthday to **Lonnie Martin**, who will celebrate her 96th birthday May 10.

Happy Birthday to **Barbara Madsen**, who will celebrate her 90th birthday May 17.

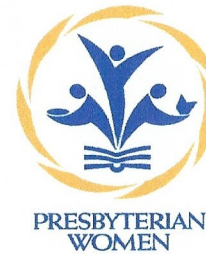
Happy Birthday to **John Brandrup**, who will celebrate his 90th birthday May 23.

Happy Birthday to **Melvin Hicks**, who will celebrate his 94th birthday May 29.

### Death

We extend our condolences to **Bev Lewis and her family** on the death of her husband, **David Lewis**, April 13.

Good News of First Presbyterian Church - 7 - May 2020



## News from Presbyterian Women

\* *Sylvia Swede, facilitator*

For several years Presbyterian Women has provided for the education of two students in Niger through the Remember Niger Coalition. In April we received notice that, because of the coronavirus, borders and schools were closed and public transportation was curtailed.

There was great concern for the students in schools which the Coalition supports because many of the students receive their only meal of the day at school. An Emergency Food Relief Program was set up to provide food and hygiene items for the most vulnerable students and their families. PW sent \$106 to pay for provisions for two families. \$53 provides food and hygiene items for a family of seven for one month. Each gift provides a family with the following:

25 kilos of rice, 10 large bags of beans, 1 can of oil,

15 pieces of soap, 1 protective face mask

Schools were also closed in Romania, where we have supported NOROC (work with orphaned and abandoned children), and the NOROC staff was banned from working with the children face-to-face. **Rich and Carol Schempp**, mission co-workers who visited FPC last year, had to return to the United States.

With the latest national mandates, the children are literally locked into the institutional centers. These centers are already understaffed and many of the regular staff are underqualified to respond to the physical, emotional, and psychological needs of the children. A fund was started to maintain the salaries of the NOROC staff because they are often the only stability in the children's lives. PW sent \$300 for this purpose.

The NOROC staff continues to work with the children through phone calls, Skype sessions, Facebook, and Messenger. They are providing counseling, prayer times, delivering supplies, and sending pizza and birthday cakes for remote birthday parties. The grannies are calling children on the phone to talk with them. The NOROC staff continues to search for ways to help these children who have already experienced so much trauma in their lives.

Thanks for your pledges which make these things possible.

## Stewardship Alive!

### First Presbyterian Church Financial Statement / March 2020

#### General Operating Budget

Balance (3/1/2020)	\$ 119,089.79
Receipts (March)	+ 47,751.48
Disbursements (March)	- 70,601.36
Balance (3/31/20)	\$ 96,239.91

Good News of First Presbyterian Church - 8 - May 2020

## How we stay in touch in this time of separation

Missing again this month is the calendar - because as of Friday, March 13 (how appropriate) everything was canceled due to the COVID-19 crisis. We don't know for how long this will be in effect, but we'll let you know when we start scheduling meetings and events again. In the meantime, we'll keep you informed through various means »

- » **Sunday bulletins and sermons on our web page.** Go to [www.FPCRochester.org](http://www.FPCRochester.org). Below the top banner is 'Worship @ FPC' and below that click on 'Learn More'. That will bring up a choice of sermons (click one and click 'read more') and bulletins (click a date, read more, and download PDF).
- » **Sunday worship.** Since March 15 we have presented an informal Sunday worship service with T.J., Jay, and John at 10 a.m. on YouTube and Facebook. We are now pre-recording the service and airing it at the 10 a.m. hour on Sunday. If you miss it, it will stay on the WEB page and you can watch it later. Follow the same access instructions (see below) to get it.
- » **Prayer requests.** Because we are pre-recording the Sunday service, prayer requests should be e-mailed to either Rev. Parlette (814-715-0290) or Rev. Rowland (990-1367) by Thursday noon.
- » **How do I access the services?** The easiest way is on our church's WEB page:
  1. Go to [www.FPCRochester.org](http://www.FPCRochester.org). Depending on how you access that, you may need to click on 'First Presbyterian Church - located near Mayo Clinic.' Wait until the FPC page loads.
  2. There should be a red banner across the top of the screen. If there is, click on that. If there isn't, scroll down to 'Highlighted Events' and click on the left panel. The link to the service is under the picture. Click on the link and you should be ready to watch. Until we actually go on the air, the space you get may be blank, so don't panic and please be patient!
- » **Good News in Brief.** If you aren't now on the GNB e-mailing list, call the church office or send an e-mail to [evans.carol512@gmail.com](mailto:evans.carol512@gmail.com). GNB is a weekly newsletter we e-mail each Wednesday or Thursday. This is an 'opt-in' newsletter - you have to let us know you want to get it.
- » **TextInChurch.** If you're on this app, watch your cellphone/Smartphone for special announcements. To be contacted, text keyword "connect" to 507-200-3175.
- » Anything else we can tell you (other than when things will be back to normal)?

*In these challenging times, supporting one another means more than ever. We'll communicate information as it becomes available. For now, please continue to take care of yourself and look out for one another.*

## Is there a graduate in your house?



In the June issue of the Good News we'll list our high school and college graduates of 2020.

If you or your child will be graduating, or graduated mid-year, please let us know by calling the church office (282-1618) or e-mailing us ([fpc\\_carol@hotmail.com](mailto:fpc_carol@hotmail.com)).

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. (2 Corinthians 4.8-10 [RSV])



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The Good News is published the first of each month for members and friends of First Presbyterian Church (FPC). The newsletter tells the story of the church, promotes its programs, and publicizes opportunities to live out one's faith. Deadline for submission of material is the fifteenth of the preceding month.

### Church Staff

Pastor	Thomas J. (T.J.) Parlette
Associate Pastor	Jay P. Rowland
Director of Music	John E. Stender
Director of Music Emeritus	Lee J. Afdahl
Coordinator of Youth and Christian Education	Susanna L. Stone
Office Administrator	Susan K. Kruger
Facility Manager	Harry E. Coleman
Custodian	Tyler Sczurek
Part-time music assistants	Katie Kuisle (Calvin and Cherub Choirs)
	Janine Yanisch (First Players)
Part-time custodians/security	Than Boutelle, Vera Brooks, Sally Evans, Tami Rinn
Child Care Workers	Amy Elliott, Maria Alma Candido, Esther Lebron, Brenda Thorson
Newsletter Editor	Carol J. Evans
Parish Associates	Roger Ring, Carol Shaffer, James Walker

Sunday worship at 10 a.m. on YouTube and Facebook  
Education classes: See "Sunday School Storytime with Susanna" on our web page.  
Office hours: The office is closed until further notice.

Visit our WEB page at [www.FPCRochester.org](http://www.FPCRochester.org).

**The mission of First Presbyterian Church of Rochester  
is to reflect God's love for all people  
by proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.**