

Presbytery of Scioto Valley (PSV) Mid-Week E-News March 26, 2020

www.psvonline.org

The Presbytery OF SCIOTO VALLEY

Mission and Vision Statement

***"Inspire, Strengthen, And Challenge Congregations
For Christ's Mission"***

Presbytery Calendar

MARCH



A Prayer for...
A Time Like This
Holy God:
It's easy to begin
"The Lord is my
shepherd..."
though perhaps
right now
a better start
in prayer is
"Lord, you have
been our dwelling...
Remind us
in time of fear or
trial storm or
plague that you
have given us
others who pray
with us

A Letter to our PSV Church Professionals (CCP)

From the Reverend Annie Melick, CCP Chairperson

email: annie@melick.net

Church professionals, I know that most of you are working harder than ever! We had to navigate a pretty steep learning curve to suddenly offer worship services, meetings, and classes online. We find ourselves with a big load of pastoral care right now, too. Our congregations need us more than ever. I pray that you will each find peace and rest during this season, too. If you have prayer concerns, or need pastoral care yourself, please contact me or Jeannie. Last week a group of us met on Zoom to pray and offer support for one another. If you would like to join this, please use the log in information below for this Pastors' Group weekly on Thursdays at 2 pm.

To Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/812694666?pwd=R0ZXMEkxZUJUY3p0YmdxUzZadGFmZz09>

Meeting ID: 812 694 666 Password: 980039

PSV COMMISSION LEADERS READY TO ASSIST CONGREGATIONS AND PASTORS...

The Presbytery leaders elected by our Presbytery are available to support, guide and assist congregations and pastors especially during this difficult time of dealing with the danger and impact of the Coronavirus. Please feel free to contact any of these leaders with your questions and concerns. The Presbytery Commission leaders are: Commission for Congregational Life; The Reverend Adam Anderson, Chairperson, email: pastor@oldstone.org; Commission for Church Professionals, Reverend Annie Melick, Chairperson, email: Annie@Melick.net; Commission for Nurture and Outreach, Reverend Mary Gause, Chairperson,

and stand by us
in Jesus Christ.

by bill leety

Presbytery

Office is

Currently Closed

All meetings of
Presbytery
Commissions and
committees have
been cancelled,
postponed or are
being managed
via conference
calls, online
conversations or
Zoom meetings.

APRIL

Sunday, April 5

Palm Sunday

Holy Week Begins

April 10

Good Friday

Sunday, April 12

Easter

Resurrection
of the Lord!



Calendar

Update!

The Art of

Transitional

Ministry Week 1

Training

email: mgause@overbrookchurch.org; Commission for Presbytery Operations, Jim Hines, Chairperson, email: jhines1116@gmail.com; Coordinating Team, Elder Carla Mavis, Chairperson, email; carla.mavis@gmail.com. In addition, please feel free to contact the Reverend Jeannie Harsh, Executive Presbyter by email: Jeannie@psvonline.org, or cell: 614-562-1775.

Supporting Older Adults During COVID-19

To learn more ways to continue to support older adults during this crisis time, join in the ZOOM Meeting on Friday, March 27, 1 pm, Eastern Time. This meeting will be presented by the Presbyterian Older Adult Ministry Network. To join this ZOOM Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/640810851>

For more information or questions, email Desiree Youngblood: dyoungblood@swbell.net.

Thoughts and Prayers from Jeannie Harsh

Executive Presbyter, Presbytery of Scioto Valley



Jeannie Harsh

Dear Friends, I always hold each of you in my thoughts and prayers, especially in this time of anxiety as we address the challenges that COVID-19 has brought into our church families and communities. I know we will weather this disruption in our lives. As we live into our home-bound time, may it bring each of us a time of peace...a time to be alone, or a time to be with family, maybe even a time to find new ways to communicate and keep in touch. We, in the presbytery, are enjoying discovering creative ways to continue to work together. Our ZOOM meetings offer us the opportunity to hear each other's voices and see each other's faces while staying safely in our homes. We are discovering that we can be connected in new ways. And, we Presbyterians do value our connections. I pray that this time of social separation will offer all of us opportunities to stay in touch as we discover creative ways to live into who we are as a connectional church. And, may the peace of Christ be with each of you each day wherever you are!

has been

postponed

from May 3-7 to

August 30-

September 3.

THE PRESBYTERY OF SCIOTO VALLEY (PSV) COMMISSION LEADERS' UPDATE ON COVID-19

A Report from the March 25th ZOOM Meeting of the PSV Chairs for The Commission for Congregational Life, The Commission for Church Professionals, The Commission for Nurture and Outreach, The Commission for Presbytery Operations, The Coordinating Team, and PSV Staff

Summarized by the Reverend Jeffrey A. Schooley, PSV Stated Clerk

Your Presbytery leaders want you to know that we continue to work diligently on behalf of the presbytery so that we might all come through this chaotic and confusing season healthier and holier than when we entered it. To that end, we are meeting via Zoom video conferencing once a week in order to review and plan around the needs and challenges facing our churches, their pastors and their members. The chair of the Coordinating Team, the Presbytery Moderator, the Executive Presbyter, and the Stated Clerk are joining in this supportive and collaborative work.

It is our intention to continue to meet and work together to rise to the challenges facing us and so you can reasonably expect to receive regular summary reports from us. If, in the meanwhile, unique questions and problems arise within the life of your congregation, please also feel free to contact us directly. You can easily find all our email addresses at www.psvresources.org, the resource page we've created for the COVID-19 outbreak and beyond.

This summary is focused on four topics that have been brought to our attention over the previous weeks:

1. Further clarity on the Presbytery's guidance to churches to suspend all in-person worship and church activities for an "indefinite" period of time - and especially what this might mean for Holy Week 2020
2. Guidance for church property use in response to COVID-19
3. The Lord's Supper at times when churches are worshipping virtually
4. Concerns over church finances

Recommended suspension of all in-person worship and church activities

Last week, the Presbytery leadership sent a letter strongly urging all churches in the Presbytery of Scioto Valley to suspend all in-person worship and church activities indefinitely. As was anticipated, there have been some questions around what "indefinitely" means and whether or not the Presbytery is in a position to provide a more concrete date.

"Indefinitely" was chosen as both a declaration of hope and as an honest appraisal of this very fluid situation. As a declaration of hope, we saw "indefinitely" as a reminder that this virus could clear up quicker than the experts were predicting and that we might reasonably and faithfully return to in-person activities sooner than expected. We maintain this hope even now. We also, however, are following the guidance and information being provided to us by Governor Mike DeWine and Dr. Amy Acton, the Director of the Office of Public Health. They have consistently made it clear that mitigating the spread of COVID-19 is not going to be a quick thing. We continue to follow the leadership of our civil authorities in our discernment and decision-making. It is all we can do. To say otherwise, at this point, would be dishonest of us.

Part of the expressed concern around this term - "indefinitely" - is what it could mean for Holy Week and Easter 2020. While we remain hopeful that we might celebrate this wonderful season as usual, we also want to encourage every church to begin to prepare - emotionally and spiritually - for the sad reality that this year's Holy Week will not look like previous years'. Every church, of course, is still free to make their own choices - assuming that they do not transgress any rules put forth by the civil authorities - but our guidance is still to prepare to find ways to worship our God without being together. Easter 2020 is not promised to us, but our hope in the resurrection remains as sure as ever.

Guidance Regarding Church Property Use

One of the results of the Presbytery leadership's previous letter urging the suspension of all in-person worship and church activities is that it created confusion around how the church can still work missionally to minister to those in need; this is especially true for churches that provide nutrition ministries or other forms of social services in their communities.

No part of our guidance should be misconstrued to imply that the Presbytery is shutting down these missions and ministries. At the same time, the decisions of each Session as it regards building use during this season are still binding. The Presbytery recommends that churches decide what the best practices are - keeping in mind all the advice we've been given about hand washing and physical distancing - for them and any mission partners they work with in their buildings. Indeed, we are proud of those churches who have continued to serve those in need during this time, while simultaneously commiserating with those churches who have found it most prudent to suspend services. We do recommend that any church that suspends services to vulnerable peoples also do the appropriate research necessary to direct those people to other people and places that can provide care. We are also recommending that ALL churches with such ministries visit www.psvresources.org to learn what other churches are doing to make mission and ministry possible during this time. Those stories and guidance will be on the website shortly.

Virtual Lord's Supper

With many churches traditionally celebrating the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of each month, we are aware that April 5 (Palm Sunday) looms large. Following guidance from the PC (U.S.A.), we are recommending churches who so desire to do so participate in a virtual communion service. The polity is clear that these accommodations are permissible, so long as the Session of a church has deemed them necessary. We would specifically draw your attention to W-3.0410, second paragraph, which reads: "A council may authorize the celebration of the Lord's Supper in certain contexts beyond the congregational setting, such as hospitals, prisons, schools, military bases, or other

ministry settings." For many of our churches, Facebook Live, Zoom, and YouTube have become legitimate expressions of "other ministry settings."

Our main recommendation is that church leadership weigh the logistics of such services carefully, especially as it pertains to the elements. If broadcasting that your church is going to hold a virtual communion service that requires members to secure the necessary elements for themselves causes an at-risk congregant to make an additional shopping trip and thus expose themselves to potential contraction of COVID-19, then maybe such guidance shouldn't be given. It is important that each church use its best reasoning and most thoughtful approach to pursuing this option. Otherwise, we look forward to hearing how God has blessed us through a communion experience most of us probably never anticipated having. God is good that way.

Churches and Financial Difficulties

We are all keenly aware that a prolonged season of no in-person worship can threaten the financial well-being of churches who receive the majority of their annual income through the weekly offering. As such, we offer the following guidance:

- Encourage your congregation to continue to give even while apart. Online Giving is a viable option and easier to set up than one might expect. A number of options exist for this sort of giving, but we lift up - especially - the Presbyterian Foundation. Do keep in mind that online giving always requires a small percentage of each gift given to go to the host/provider of this service. Additionally, Electronic Deposit/Checks are a good option provided by most banks. Encourage congregants to call their banks and work out the details to have funds sent directly to the church from their checking accounts, without their ever having to set foot inside church or bank. Finally, it is appropriate to encourage congregants to just mail in their checks to the church. What is probably most important to remember is to present giving in this time *not* as an act of institutional stabilization, but rather as a radical witness to the goodness of God. As we witness neighbors in each of our communities turn toward hoarding instincts fueled by a mindset of scarcity, the church has an amazing opportunity to witness to generosity and our God of abundance. Giving is always such a witness, but it will be even more profound when thrown into stark contrast with the rest of society.
- We also need to encourage churches to use any reserves they might have on hand. To channel our inner Mordecai, perhaps those funds were meant for just such a time as this. Hoarding reserves in this season is the exact opposite witness to what we recommended above. Even having reserves is proof that God has provided before; surely God can provide again.
- Finally, consider leaning more radically into our connectional theology. If your church happens to have a surplus and is located near another Presbyterian church in need, consider what your role might be in supporting that congregation. While the Presbytery will always gladly accept directed giving from our churches for such use, churches are equally allowed (and encouraged) to seek how they might serve without the Presbytery as an intermediary.

It is our sincere hope that this correspondence finds you healthy and well, and that it answers any lingering questions you might have. Please do not hesitate to call upon any of the Commission chairs, or the rest of the Presbytery leadership, if any challenges arise that require our support and encouragement. We will continue to be in touch.

Stated Meetings of the Presbytery of Scioto Valley (PSV) in 2020

May 19, 2020, 3:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. - Columbus, Broad Street Presbyterian Church
September 15, 2020, 3:30 p.m. -7:30 p.m. - Columbus, Overbrook Presbyterian Church
November 17, 2020, 3:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. - Jackson, First Presbyterian Church

The 225th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) To be held in Columbus, Ohio, July 2-9, 2022

The Presbytery of Scioto Valley has the honor of hosting the 225th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), July 2-9, 2022. Please note the date change from the original announcement. For questions, or to sign up to volunteer, email: jeannie@psvonline.org

For the latest news and information from the Presbytery of Scioto Valley and its churches, visit www.psvonline.org. Telephone: 614-847-0565 or 800-244-7207; Fax: 614-847-4359

The Presbytery of Scioto Valley
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