

May 26, 2020

Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who wore masks and practiced social distancing in worship this past Sunday! It was our first time back in the sanctuary since March 22, and most of us did our best to keep everyone else safe. We have posted recent Centers for Disease Control guidelines for churches on the doors, and will continue to comply in every possible way – which includes wearing masks. Read on ...

Headlines!

Have you seen the headlines? “Multiple COVID-19 Infections in Local Church!” It has happened in Arkansas, California, Washington, and here in North Carolina. It could happen at First Presbyterian Church as well if we are not careful. Worshiping together in church is one of the precious liberties guaranteed in our Bill of Rights, which we celebrated in our Memorial Day worship service this past Sunday. But Christians and Americans understand that personal freedom requires personal responsibility for the common good, or else it devolves into anarchy. You can help protect the health and safety of everyone in church, yourself included, by wearing a mask and practicing safe social distancing whenever we come together.

[From Dr. Paul Sasser:](#)

Dear friends,

What a blessing it was to be able to worship together, inside this morning. Just some medical thoughts as we prepare for next week. Our rural county has far fewer cases than more urban counties around us. That is encouraging, but as shelter-at-home is

relaxed and travel is increased, our exposure risk increases. We are seeing asymptomatic cases in the county, with infectivity (I had an asymptomatic case tested this week due to exposure at work from someone who was positive for COVID-19). Therefore, the safe thing would be to assume everyone, including yourself, to be infected. With that in mind, if you are sitting in the congregation, please wear a mask. Masks aren't perfect and only partially protect the wearer, but decrease infectivity to those around you by a significant percent. Your mask protects the most vulnerable in our congregation. This is especially important when visiting before and after the service and when singing. The praise team should be far enough away from the congregation to not require masks. Same with Peter. There are masks at the entrance; simply ask the greeter and you will have one for those trips to Walmart. I know masks are not comfortable, I wear them all day long, but if we can protect the most fragile of our congregation with this simple step, that's not "fear," which Peter told us today.

It is the opposite of fear. It is a small personal sacrifice that emulates the infinitely greater sacrifices of America's fallen warriors whose courage and devotion to duty we honored yesterday.

Sunday afternoon I received this text message from a member of our congregation who stayed home and worshiped online:

Peter, thank you for sharing the service online. Missed being there! Sorry they didn't have the sound for Cindy's postlude! Know that it was pretty!!

Sorry to see the bunching up and "no masks" after the service! Not social distance! That is why it will be difficult to come back and worship. People don't think but they could be asymptomatic ... not worth any chance! Hopefully not, but it might be months before some of us can return. People need to remember!!

To quote someone after church on Sunday: "We can do better." It is a matter of common courtesy. **Not wearing masks or practicing social distancing may prevent some of our vulnerable brothers and sisters from being able to come to church and worship with the rest of us.**

We want everyone to feel safe and welcome at First Presbyterian Church. I am not interested in excluding people for not wearing masks, but if you choose not to wear a mask, please choose also not to mingle before and

after worship. Keep your distance, and help keep First Presbyterian Church out of the headlines.

Peter N. Smith

Congregational Meeting Next Sunday

By Session agreement, our annual Congregational Meeting is scheduled next Sunday immediately after the worship service. The primary order of business before us is the election of Ruling Elders to the Session Class of 2023. Nominees are: Martha Corum; Charlie Hall; Suzon Martin; Paul Sasser; and Pat Smith. Other nominations may be presented from the floor. Ruling Elders rotating off Session this month are: Flavel Collins; Robert Gauldin; Sue Parker; Billy Shafer; Pat Smith. We also need to elect at least three members at-large to serve on next year's Nominating Committee (responsible for nominating people to the office of Ruling Elder).

Sunday, May 31

Next Sunday is the Day of Pentecost, which many consider the birth of the church, when the Holy Spirit came upon the followers of Jesus Christ and they were filled with power (Acts 2). We look forward to receiving our Confirmation Class participants, Cayden Hinson and Cyler Vincent, into the membership of the church by profession of faith.

We will return to our theme of the marks of Christian Discipleship in our sermon next Sunday. So far we have talked about hearts for Christ alone, minds transformed by the Word, arms of love, and knees for prayer. Next week will be: "Voices to Speak Good News" (Luke 15:1-7).

Our annual Congregational Meeting will convene immediately after the worship service. The EPC Book of Order requires ten percent of the membership for a quorum, or 25 active members.

Online Giving at FPC – Safe, Easy, and Convenient

Our website (www.fpceden.org) has a DONATE button at the top of the home page, which takes users to a secure site for making financial contributions to the church using credit and debit cards. It is safe and very easy to use. Please remember to support our General Fund for daily operating expenses, as well as our Building Fund for monthly mortgage payments.



Black Tie and Blue Jeans

From Pat Smith and Mission Service Committee ...

ROCKINGHAM PREGNANCY CARE CENTER ON-LINE AUCTION – This auction replaces the Black Tie & Blue Jeans Fundraiser for the Pregnancy Care Center. Please mark your calendars for May 22 – May 31 to go online and look at the more than 400 items including cakes, pies and a family dish of lasagna. Most of the delectable items are made by church members. Bids will be registered and the auction will run for a week so you may check your bid often. Bidding will end on May 31 and items may be picked up at the Pregnancy Care Center beginning on June 1. Please see the attached flyer about this event. Simply click on the link on the flyer to begin bidding. Call the center if you have a problem getting on line or have other questions.



Black Tie and Blue Jeans will look different this year but our needs are the same! The auction provides a large portion of income that is crucial in order for us to offer services, education, and support to our clients. **PLEASE join us ONLINE May 22—May 31, 2020.**

EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL



ONLINE May 22—May 31, 2020

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<https://www.biddingowl.com/RockinghamPregnancyCare>



It's not just a date—it's a date that makes a difference.



Graduation Sunday – June 7

We look forward to recognizing our high school and college graduates on Sunday, June 7. Please give the names of your graduating seniors to Peter Smith (peter@fpceden.org) or Beth Chandler (beth@fpredden.org) so that we may present them with a gift from the congregation.



NEW: Gospel of John Bible Study

The Pastor will lead a new Bible study through the Gospel of John starting Wednesday, June 10 at 6:00 pm. Everyone is welcome! Bring your Bible, your questions, and your passion for studying one of the most exciting books in the New Testament. We will meet in the Parlor or the Gathering Area depending on attendance, and will practice safe social distancing.

Prayers

Local, state, and national leaders

People infected with COVID-19

Families of loved-ones who have died from COVID-19

Health care workers who treat COVID-19 patients

Retail clerks, truck drivers, warehouse workers who keep necessities in our stores

Business-owners and employees who have lost their jobs because of COVID-19

Parents and children who are out of school

Teachers who have to learn to do their jobs in a new ways

High school seniors who are missing many important milestones

First Presbyterian Church and other congregations

America's health and economic impact from COVID-19

Carol Helms and Larry
Mac and Sherry McDowell
Danny Wilson and family
Jim and Mariam Wilson
Paul Brown and family
Rhonda and Denny Hale
Larry and Lib Roberson
Shirley Carter
Ron and Suzon Martin
Mike and Merle Gentry
Gen Critz
Jeannie Wilde
Joy Outland
Bobbie Felizzi
Dana Roare
Karen Dolbere
Joice Pucket
Susan Howell
Christa Walker and Morgan
Stephanie and Jacob Smith
Hazel Horton