



# *The Presbyter*

April 2020

The First Presbyterian Church of Clarks Summit

## **From the Pastor**

April 2020

Friends, this is the Lent that none of us expected. As Presbyterians, we have often regarded our spiritual practice as "Lent Lite," perhaps skipping a piece of chocolate cake while not changing our lives in any significant way. This year, the reality of the coronavirus pandemic is forcing all of us to simplify, to stay connected, to emphasize what's valuable, to cast off sloth and deepen our devotion, and, above all, to live with restraint. All of these are classic Lenten themes.

The current reality is rigorous and demanding. No doubt about it. Please be sure to take care of yourself and those you love. Pay special attention to your spirit. It is important to stay positive, realistic, and strong. To that end, I recently read an article in the New York Times from astronaut Scott Kelly. He spent a year in outer space and knows all about the demands of social distancing. Here is his list of eight soul-sustaining suggestions:

- Follow a schedule
- Go outside
- Keep a journal
- Listen to experts
- Pace yourself
- Take up a hobby
- Take time to connect
- Remember we are all connected

To his list, I would add the classical spiritual practices of prayer, meditation, reading, and reflection on scripture. Especially the psalms. As I have selected the scripture readings for our upcoming online Maundy Thursday service, I have been struck by the poignant honesty of the psalms in light of the current crisis.

We are stewards of body, mind, and spirit. It matters where we devote our energy. I hope this extended season of Lent is a time for all of us to grow in the grace and love of Christ. Please let me know if there is anything you need in this stressful time. I miss you and look forward to seeing you face to face!

With every good wish,  
*Rev. Bill Carter*  
pastor@fpccs.org

## Online Holy Week schedule

- **Palm Sunday**, April 5, at 10:00 a.m.
- **Maundy Thursday**, April 9, at 7:30 p.m. with Tenebrae readings and "virtual communion" - bring your own bread and wine.
- **Good Friday**, April 10, at 12:00 noon (a brief service of prayer and scripture)
- **Easter Sunday**, April 12, at 10:00 a.m.

## Weekly Bible Study

**Anybody want to join us for a weekly Bible study?** For Thursdays through the end of April, Rev. Bill will lead a morning online Bible study through our Zoom teleconferencing account. It will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Bring your own Bible and coffee. All are welcome, as we look at the scripture passage for the upcoming Sunday. We invite you to give this a try.

We are using the free Zoom videoconference software so that everyone can see and hear one another if they have a computer and microphone. For those who wish to do this, you need to sign up at **www.zoom.us** and download the software ahead of time.

After you have done this: to take part on your computer, iPad, or smart phone, go to **https://zoom.us/j/317867850** and sign on a few minutes before the meeting.

You can also join by calling in by phone. Dial this number: **1 929 205 6099**, and enter the meeting ID at the prompt. The unique meeting ID for this weekly Bible study is **317 867 850**

The Presbyterian deadline for the next issue is to be determined.

The Presbyterian is a monthly newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church, 300 School Street, Clarks Summit, PA 18411.

In accordance with CDC guidelines, we have closed our building for the time being. **Our worship services have moved online and are held on Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m.** We look forward to worshipping together when it is safe to do so.

Our staff is working out of their homes. Feel free to get in touch if there is anything we can do for you.

<b>Church Office</b>	<b>(570) 586-6306</b>
<b>Fax</b>	<b>(570) 587-3784</b>
<b>Web Page</b>	<b>www.fpccs.org</b>
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<b>Administrative Assistant</b>	Nancy Owens
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<b>Treasurer</b>	Wayne Griffiths
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<b>Director of Bells</b>	Richard Cochrane
<b>Director of Chapel Choir</b>	Kay Ten Eyck
<b>Organist</b>	Kay Ten Eyck
<b>Sexton</b>	John Conklin

## **Board of Deacons**

Care Team Ministry **Coordinators are:**

Deacon Meals:	Donna Kepler 570-587-2729
Time of Loss:	Anne Rich 570-587-2802
Emergency Home Repairs And Maintenance:	Joe Waters 570-351-3620
Deacon Driver:	Mick Wirth 570-587-3767

Please let the Board of Deacons Care Team Coordinators or the church office know if anyone is in need of care.

We're here to care for FPC members and friends and we count on all of you to let us know when help is needed. This is our ministry and our Christian privilege to care for you.

# How to stay connected to your church family

As we move through the third week of our “social distancing” response to the coronavirus, our building is closed -- yet we are the church of Jesus Christ. Here is a quick update on what is going on at the Church on the Hill.

**First Presbyterian Church is doing ministry, but we are doing it in different ways.** We do not know how long these changes will last, but we will follow the guidance of the CDC and the NIH. Please share the following information to family, friends, and neighbors.

**Through the end of April, Sunday worship will be live-streamed (broadcast online) on Facebook Live each Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m.** Scroll down to the "videos" section on the left side, click that, and you will see the video. We will sign on from the church a few minutes before the start of the service time. Feel free to write a greeting or share a prayer concern.

## Some tips:

- Check our church's website regularly for updates. **Here is the link: [www.fpccs.org](http://www.fpccs.org)**
  - The **worship bulletin** for every Sunday is also available on the church website. We will include lyrics to the hymns so you can sing along.
  - We have set up a **prayer request link on our website** which resembles our weekly prayer cards. Send along your prayer requests through our website and we will try to include them in our Sunday services.
  - Thank you for your strong financial support during this shaky time. We invite you to **contribute online**. You are also invited to send your contributions to us at 300 School Street, Clarks Summit, PA 18411. We appreciate your generosity.
  - The weekly service will also be recorded and posted later in the day **online on the church's YouTube channel**. To find it, go to **[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)** and search for "fpccs." The inside scoop is that the YouTube recording is usually clearer and sounds better than the live broadcast.
  - As it has been our practice, the weekly sermon recording on the church's website ( <http://fpccs.org/sermons-a-worship/sermon-audio-archives.html> ).
  - The “script” of Rev. Bill's sermon is always posted on his sermon blog ( <http://billcartersermons.blogspot.com/> ), usually late on Saturday night.
  - **Need to talk to somebody?** Our church leaders, Stephen Ministers, and our pastor are just a phone call away. Rev. Carter would also be glad to give you a call, or contact you visually on Skype or Zoom teleconferencing.
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## One Great Hour of Sharing

Around the world, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. The three programs supported by One Great Hour of Sharing – Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People – all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need.



Received during the season of Lent, each gift to One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) helps to improve the lives of people in these challenging situations. The offering provides us a way to share God’s love with our neighbors in need. **In fact, OGHS is the single, largest way that Presbyterians come together every year to work for a better world.**

**Please give generously to benefit others!** You can mail a contribution to the church, or use our convenient online giving at [www.fpccs.org](http://www.fpccs.org)

**For the time begin, all church meetings will be held online.** We have convened Zoom meetings of our Session and our Deacons. If we can help facilitate a meeting for your group, please contact Rev. Bill ([pastor@fpccs.org](mailto:pastor@fpccs.org)). You will have to load the free Zoom software before the meeting, and he will gladly walk you through the process.

Many people in the church are willing to **make a run to the grocery store or pick up medication** for anyone in our church family. Contact our office (586-6306 or [office@fpccs.org](mailto:office@fpccs.org)) and we will help to make the connection.

In times like this, we need to reach out to one another in care and compassion. Can we ask you to do something very simple? **Could you make a list of ten people in the church family that you are concerned about, and call them once or twice a week?** It is a simple thing to do, but it expands our touch. As you can imagine, anxiety is high, information is inconsistent, and people need human connection. Your phone calls and cards to one another will be extremely important.

**Above all,** trust God. Love one another. Get outside and enjoy the fresh air. Limit your TV watching. Go for a drive around the beautiful countryside. Tackle those rainy day projects. Know that you are loved, and that your church is concerned about your well-being. Thank you for your faith, love, and hope during this time!