

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN TIMES

LOVING AND SERVING GOD AND ONE ANOTHER



Grace to you and peace in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

As I write this note, it's been exactly two weeks since I began as "new guy" here at FPC Manhattan. And what a two weeks it's been! I've had the opportunity to speak either face-to-face, via ZOOM, or on the telephone with many folks. I've run into many of you here in the office, have had a few committee meetings, and have met many neighbors as I've walked around the building, and across the parking lot. I've gotten lost several times simply trying to navigate the town and find my way home. And have begun learning my way around the labyrinth that is the building we all call FPC (does anyone know where the light switch to the maintenance room downstairs is located?). It's an intense time of listening and learning.

But it's a strange time, and getting stranger by the day, too, as we all navigate these "COVID-Times" in which we find ourselves. Trust me, please, when I say that I (and my family) share many of the same feelings of longing, disconnectedness, disquiet, and anxiety about what the future will bring, when we'll be together in worship again, and what (as we've begun calling it in the office) **FPC 2.0** will look like.

It's so easy in such times to focus on what we *don't* have, to the neglect of affirming what we *do* have. Or put a different way: it's easy to become discouraged and pessimistic about what we've lost, and forget about who (and whose) we are as those found by the Good Shepherd, Jesus.

While we may have lost familiarity with routines and rituals long held dear, we haven't lost the presence of Christ with us in our scattered state. We are finding new ways to dwell in God's presence and new routines for gathering as the "virtual" body of Christ. And rather than focusing on what we've lost, we're having to focus on the opportunities God is giving us in these strange times to assess our mission, redirect our vision, reaffirm our core values, and establish new goals. In many ways, these COVID-Times are providing a gift to ask questions we may have been too busy or too frightened to ask before: "What's most important to us as a community of faith?", "If FPC were not here tomorrow, what would the community be missing?", and "How might we, in a time of exile-like separation, *Glow for God* as one translation of Isaiah 60:1 puts it?" How might you answer these questions?

Rest assured that we are feverishly working to put procedures and policies in place to make the FPC building an open, hospitable, and safe environment for all God's children. Rest assured that our new staff (and there's lots of us!) is working tirelessly to field questions and concerns, assist in the overall ministry of the congregation (now and in the planning for the future), keep communication open and transparent, and to do so "decently and in order" as we Presbyterians love to say.

But take comfort, also, in the fact that we're all part of a living body whose charge it is to "love your neighbor as yourself." And as we press onward, discovering new ways God is leading us to do so, I ask you to be in prayer for, and to continue to reach out to, one another—through phone calls, ZOOM, emails, cards and notes, porch visits, socially-distanced park playdates, etc. And remember the words of the psalmist who declares "How very good and pleasant it is when kindred dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1).

I am so very glad to be your pastor, and so very excited to see what God will do in, through, and around, us as we seek to follow where Christ leads.

Peace,
Pastor Jason

July 2, 2020

To our already-beloved-new-church-family,

As I write this, most of the boxes have been unpacked inside the house (just don't look in the garage! J), and we are beginning to settle into new rhythms and routines. Moving is at once stressful, exciting, exhausting, joyful and sad...a bittersweet combination, but one that is all a part of the rich and wondrous journey of life.

It has been written (and attributed to so many different writers that I am not sure who actually penned the phrase) that "God writes straight with crooked lines". I love that image of crooked, winding, bending lines, all leading straight to the same gracious Lord who hallows and redeems it all. At this point in our family's journey, we are grateful to God for leading us so clearly into this new season of ministry with YOU...new community, new home, new schools, new friends, and the privileged gift of expanding our experience of "church family" once again.

We have been overwhelmed by your outpouring of generosity and hospitality toward Jason, me, Kathryn and Ben (and even Copper who shared in the spoils of the Pounding Party with an unexpected Milk-bone and toy!). Thank you so much, for welcoming us in such tangible ways. What a relief it was that first week, when we hadn't yet unpacked pots and pans and our bodies were bone tired, to be able to pull out a gift card and order takeout, or open the fridge and already have fresh fruit to nibble on! We will continue to reap the benefits of your hospitality for weeks and months to come, as you have helped to stock our pantry with all kinds of staples (including dessert and COFFEE...two shameless staples in our home).

It is a joy and a comfort to know that we are already a part of this community of faith. I look forward to being able to meet you all face-to-face, and I am excited to get to know you individually in the coming weeks, months and years as we do life together. These strange times we live in certainly make this process a unique challenge! However, God promises to work all things together for good, and I trust that part of the "good" to come out of so many months of social distancing, will be our great thanksgiving in the simple act of once again being able to worship in the same space, and share a touchable sign of peace with one another. When we replace waves and air hugs with handshakes and real hugs, what a day of rejoicing it will be!

Until then, feel free to reach out to me through email, phone call or text. I'm always up for a cup of coffee or a walk. The landscape here in the Flint Hills is lovely!

Peace, joy, hope and love be yours in Christ Jesus.

Beside you in prayer,

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NOTES OF HOPE

By Scott Voos, Life Skills Ministry

I wear two different hats. One hat has always been my go to hat, the one I grab without thought and that I can always count on for fitting best. I don't even really think about the look of it, and I assume I look my best with it on.

My other hat isn't my go to. It fits just...differently. But lately I'm realizing this hat gets more compliments and people respond better to it.

My two hats are my "career" hats over the years. My go to hat has always been my trade hat. My insurance agency Owner, my customer service Representative, my education Advisor, my Director identity job hat.

The hat I haven't always worn until recently is my Christian hat. And the response to how people interact with me, when they know I'm a man of Christian faith has been incredible. The more visible I make my Christian hat, the more prone people are to reveal what their faith is like. It's been quite the conversation starter.

How are you letting others know of your new identity? I like Colossians 3:3-4 for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

Love, Grace and Blessings to You.

Scott Voos

If you are interested in learning more or contributing to the benevolence funding please contact me at scott@firstpresmanhattan.com

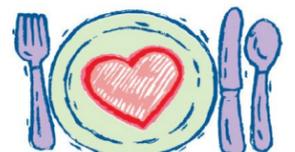
JUNE PRESBY COMMUNITY MEALS

To Go Dinners Served - 293

To Go Breakfasts Served - 204

Pawnee Mental Health Crisis Stabilization Unit - 50

A total of 547 meals were provided by our Fantastic Meal
Volunteers in June!



COMMUNITY DINNER