

FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

BOZEMAN



PresbEnews

June 17, 2020

A mid-week newsletter of First Presbyterian Church - Jody McDevitt & Dan Krebill, co-pastors
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Congregational meeting called for election of officers

The session has called a special meeting of the congregation to be held on the Zoom platform on Sunday, June 28, immediately following the 9:30 a.m. worship service. The sole purpose of the meeting is to act on a report of the Nominating Committee to elect a slate of nominees for elder and deacon positions. Church members are encouraged to attend this meeting online or via telephone. Zoom access information for this meeting will be sent out next week.

WEEKLY WEED WHACKING AND/OR MOWING

Weekly, beginning this week, June 14, we need volunteers to help with weed whacking and/or mowing. Below is a link to 'SignupGenius' where you can sign up one or more times to



either weed whack and/or mow sometime during the week. If you need to change your signup date you can change that on 'SignupGenius', hopefully having contacted another volunteer to swap weeks. Many of you have done weed whacking or mowing at Rockhaven before, so you know the drill. For the 'newbies', don't hesitate to sign up to help. You can bring your own equipment or use the equipment at Rockhaven. It would be helpful if you would contact Scott Thrasher, Camp Director, if you can before arriving to verify work needs to be done and to let him know when you are coming to the Camp. And,

check in with him on arrival. Cell: 406-600-1891. Rockhaven: 406-763-4212

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0b4baaaf2ea0fd0-rockhaven>

If you have any questions, please contact either Scott Thrasher, Camp Director, (406-600-1891, 406-763-4212) or John Patterson, Rockhaven Elder. (406-581-9767, 406-587-9722)

Enhancing Our Conversations with God

"The storm will not last forever. Yet while it rages, we can cling to the Lord's promises of love and faithfulness, for His "testimonies are very sure". Our Father in Heaven is holding our hands." Great Is Thy Faithfulness, 6/13/2020

Congregation Responds to Survey

Last week the congregation was polled regarding reopening the church for worship and summer opportunities at Rockhaven. Ninety persons responded online and 14 were assisted in completing the poll by office administrator Linda Best, for a total of 104 respondents. Many comments were included, which provide food for thought for church leaders going forward. Many thanks to all those who responded.

1. The protocols of Phase 2 in-person worship were described. Congregants were asked if they would desire additional protocols.

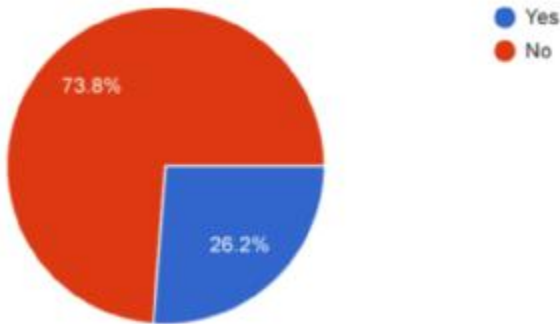
[10%] YES [90%] NO

Comments: Some expressed concern that masks would not be required.

2. Would you be likely to attend worship services with these protocols in place?

[24%] YES [76%] NO

Comments from those who would not attend: Many people identified themselves in the vulnerable categories. A small number feel that there are so many precautions that it would not be worthwhile. A small number said they prefer online worship at this time.



3. Online worship will continue concurrently with in-person worship. What is your likely choice of worship as we reopen?



4. Families with young children were asked: Would you be comfortable attending with your young children?



Continued on next page

5. How have you participated in worship during these past months? (multiple responses were allowed)

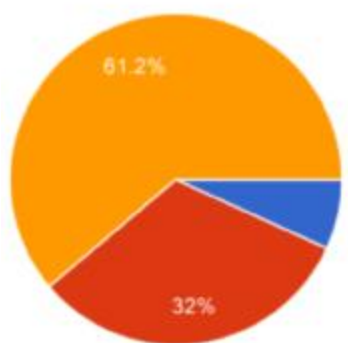
[84%] ZOOM [9%] FACEBOOK LIVE [12%] FACEBOOK ARCHIVE
 [9%] FPC WEBSITE ARCHIVE [10%] NOT PARTICIPATED

Comments: The wording of the question was problematic for some. Some others lack the equipment or the skill. A few do not enjoy online worship.

6. Which of the following describe your experience during the last two months? Choose all that apply to you.

[84%] I am grateful for the many ways First Presbyterian Church has continued to be vital in this pandemic.
 [71%] Sunday morning services have been important in my life.
 [56%] I have stayed connected to the church family.
 [18%] I have felt distant from the church family.
 [8%] I have felt cut off from worship.
 [8%] The stress of the pandemic has made it difficult to stay connected to church.

7. Rockhaven Sunday afternoon picnics will take the place of the standard potluck and Vespers during Phase 2. The protocols of this were described. How often do you expect to attend?



● I would probably attend often
 ● I would probably attend occasionally
 ● I would not attend

[7%] FREQUENTLY
 [32%] OCCASIONALLY
 [61%] NEVER

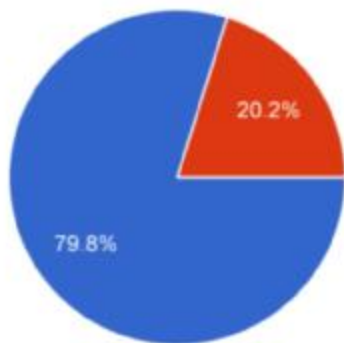
Comments from "never attend" respondents: Many identified themselves in the vulnerable categories. A few said this is not an appealing option. Some do not attend Rockhaven, for a variety of reasons.

8. Are there other ways we can serve you?

There were many and varied responses to this question. Numerous people expressed appreciation. A couple of responses expressed frustration with not reopening sooner and with restrictions.

9. Are you in a vulnerable category?

YES [80%] NO [20%]



● Yes
 ● No

Town Hall Meeting Answers Congregational Questions

On Wednesday, June 10, a "Town Hall Meeting" provided another opportunity for the congregation to ask questions and for church leadership to gather information regarding reopening the church building. Following is a summary of questions and the responses of Pandemic Response Team members.

Why are we taking so many precautions regarding church?

There are a number of reasons.

- Research reveals three elements (three "Cs") which contribute to the potential for a "superspreader" event: a Crowd, in a Closed room, where people are in Close contact with one another. This sounds a lot like church as we have known it.
- Group singing, a favorite activity in church, projects aerosols, which can include the coronavirus, far and wide.
- At least 25% (maybe as high as 40%) of those who are infected are asymptomatic.
- Our congregation includes many who are considered "vulnerable," meaning that if they are infected, there is a significantly higher likelihood they will need to be hospitalized, and if hospitalized, a significantly higher likelihood of death. We are called by our faith in Jesus Christ to care for "the least of these," who in this pandemic, are those categorized as more vulnerable.

What are the plans for Sunday school, nursery, and the reopening of the church office?

At this time, efforts are being focused on providing one (9:30 am) in-person worship which will take place concurrently with online worship. We have no plans yet for Sunday school, church nursery, or other activities. Phase 2 guidelines encourage businesses to provide for employees to work from home if able, and we are able to continue our essential functions this way, so the office will remain closed until health conditions improve.

How soon will we know when worship is in-person as well as online?

The Worship Team, working with the Pandemic Response Team, has been working very hard to put in place the technology needed for concurrent worship services. We have very smart and very committed people working on this, but this is new territory. That said, the Pandemic Response Team on Monday, June 15, set a target date of Sunday, July 5, 2020 for in-person worship to reopen. We will continually monitor the public health conditions and will confirm this date as it draws closer.

What about Rockhaven Vespers? Can we have outdoor worship there that would be safe for vulnerable persons?

It was the decision of the Rockhaven Operational Board that while we are in Phase 2 of Montana's reopening, we will not gather for formal activities at Rockhaven. If Phase 3 is announced, activities such as groups eating outdoors and outdoor worship may be organized.

How are decisions being made? What authorities are being followed?

The Governor's office has determined the plan for reopening Montana. The Gallatin City-County Health Department has authority within that plan to be more restrictive, but not less restrictive. We will follow the directives of both state and local authorities. There is no set number of infections which will trigger our church's decisions. Each church has freedom and responsibility to determine what is best for their congregation.

Will we be required to wear masks during in-person worship?

The Pandemic Response Team is still finalizing the "gracious boundaries" which will define our in-person worship. This question is not yet resolved. At the minimum, masks will be "strongly encouraged" and made available at the door for those who do not bring their own.

*Many thanks to those who joined the Town Hall Meeting,
listening to the concerns of others and truly, being the church!*

Pandemic Report by John Patterson

My thanks to John Sacklin for stepping in for me last Sunday while Judy and I were out of town. In this era of online access to our services we were still able to attend the service and take communion with all of you from our motel room.

The Pandemic Response Team continues to meet twice weekly to review current COVID-19 related guidelines and to work out the final details of protocols and checklists for starting summer camps at Rockhaven June 29th and reopening our church building to in-person services (target date of July 5th) while continuing and improving online access.

Updates from the Team include:

- This was the second week of seeing if we could have part of the worship team in the sanctuary and others, especially those in the more vulnerable categories, at home just as we plan to do when we actually resume in-person services. Despite a few glitches, it seems to be working.
- We've had a technology consultation with a local company and, following their recommendation, new camera equipment is being purchased which will provide good quality video for the long-term for those accessing our services online.
- Thanks to everyone who participated in last week's Congregational Poll. Those results will be available to the Pandemic Response Team this week and will definitely help guide our planning.
- Last Wednesday evening, following the weekly Congregational Zoom Gathering, a 1 hr. Zoom Town Hall meeting was held to discuss and answer questions about our upcoming transition to concurrent church services in-person and online. Thanks to those who were able to join us.
- One of the important steps for us to be able to open to in-person services is to have the help of a number of church members, who are not in the 'vulnerable categories,' to be greeters. As a greeter you will receive training on how to provide gentle guidance on our 'gracious boundaries' as people enter, are seated and leave the church. If you are available, please contact Linda through the church phone system. And, if you are asked to serve as a greeter, please accept, understanding that we can't reopen without your help.
- When a decision is made that we are ready and can reopen to in-person services you'll hear about it in communications to the congregation. So, please stay tuned.
- There are some additional updates regarding Rockhaven:
 - * A big THANKS to those who were able to get to Rockhaven on Saturday for the work-day. Scott had a big list of to-do items and we got a lot of them done! Thanks, also, to Jim and Bernie Mitchell for bringing everyone lunch.
 - * Help is needed all summer with weekly mowing and/or weed whacking. Please check the email that went out on Friday and the weekly PresbEnews for a link to 'SignUpGenius' if you would be willing to help one or more times this summer.
 - * Although we won't be having our usual weekly Sunday Potlucks and Vespers this summer, beginning next Sunday, Father's Day, Rockhaven will be available on good weather Sunday afternoons for informal outdoor individual and family picnics and use. This will offer the opportunity for those in the congregation to enjoy Rockhaven and to be together informally outdoors as a church family, while still maintaining appropriate physical distancing.
- As a closing thought, we continue to wish you all **good health** and encourage you to **stay safe** and **stay connected** with each other and with God. This is our prayer for you.

Financial giving during this time

Since we will not be meeting in person for worship in the coming weeks, please continue to support the church through your financial gifts, pledges and offerings. You can mail checks to the church at P.O. Box 1150, Bozeman, MT 59771. Or consider making your contributions through our church's online giving platform. Simply go to www.easytith.com/fpcbozeman and choose the "Give Now" option to make a one-time gift, or chose the "Sign In" option if you'd like to be a regular user. The drop down "Fund" menu allows you to direct your gift to a specific fund. The first option, "General Church Budget, " is the one to which Sunday offerings go. You can give by credit card, debit card, or by electronic funds transfer from your bank account. You also have the option to make recurring gifts on a schedule you choose.

Smartphone users may scan this QR code to access the online giving portal.



Thank you for your ongoing support of our church.

Birthdays this week

6/17 *Scott Thrasher*

6/18 *Dwayne Arscott*
Kori Robbins

6/19 *Chandler May*

6/20 *Paula Thomsen*
Nancy Rutkowski
Sullivan Kroeze

6/21 *Gayle Hickert*
Dolly Smith

6/22 *Sarah Thrasher*

New Directory Summer 2020

A new directory is available by email or hardcopy. If you are interested in having this directory please call Linda at 586-9194 or email linda@fpcbozeman.org

Congregational Get-together 7 PM Wednesday, June 17

During these weeks of physical separation, we are "gathering" by Zoom for connection and a short devotional. All are welcome to join, to see and touch bases with our church family.

Choose one of these methods to join:

1. Join Zoom Meeting (from your computer) at this link: <https://zoom.us/j/105970704>
2. One tap mobile (from your cellphone) +16699009128,,105970704#
3. Dial from any phone (669) 900 9128 and enter this meeting ID when prompted: 105-970-704. No participant ID is needed.



Church Facebook page a source of up-to-date info!

Even if you're not a Facebook member yourself, you can still access the church's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/fpcbozeman to get in on regular breaking news. If you'd like to interact with the content and others on the page, click the "Like" button at the top of the page if you're a Facebook member. Facebook—just one more way for us to interact with today's world!

Downtown Ecumenical VBS Goes Hybrid

This is the week of last minute preparations for next week's Vacation Bible School. With a hybrid home and online format, there are about 60 children registered. This week, pastors of the various downtown churches are recording videos of daily Bible stories, drama leaders are filming dramatic video clips, crafts leaders are packing kits for at-home projects, games leaders are putting together instructions for at-home games, and music leaders are planning the online music portions of the week. Creativity abounds in this ecumenical effort.

Children and youth have had their lives disrupted by the pandemic just as adults have. And as a percentage of their lives, it's a far higher percentage than those who have lived more years without a pandemic! Yet they still need to grow and learn, play and create, and discover the gifts of faith. Please pray for these children, and for the leaders who are putting together this original version of VBS. All aboard the Rocky Railway, where Jesus is both the engineer and the conductor!

Youth Mission Trip Becomes Week of Local Service



For the week of June 29 – July 3, eleven youth and four adults have committed to service with local organizations, following the model of Sierra Service Project (SSP). The week will be based at the home of Dan and Deana Berg, where lots of outdoor space will be conducive to both physical distancing and fun. Each day the group will partner with a local organization to serve our community.

Monday – Family Promise

Tuesday – Construction of garden boxes (carpentry is central in SSP tradition)

Wednesday – Love INC

Thursday – City of Bozeman Forestry Division, planting trees

Friday – Completing projects from earlier in the week/Recreation afternoon

The youth who will be participating are:

11th grade: Dani Berg, Alyce Larsson, Graham Overton

10th grade: Adynn Small

8th grade: Dayna Berg, Linden Hanson, Jonas Overton

7th grade: Gabe Gilbert, Zeph Small

6th grade: Gabe Eilers, Delia Turner

Adults are: Dan Berg, Deana Berg, Julie Small, and Jody McDevitt

The group is also registered to participate in 1-1 ½ hours of SSP online programming each day. ***If you are interested in a gift of a garden box (4' x 4' raised bed with soil) made by the youth, please contact Jody McDevitt.***

The youth thank you for all your support!



A GA like no other

by Leslie Scanlon, *Outlook* national reporter

There is no question, the 2020 General Assembly will be unlike any the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has seen before.

It's being held during a stunning season in American life — the aching time when more than 100,000 Americans have died from COVID-19, when protesters fill the streets night after night to protest racial injustice and the police killing of George Floyd, when churches are trying to live into the new realities of worshipping online, when the world seems to tilt in a new direction almost every hour and who knows what will come next? Fittingly, the new theme of this assembly is "From Lament to Hope" — the implications of which seem to expand day by day.

Virtual GA. This will be the **first time a PC(USA) assembly has met virtually** — all online, a technological challenge both for organizers and commissioners, something that many Presbyterians a generation ago probably never could have imagined. The assembly had been scheduled to meet in Baltimore June 20-27, but the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) decided formally in April that, because of the need for social distancing, that couldn't happen.

New business? This assembly will be much shorter than usual (with plenary sessions streamed online on June 19, 26 and 27) and the agenda will be abbreviated. COGA's recommendation is to include only business considered "**critical and core**," and to refer everything else to the General Assembly two years from now (although commissioners could try to alter that when the

docket comes up for a vote June 19, if they feel there's particular business — such as action on social justice — that just can't wait).

There's a lot on the list to be referred to the General Assembly in 2022 — including PC(USA) policy on climate change, gun violence, financial sustainability, racial injustice, international concerns and much more — and there's been pushback from some Presbyterian groups to add more business to the docket this year, although time will be tight.

Here's another possibility. Once the assembly convenes, a commissioner could move to suspend the rules to introduce new business. Such a motion would need a two-thirds vote to prevail — but if enough commissioners feel the PC(USA) needs to speak or act, to offer the assembly's public witness on the COVID-19 pandemic or George Floyd's killing or the systemic inequities driving the protests in the streets, that could happen.

Leadership. Much of the "critical and core" business on which the assembly will be asked to vote is not particularly controversial. It includes, for example, confirmation of the election of leaders of PC(USA) agencies and changes in standing rules.

The assembly also will make decisions about leadership, including deciding **whether to elect J. Herbert Nelson for a second four-year term** as the denomination's stated clerk — the public face and chief ecclesiastical officer of the PC(USA) — and choosing among **three teams of candidates who are standing to serve as co-moderators** of this assembly.

Friday, June 19th

7:00 pm	Plenary 1 Standing Rules Docket and Business Co-Moderator Report
9:00 pm	Moderator Election

All times are EDT.

Friday, June 26th

11:00 am	Opening Worship
12:00 pm	Recess
1:00 pm	Plenary 2 Consent Agenda Critical Business Budget Orientation
3:00 pm	Recess
4:00 pm	Plenary 3 Critical Business
6:00 pm	Recess

Saturday, June 27th

11:00 am	Plenary 4 Stated Clerk Report Critical Business
1:00 pm	Recess
2:00 pm	Plenary 5 Critical Business
3:30 pm	Recess
4:30 pm	Plenary 6 Remaining Business Meditation and Music
6:30 pm	Adjourn

Money. The commissioners also will vote on budgets — budgets that reflect the financial pain of the PC(USA) and the struggles of small churches to survive. A COVID-19 Financial Team is projecting **income declines across the denomination** of about 25% in 2020 and 2021, and the budgets this assembly will be asked to approve have been scaled back from earlier proposals to reflect that.

The proposed General Assembly per capita rate is \$8.95 per member in both 2021 and 2022 — the same as it has been in 2019 and 2020. “An increase to the apportionment rate for 2021 is not politically, or economically, feasible,” a report from the COVID-19 Financial Team states.

Worship and action. The assembly also will include a worship service on June 26 in which Nelson will speak theologically about lament, injustice and hope. Presbyterians are invited to participate online in a series of events — including the **Poor People’s Campaign Assembly & Moral March on Washington** (being held digitally at 10 a.m. EDT June 20); a Youth Rising event featuring young entrepreneurs of color from Baltimore (at 3 p.m. EDT June 23); and Bible study led by James Elisha Taneti and Mary Florence Taneti, focusing on Lamentations 5:20-21 (in two identical 45-minute sessions, at 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. EDT June 24). The offering being taken during opening worship will go to support Youth Rising.

One benefit of a virtual General Assembly: Anyone with internet access can watch online, free

of charge and without registering, either on the **GA224 website** or the **Spirit of GA** Facebook page. All business items coming to the assembly can be found at **pc-biz.org**.

The exact order of business during the June 26 and 27 plenaries is still to be determined, but here’s the **outline of the docket** (see above, all times are EDT).

New ways. Among the unknowns are how well all this will work and what glitches — technological or otherwise — might emerge, such as how commissioners discern together if they’ve never met in person and can’t spend those extra minutes gathered in small groups to get to know one another, talk through a complicated proposal or to pray together.

Some are mourning the lack of in-person connection and also that visceral sense an assembly provides of being part of a broader connectional church.

This may, however, be the start of a new practice for the PC(USA) — one that’s certainly less expensive and perhaps more flexible. “We are talking about a major transformation in assemblies going forward,” Nelson has said. And also: “I don’t think we’re ever going to be the same church again.”

During General Assembly, stay up to date by visiting **pres-outlook.org/GA224** for assembly coverage, follow us on Twitter at **@presoutlook** and like us on Facebook to stay connected with what’s happening at GA.

Holland-days...

by Dan Holland

Another week, another record. The global positive case count for the coronavirus increased by 915,000 humans during the past week. Fortunately the last seven days saw a modest decrease in the mortality rate as 'only' 30,000 lights were extinguished worldwide, 5,000 of which were in the US. As we conclude this year's ode to graduates, I am left to wonder if my own forgetfulness in donning a mask in all social situations counteracts any words of encouragement I might provide to future generations.

Dominion (Conclusion)

Recollections came in waves like the Black Sea chop Dorcas could feel rolling under the research vessel as it steamed toward Istanbul and the Bosphorus. She thought back to her first job out of school at the desalinization plant in southern Florida. Fresh water was a serious issue back then and desalinization was still in its infancy; it was a hugely inefficient process. Fortunately, the company she worked for was conscientious and well-funded. She served on the team charged with finding a way to solve the waste problem, specifically what to do with the salt byproduct. Almost every other outfit dumped their salt back into the ocean, thereby making their next job tougher, not to mention altering the chemical balance of the local seawater. She smiled inwardly at the haphazard way they had stumbled upon the process for transforming the excess salt into the hydrogen-chloride tablets that now fueled half of the world's machinery. Was it luck? Dorcas preferred to think of it as providence. There was more of a mystic, karmic element to something that earth-shattering. Besides, pure dumb luck discounts all of the preparation, the sweat-equity that goes into reaching outside one's comfort zone.

And what of this notion called preparation? She wondered if she would have been in a position to have been a part of these scientific breakthroughs without the renewed emphasis on STEM in childhood education. She thought about the academic background of her colleagues on this boat. They represented every continent, every race, most every religion. Dorcas treasured their everyday interactions as much as she did the breathtaking research they performed on a daily basis. They all seemed to possess the curiosity and desire to change the world, and their knowledge base was unparalleled.

In these moments of reflection, of contemplation, Dorcas often thought back to the words the pastor at her small church had whispered to her when she was starting high school. They were the same words written above the scientists' galley door in Sanskrit, and it was also tattooed on her inner forearm, this ancient proverb: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction." Subconsciously she rubbed the inscription, and then by habit rubbed the tattoo on her other forearm, this one from the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

Dorcas' train of thought was interrupted by the whistling of her tea pot. She nimbly turned the heat off and opened the drawer containing her dwindling supply of Sumatran leaves. She retraced her steps to the back alley market in Djakarta where she originally bought the two pound bag. A year later it barely held enough for two more cups. She made a mental note to buy some more if she ever found her way there again. Somehow she knew she would. ...*The End*



First Presbyterian Church

June 2020



Rockhaven Chapel

First Presbyterian Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
14 9:30 am Worship	15 4 pm Pandemic Response Team	16 7 pm Rockhaven Operational Board	17 12:15 pm Worship Team 4 pm Pandemic Response Team 7 pm Congregational Get Together	18 7am Men's Bible Study	19 9:30 am Worship Tech Rehearsal	20
21 9:30 am Worship Rockhaven informal outdoor individual and family picnics	22 Ecumenical Hybrid Vacation Bible School Week 4 pm Pandemic Response Team	23	24 12:15 pm Worship Team 4 pm Pandemic Response Team 7 pm Congregational Get Together	25 7am Men's Bible Study 7pm Session	26 9:30 am Worship Tech Rehearsal	27
28 9:30 am Worship Congregational Meeting Rockhaven informal outdoor individual and family picnics	29 Good News Deadline Youth Local Mission Week 4pm Pandemic Response Team	30				

In these changing times the events on the calendar have changed too. Until further notice all the services, group meetings and events will be by Zoom until we find it safe to come back together. Please contact the leaders of the group meetings for instructions on how to get on Zoom for the meetings. We will update this calendar each week in the PresbEnews and on the church website as more meetings and events are scheduled. Stay Healthy.