



1st Pres

“When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.”

So begins the account of the gift of the Holy Spirit to the church in the book of Acts. As we approach the day of Pentecost in the year 2020, we understand that it may not yet be possible for the members of our congregation to be “all together in one place” this year. While some restrictions are being lifted in some places and for some people, the ongoing threat of the Covid-19 global pandemic will require that we return to church in a way that is measured and mindful of the needs of the most vulnerable among us. And, while some may begin to attend public worship in person, we know that some will need to continue to worship at home for some time. The Session of First Presbyterian has made the decision that we will continue to refrain from worshipping in-person through the month of May. At its May meeting, the Session will again reassess and make a decision about June worship.

As this congregation begins to resume public activities, please know that we will do so through a careful process of discussion and discernment, with an abundance of caution and concern for those who are most vulnerable, upon consideration of the best scientific knowledge at our disposal, in the spirit of constant prayer, and with full trust in the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit. During the month of May, staff will be returning on a limited and distanced way to our building. Joan will continue to be available on MWF. Stormy will be in the office from 8:30am-1:00pm, MTWThF. The doors to the church will remain locked to reduce traffic within the building, but if you need entry or to speak with a staff member you may do so during those times and you will be let in. We ask at this time that you wear a mask.

Also during May we are working to establish procedures that will keep us safe upon return and support what we recognize may be an extended period of “blended” in-person/online experience of church. This includes, but is not limited to, sanitizing and cleaning protocols, wearing masks upon building entry, distancing during gatherings and caps on gathering numbers, provision long-term for online options and the technology to make that possible.

We may make mistakes along the way. There will surely be awkward moments as we adjust to new protocols and practices. There will be times of frustration, disappointment, and grief. We will have countless opportunities to exercise the spiritual gifts of patience, kindness, gentleness, and self-control.

But there will also be blessings. There will be wonderful surprises, great celebrations, and moments of deep satisfaction. We will get to see glimpses of the new thing God is doing, even now. We will have opportunities to savor the spiritual gifts of love, joy, peace, generosity, and faithfulness.

Let us be faithful, then—to God and to one another—as we receive the gifts and work through the challenges of this time in the life of our congregation and world. Let us be guided by the Word, responsive to the Spirit, and open to the grace of God. Most importantly, let us remember that nothing can separate us from God’s love in Christ Jesus.

Grace & peace,

Pastor Heather

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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