

Weekly email for Sunday May 31, 2020 – the Day of Pentecost!

Dear Ones,

I hope this finds you and your loved ones well and hanging in there, upheld by the loving arms of God, the deep peace of Christ, and the encouragement of the Spirit.

We continue to pray for the many urgent needs of the world: for peace for all who mourn, and for wisdom for world leaders and patience and courage for the world's people. These past two weeks we have been angered and grieved at fresh evidence that the jagged wounds of racism continue to infect our nation, and so we pray for justice and healing, and for God's will to be done.

We also offer prayers of hope and gratitude and delight: For Fiona's continuing recovery (and mine!), for the fellowship of our church community, for the upcoming Virtual Graduation of the Alexander Robertson School and for the faculty, students, staff and parents who have made distance learning work. And we give thanks for signs of new life in the middle of this terrible pandemic:

For the healthy pregnancy of Vivian's caregiver Bibi;

For Amalia, the new granddaughter of Elaine (and daughter of Elaine's daughter Andrea), who, Elaine writes, "is my sweetheart already!" We also give thanks and praise to God for confirmands and new members Miranda and Danny, and look forward to welcoming them officially in some form of worship service at some point in time!

And speaking of new members, next month I'll be reaching out to those of you who've expressed an interest in joining the church - because this summer might be a very good time to have a couple of **Stay at Home New Members Classes!** But if you think you might be interested, please call me or drop me a line.

**Looking Ahead:** Both the Worship & Music Committee and your Session are talking and researching and thinking ahead to what the future may hold - but please know that the well-being of the community will always be

our first priority, and we are not going to rush things. As Worship & Music Committee Chairperson Elaine writes:

*"As the city and state begin the process of reopening, we are proceeding cautiously when it comes to resuming worship in the sanctuary, with the highest consideration being the safety of our congregants. At this point, as the risk of infection continues, we do not anticipate resuming in-person worship at least through the summer, and possibly after that. As time goes on, we will remain open to and guided by the city and state government, public health authorities and fellow church bodies, including the New York City Presbytery.*

*When the time comes and we do start having services in the sanctuary, it will be phased and gradual. Until it is completely safe for all to leave home and take public transportation, we will continue to use alternatives such as Zoom meetings and recordings.*

*As we have proved in our spirited gatherings on Sundays over the past 10 weeks, it is clear that we don't need the walls of the building to be a church. God is with us wherever and however we meet."*

And we will be trying some different things for Sunday worship from time to time, as we are always looking to improve and engage. For a start, here are some things to look forward to:

**Tomorrow, May 31, Pentecost:** for our Zoom meeting, **wear red - it's the color of the Holy Spirit!** And maybe have another sign of the Spirit nearby - a lit candle, or a balloon, or a fan to blow some holy wind (though probably not all those together, as that would be a fire hazard!)

**Sunday, June 7:** Communion Sunday! Yes, on this first Sunday of June we will try our hand at celebrating a Stay at Home Lord's Supper. So things will be a little bit different. As always, you're encouraged to listen to our worship podcast via the website at 10:15, and then join the Zoom meeting at 10:45. This gathering will be a bit different, just to ensure that we follow the proper order of service for the Lord's Supper. We'll begin with a prayer, then scripture reading, then a short version of my sermonette (as we always celebrate Word and Sacrament, never Sacrament alone), a hymn by soloist, and then the communion.

It will be BYOE - Bring Your Own Elements – so before you settle in at your computer, tablet or phone, have your "bread and wine" ready. It can be a slice of bread, a bagel, a saltine a gluten-free cracker, whatever you like – but something you can lift and break following my lead at our virtual Table. Same with the cup: the beverage is your choice - juice, water, soda or real wine - in a cup or glass that you can lift up before you drink during the Communion.

After, as time allows, we hope to be able to share (brief) prayers, before closing with a final hymn and benediction. Frankly, I have mixed feelings about "virtual Communion" - but I feel the Spirit saying, "Give it a try!" so I'm excited to do that. I hope you are, too!

**Summer Worship, June 28 - August:** We hope to offer some further special services. But we know for sure that Minister of Music, Ms. Eunjung Ahn, invites any and all church musicians (singers and/or instrument players) to volunteer to serve as soloists while Katy and Marcel are off for the summer. You do not have to be a choir member to volunteer! You do have to be willing to either sing without accompaniment or provide your own accompaniment. Or play an instrument without singing. You will be asked to do two verses of one hymn (musician's choice! Though Eunjung will be glad to brainstorm with you.). So call or email Eunjung if you're interested - or even think you might be!

**For Sunday's Stay at Home Worship (music, readings and a meditation), click this link:**

<https://secondpresbyteriannyc.org/events/worship-19/>

You can also simply go to <https://secondpresbyteriannyc.org> each week, and click on the Recent Sermon or Stay-At-Home Worship link.

**For our Zoom get together Sundays at 10: 45 am:** for safety reasons, we can't publish the Zoom information on the website, but members and friends should feel free to contact me or any church member for details.

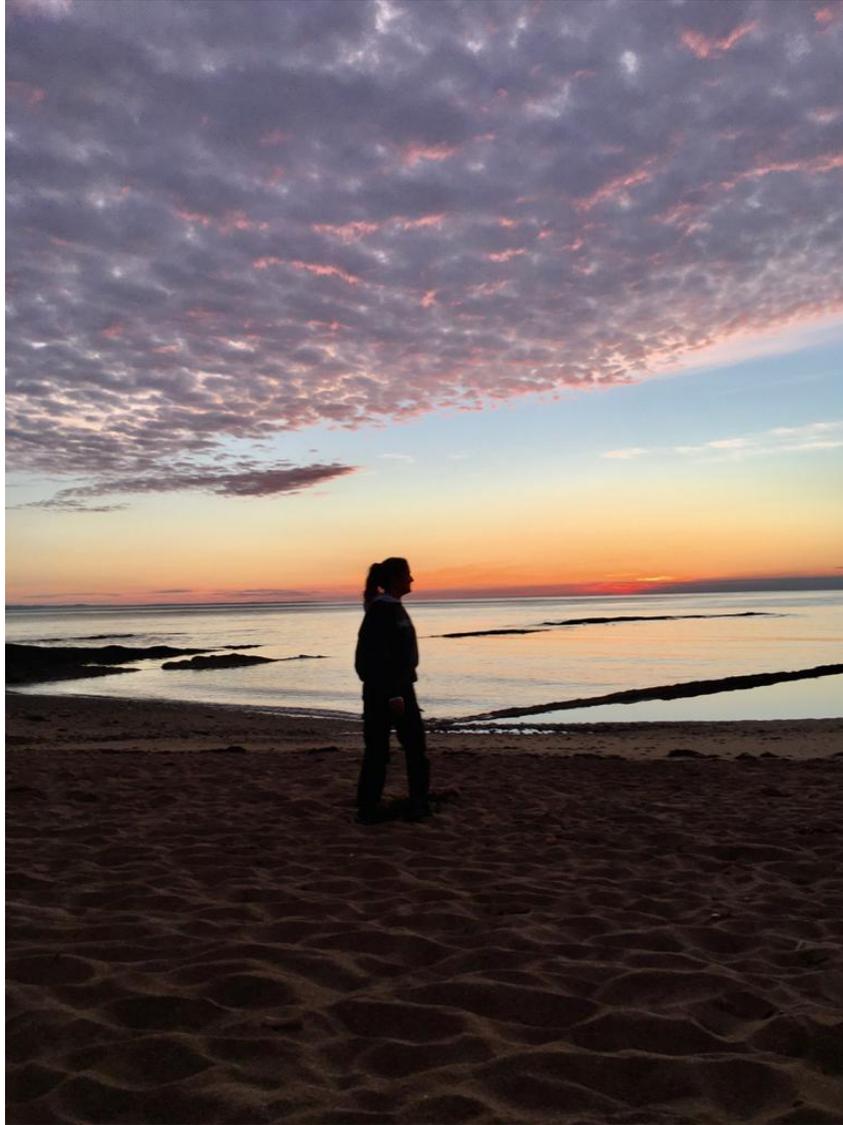
Here are some words I found helpful, from *Presbyterian Outlook's* Jill Duffield, who has been sharing wonderful liturgies and other worship aids during this pandemic. This week she writes:

*As the death toll mounts and the lines at food banks lengthen and the scale of suffering around the globe grows, the burden and terror of life feels inescapable. We find ourselves in a new moral universe, one that feels very scary, but one that is nonetheless redeemed by Jesus Christ. Our call as Christians is to be in such close communion with Jesus Christ that we can help it heal. In the wake of this lonely, lonely virus, we bear witness to the truth that God refuses to leave us alone and therefore we will not abandon one another.*

~ <https://pres-outlook.org/2020/05/a-lonely-lonely-virus/>

Last week I alluded to the Lindsay tartan. In keeping with the Scots theme, I mention that at some point, months ago, I had thought about taking a trip to Scotland this spring - going on "the Presbyterian Haj," as it's been called - a pilgrimage to the spiritual homeland, and certainly the motherland of the Second Presbyterian Church! It would have been especially timely, as my (British-American-Bulgarian) niece Stef was finishing her studies at St. Andrews University. Well, Stef did graduate - Alleluia! Though without a visit from her aunt, for obvious reasons. She did share some gorgeous photos of St. Andrews on her last days there - *enjoy!*





God be with you, until we meet again.

love and light,

*Rev. L*

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