

The SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH in the City of New York
Weekly pastoral email for the Week of Sunday June 21, 2020



Photo from Pride Month 2019

Dearest Peeps,

As New York gets closer to a citywide "reopening" and parts of the rest of the country face increased cases of COVID-19, and as we mark Juneteenth, the day that the promise of freedom finally broke through to every corner of Black America, while we acknowledge how far our nation is from realizing that promise, I am feeling as uncertain and confused as ever about the future.

But I this Sunday's readings remind me that Jesus was a Disturber of the Peace as well as the Prince of Peace, as we hear him say: *"Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one's foes will be members of one's own household."* (Matt 10: 34 – 36)

So writer Debie Thomas asks, "What would it be like to allow Jesus to disturb us, unmake us, and divide us? What would it be like to experience the peace that costs,

the peace that breaks, the peace that saves? Jesus will indeed 'guide our feet into the way of peace.' He will. But only if we'll let him." Sometimes we have to tear down before we can build up - and with Christ by our side, we don't have to be afraid of that.

And as for returning to "normal" after the pandemic? I don't know if that will ever happen! But your Session is standing firm in its decision not to rush, to take things one day at a time, and to be willing to try things out and see if they work. Meanwhile, over the summer, we will continue our worship as is - except when it's different! I think we will celebrate another Stay at Home Communion on July 12 (not the first Sunday of the month, due to the 4th of July holiday), and later in the summer, maybe even experiment with live-streaming worship from the sanctuary, with only the worship leaders present.

So we ask that you hang in there with us, trusting with us that God will bring us through – not to where we were before, as a church, a city, a nation or a world – but to somewhere better; somewhere closer to the shining city on a hill where God's peace reigns because God's justice has been fulfilled, and God's children are truly one, in all their glorious difference.

PRAYERS ANSWERED AND NEEDED

We pray for the continued recovery of Fiona, Rev. Ted, Barbara, and Fern. And for the families and loved ones of those lost to illness, those lost to despair, those lost to violence, and to injustice.

We pray for the health and well-being of the church and the school as we work out details of our more-than-amicable separation, and look to a bright future for both.

We pray traveling mercies for all, including Karen as she travels to see her family in Michigan, Cecilia as she waits to return to the U.S., and for those who are planning to venture onto public transportation once more.

And I invite you to join me in offering thanks for two recent Supreme Court decisions which I believe reflect God's openness and love for all people. One blocks the current administration from ending the DACA program, and the other rules that LGBTQ+ workers are protected from job discrimination.

SAVE THE DATE: Friday, June 26, 5:30 pm



On **Friday, June 26, 5:30 pm**, we'll gather virtually to begin our **anti-racism conversations**. Don't get nervous - our first meeting will be quite simple. We'll watch a video together (on Zoom), and then all will be invited to share some thoughts. Those who can't Zoom - I'm hoping you can watch the video on your computer through a link I'll send - and you can either stay on your phone, or rejoin the Zoom meeting after the video. For those without a computer or tablet on which to watch, I think even just listening by phone will be good. Then we'll talk about what our next steps might be. I hope you'll consider joining in, and I'll send out reminders and links next week.

Don't forget - Fill out your Census 2020 form (<https://my2020census.gov/>) and encourage others to do so. It's important that we and all our neighbors be counted.

VOTE! NYS Primary Election Day is June 23. Federal Election Day is November 3.

Absentee voting: <https://www.elections.ny.gov/VotingAbsentee.html>

Voter registration: <https://www.elections.ny.gov/VotingDeadlines.html>

The League of Women Voters NYC is always helpful: **212-725-3541** or **212-213-8950**

Call for Musicians! Summer Worship starts June 28, and Minister of Music, Ms. Eunjung Ahn, invites any and all church musicians (singers and/or instrument players) to volunteer to serve as soloists while Kyunghye and Marcel are off for the summer. So call or email Eunjung if you're interested - or even think you might be!

Sunday, June 21 is Father's Day. It can be a joyful day for some, but a difficult day for others. It can even be both for the same person.

So I share one of my favorite thanksgiving prayers for the day:

Let us praise those fathers who have striven to balance the demands of work, marriage, and children with an honest awareness of both joy and sacrifice.

Let us praise those fathers who, lacking a good model for a father, have worked to become a worthy and virtuous father.

Let us praise those fathers who, by their own account, were not always there for their children, but who continue to offer those children, now grown, their love and support. As well, let us pray for those fathers who have been wounded by words and actions of their children.

Let us praise those fathers who, despite marital discord, have remained in their children's lives.

Let us praise those fathers who adopted children, and whose love and support has nurtured a thriving life.

Let us praise those fathers who, as stepfathers, freely choose the obligation of fatherhood and earned their step children's love and respect.

Let us praise those fathers who have lost a child to death, and continue to hold the child in their heart.

Let us praise those men who have no children, but cherish the next generation as if they were their own.

Let us praise those men who have "fathered" us in their role as mentors and guides.

Let us praise those men who are about to become fathers; may they openly delight in their children.

And let us praise those fathers who have died, but live on in our memory and whose love continues to nurture us. Amen.

So we think too of all the fathers who are not with us – our own, perhaps, like my Dad who lived a long life and died surrounded by children and grandchildren. And fathers like George Floyd, gone too soon and senselessly.



This portrait of George Floyd was painted by Eli Ruhala. Eli is 20 years old and attends art school in Maryland. He has been active in raising funds for antiracism groups, and is the nephew of church member Karen Amrhein.

God be with you, until we meet again.

love and light,
Rev. Lindsay