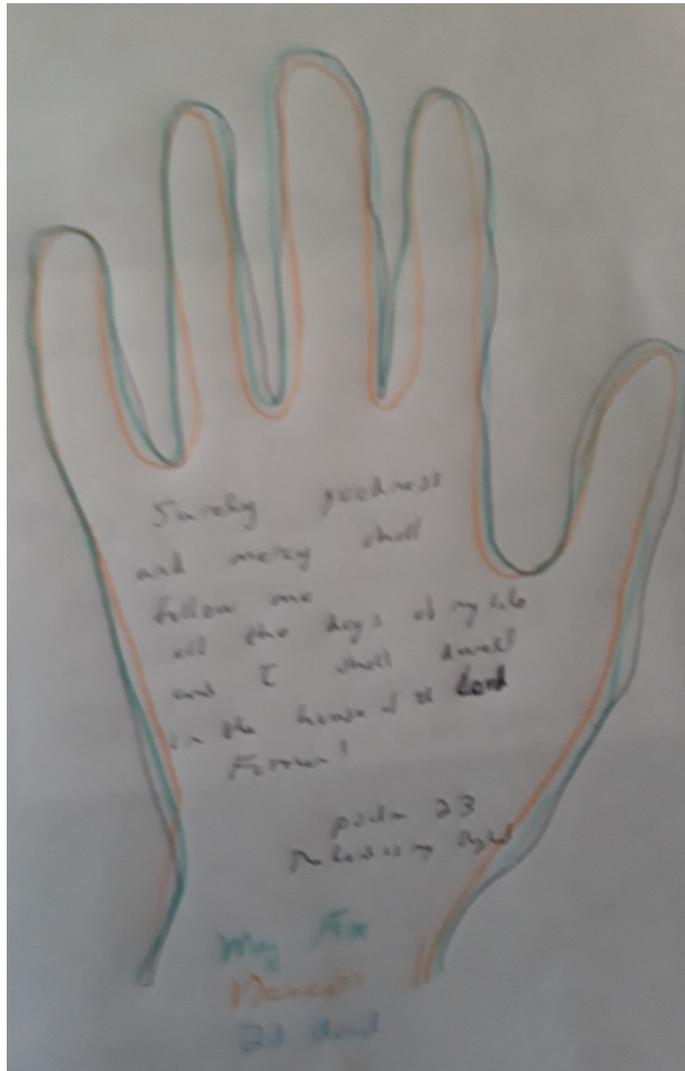


**The SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH in the City of New York**  
Weekly pastoral newsletter for the Week of Sunday July 26, 2020



*"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever!" ~ Psalm 23  
Deacon Meg holds us up with words of comfort from her favorite psalm.*

Dear Friends in Christ,

I'm imagining Jesus saying this: Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than take-out, and the body more than PPE? So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.  
(see Matthew 6: 25 -34)

Well, today's trouble is certainly enough for today. But for better or for worse, as a pastor, and along with many colleagues, I find myself in the odd and distinctly challenging position of having to, if not *worry*, at least to make plans: plans based on facts that are constantly changing, for events that that may never happen, for a future than cannot be imagined. Oh, well!

Last week, I reminded us all (including myself) that we don't and can't know what the future holds - and specifically, we don't know when Second Presbyterian Church will open its welcoming red doors to all.

But we are nonetheless firming up our "reopening plan," in compliance with New York State requirements. There are stringent screening, cleaning and tracking procedures that must be followed to protect staff, church members and visitors who have reason to be in the building. We need to adhere to state guidelines *whether we are holding worship services or not*.

Meanwhile, the Chinese Community Church of New York will resume in-person worship in August. We have reviewed their reopening plans, and have insured that they are in compliance with New York State standards. CCCNY has been a wonderful partner in ministry for SPC – but we are in no hurry to follow their reopening lead. In fact, we will monitor how things go with them, and see what we might learn. But as we all well know, *everything* is subject to change right now.

So, I emphasize again that we plan to go slowly and carefully because your safety and wellbeing is the primary concern of the Worship & Music Committee and the Session.

For as much as we trust God to take care of us, we also trust that God has given us people like Dr. Anthony Fauci to help us. And the Apostle Paul to remind us, in 1 Corinthians (10: 24 – 25), "All things are lawful', but not all things are beneficial. 'All things are lawful', but not all things build up. Do not seek your own advantage, but that of others."

We continue to be very grateful for your support - and for the church staff who is doing much work behind the scenes. (And more on your staff in future issues!)

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### **Antiracism – Sowing Seeds of Understanding and Action**

*For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth;  
the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind.  
But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating;  
for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy,  
and its people as a delight.*

--Isaiah 65: 17-18

What is the new creation we can hope for and build together to overcome racism? These are among the questions we have contemplated during our discussions on antiracism over Friday Zoom meetings since June.

Our conversations have been eye-opening, heartbreaking, insightful and stimulating. It has been a time to share our thoughts and feelings, and both lament the state of our country while searching for hope in faith.

We have been guided by Bible reflections from the Antiracism study guide of Presbyterian Mission called "Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community." One recent gathering focused on passages speaking to God's love of diversity and to justice. At another get-together, we reflected on the meaning of beloved community and the promise of Isaiah's call to create new heavens and a new earth.

We also discussed Martin Luther King Jr.'s words in "Letter From a Birmingham Jail," directed to white church leaders, and how racism affects ecology and produces unhealthy environments.

Our focus in these early weeks is on dialogue as a first step to joining our hearts and minds on this real and persistent scourge on our communities. We hope we can move from there to concrete and collective action.

~ Elaine Song, for the Anti-Racism Group

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**MONTHLY PRAYER GROUP**  
**Wednesday July 29 at noon**

All are invited to join us for noontime prayer and fellowship this coming Wednesday. If you haven't joined us before, please contact Vivian Tom, Rev. L or any member of the prayer group for Zoom information. We'd love to see (and/or hear) you there!

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**Common Humanity**

It was lovely to welcome our friend Mel Lehman to our recent Communion service. Mel's organization Common Humanity seeks "Peacemaking through understanding, respect and friendship with the Middle East and the Muslim World." Many of you are familiar with the Common Humanity art shows SPC has hosted, and with our Christmas card-writing projects to Christians in the Middle East. Here is a link to a new venture – the Common Humanity Peace Channel on You Tube:

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=CommonHumanityPeaceChannel](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=CommonHumanityPeaceChannel)

Mel was very happy to see us, too, and writes with gratitude that "The little 'mustard seed' is growing; thanks again for being the place where we first found root!"

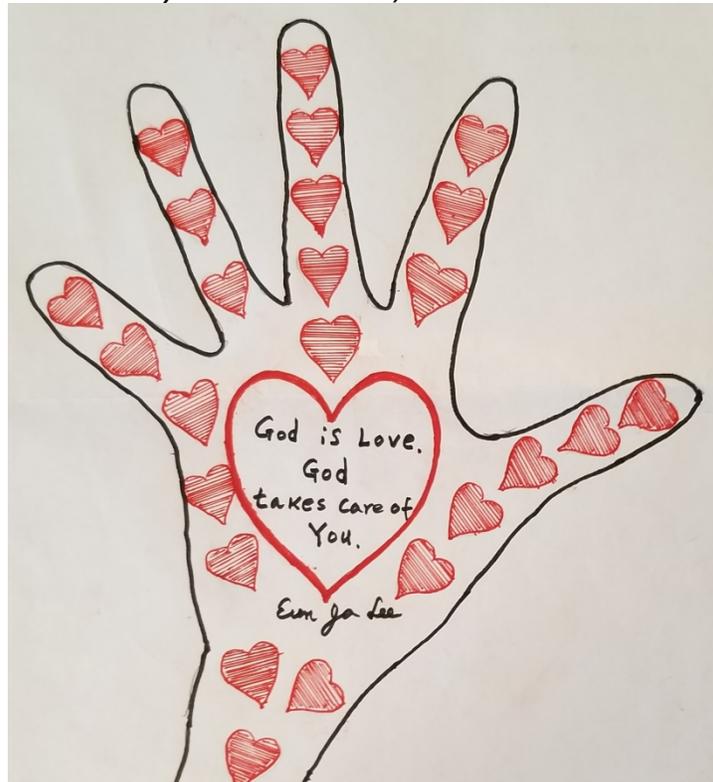
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### **Don't Forget – Send Me Your Palms!**

There is no cut-off date for the Palms Project. So I invite you all to trace your hand onto a piece of paper – as a symbol of the way we are holding each other up and God is holding us all. Write a prayer or a hope or blessing in the palm, add your name, and color and decorate however the Spirit moves you. (Hint: I've noticed marker shows up better than colored pencil.) Then take a picture of your drawing and email it to me, Rev. Lindsay. Or just mail your hardcopy to my home address. And I'll share them in various ways with the congregation.

And even if you take a photo, save your original or send it to me anyway – when we reopen, (whenever that is) maybe we can put them up in the sanctuary or narthex.

*And so, as Meg welcomed you to this letter, I'll let our sister Eun Ja send you off...*



God be with you, until we meet again.

love and light,  
Rev. Lindsay