



**“VIRTUAL” WORSHIP SERVICES  
ON  
FACEBOOK/FPCOFVICTORIA:  
FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER,  
MAY 3, 2020**

Based on the enthusiastic and encouraging feedback we have received, we will continue to post our Sunday morning worship services on the FPC Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/fpcofvictoria/>).

Another encouraging development is that our efforts last week to circulate a *single* Newsletter, which also included a link to the Bulletin for our worship service the following Sunday, were quite successful. Thus, we will follow that same practice this week and from here on out until it is safe to return and worship in our Sanctuary in person.

Specifically, once again we are making the Bulletin available for our May 3, 2020 worship service (1) by mailing it to members who do not receive email and (b) for members who receive this Newsletter via email, by providing this electronic link where you can find (and print), the Bulletin: <https://fpcofvictoria.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/2019-05-03-Bulletin-communion-PDF.pdf> By way of reminder: to access the Bulletin, place your mouse over the link and then simply click on it. Many of you do this all the time, but if are having trouble finding or printing the Bulletin, do not hesitate to call the Church Office for help.

As forecast last week, we have also been able to post not only our Newsletters but also videos of our worship service on the FPC website ([www.fpcofvictoria.org](http://www.fpcofvictoria.org)). It takes only a day or so for the Newsletter to be posted on the website (go to our home page, click on “News & Events,” and then, from the “drop-down menu,” click on Newsletters. Click on the month you are interested in, and the link for the specific Newsletter you are looking for will appear.

It takes more time (4 to 5 days) for a video that appears on our Facebook page to be transferred to our website, but we are now making those transfers in an effort to reach a larger audience inside and outside the Victoria community. To find the video for any of our past services on our website (instead of on our Facebook page), once more go to the home page of our website. Click on the tab labeled “Worship Services,” and it will take you to our videos. Again, however, please remember that while our videos on Facebook are posted immediately, a video does not appear on our website until 4 to 5 days after it was recorded.

Some members of the congregation have noticed that the number of “views” for each worship service on our Facebook page has declined each week since we began this practice. The Session is not concerned about this phenomenon, however. First, it is to be expected. There was initially a great curiosity about us among Facebook followers, but now the “novelty” of watching us on Facebook is

wearing off among those who do not regularly attend church or who have decided they are not interested in worshiping in the Reformed Tradition of our denomination. And, to be candid, those who faithfully attend church are well aware that attendance following Easter is never as strong as it is during Lent and on Easter morning.

Second, however, the number of views of our videos is still some multiple of what our average, in person Sunday attendance was before the pandemic. Happily, that must mean we are reaching people in their homes who, for whatever reason, were not able to worship with us in person even before the pandemic. In addition, we know from reports we are receiving from our members that they have been inviting others to watch our worship services with them. That means that two or more people are watching our videos together, even though that would only count as one “view.” Our prayers are that those who have been invited to watch our videos with members will, when we return to the Sanctuary, want to come and worship with us in person as well.

Third, we are taking these extraordinary measures primarily to reach those who love and support our church. We want to keep our church together in these difficult times, and we want the members, families, and friends of FPC to continue to worship as a congregation while we are in forced isolation due to public health concerns. We also want to assure everyone that, when we are able, we will resume worshiping God in our beautiful Sanctuary where we can gather with each other in person as members of Christ’s community. Your pastor is not concerned about “ratings.” First and foremost, your pastor wants the loving community of FPC to be collectively comforted and encouraged by having the means to worship every Sunday as this congregation has been doing for some 178 years.

Finally, please remember that this Sunday, the Fourth Sunday of Easter and the first Sunday of May, we shall once again celebrate a “virtual communion.” As mentioned in our Newsletter before our Easter worship service, there are many possibilities for what form the elements can take that you use at home to celebrate the Lord’s Supper: a bread of any sort is suitable, including crackers, tortillas, etc.; any sort of fruit juice would be appropriate, as would wine or even water. If acquiring the elements is difficult or necessitates an unwelcomed trip to the store, please let us know at the church office so we can help. It is our hope that in sharing the sacrament in this extraordinary way we may be mindful of our common faith and the life we share together within the Body of Christ.

In the Presbyterian tradition, we believe that God hosts a table open to all who seek to be followers of Jesus Christ. The table is wide enough, ample enough, and

open enough to serve all of God's creation. This is Christ promise:

*"Come to me, all you that are weary  
and are carrying heavy burdens,  
and I will give you rest.  
Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me;  
for I am gentle and humble in heart,  
and you will find rest for your souls.  
For my yoke is easy,  
and my burden is light."  
Matthew 11:28-30*

### **INCREASED NEEDS AT CHRIST'S KITCHEN**

Understanding the necessity for many of our more vulnerable members to isolate themselves in accordance with public health guidelines, other members, who are able, continue to volunteer to feed the hungry as they work tirelessly on Tuesday mornings at Christ's Kitchen. The number of clients who are now being served at Christ's Kitchen has skyrocketed to over 750, which has stretched the volunteers and their resources almost beyond limits.

Have you been wondering what you, as a faithful Christian, can do to help your neighbor in this time of crisis? Read this report from Frances Miller, and see if you are not inspired:

*Due to the pandemic, Christ's Kitchen is now feeding more people than ever. Christ's Kitchen is no longer providing breakfast for the area homeless, but we are still working diligently to serve a noon meal to all those whose livelihoods have been affected by the coronavirus. Approximately 750 to-go meals are prepared daily. Most of the desserts provided for the noon meal have been generously donated by local bakeries for many years. These businesses are unable to donate now for obvious reasons. Christ's Kitchen volunteers from First Presbyterian Church provide as many desserts as possible on Tuesdays, but we need the congregation's help.*

Can we respond to Frances' call for help on behalf of the poor, the destitute, and the homeless in our community? Here's how to do so:

1. If you are able to donate store-bought or homemade cakes, cookies, brownies, etc., you can bring them to Christ's Kitchen (611 Warren Ave.) by 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday mornings.

2. If you have health concerns, you can, instead, bring your donations *to the Church Office* on Monday afternoon. We can store them (even in a refrigerator if necessary) and deliver them in time to Christ's Kitchen on Tuesday morning.
3. Individual servings such as cookies and brownies should be stored in Ziplock bags which can be put directly in the to-go boxes. Cakes or pies, pre-cut into individual portions if possible, should be delivered in disposable containers (do *not* bring personal serving dishes that need to be returned). Christ's Kitchen volunteers will prepare these desserts for the boxed lunches.

Christ's Kitchen has always been a "loaves and fishes" operation-- stretching its limited resources beyond any normal expectations. Still, the tireless volunteers who perform these seeming miracles cannot do it without our assistance. Anything we can do will be a big help: a batch of brownies; a dozen baggies with 3 sugar cookies in each one; a dozen baggies with 2 donuts in each one. Please heed this call for help if you are able. And naturally, if you have any questions or comments, please call the Church Office. We are here to help you help others.

**COPIES OF "*THESE DAYS*"  
AVAILABLE FROM CHURCH OFFICE**

The April/May/June 2020 editions of "*These Days: Daily Devotions for Living by Faith*" have arrived in the Church Office. If you would like a copy, just phone us (361.575.2441) or email us ([info@fpcovictoria.com](mailto:info@fpcovictoria.com)), and we will gladly send you one immediately. Do not worry about the postage involved, by the way. We have received a generous contribution to our postage budget to help meet our mailing expenses as we try our best to stay in touch with the members and friends of First Presbyterian Church.

Also, if you are interested in online worship devotionals, there is none better than *The Presbyterian Outlook*. Investigate this timely, information, and spiritually motivating publication at: <https://pres-outlook.org/>. I particularly recommend the devotionals presented by Jill Duffield. If you enjoy this publication, you can sign up for a free "internet subscription" and receive the weekly editions by email.

Peace, grace, and mercy,

Pastor Jim



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