





**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
CONTINUES TO HOLD
“VIRTUAL WORSHIP SERVICE”**

Dear FPC Family,

Last week, I bragged to you about the amazing folks whom I call the “Virtual Worship Team.” As expected, they came together to produce FPC’s first ever virtual worship service video which was available for viewing on FPC’s Facebook page on Sunday, March 29, 2020.

To be clear, the video still remains available for viewing at any time:

just go to <https://www.facebook.com/fpcovictoria>, and scroll down until you see the video.

I wish we could have rolled movie-type “credits” at the end of the video, for if we had, this is what they would have looked like:

Music by Robert Wyatt

Sound and Technical Support by Bob Whitaker

Production Assistance by Tasha Wolf and Marina Lane

Motivation provided by the love of God

Inspiration provided by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ

Guidance provided by the companionship of the Holy Spirit

In these credits you can understand not only *how* we were able to produce our first video; you can also understand *why* we were compelled to produce it.

And so, we shall continue to worship in this same manner on Sunday, April 5, 2020. In that regard, I want to mention something important. Liturgically, there are two ways to approach the Sixth Sunday in Lent.

The first approach is a joyful one, celebrating Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem with the shouting of “Hosannas” and the waiving of palms by crowds who watched or joined the procession. This is a very traditional manner of celebration, and in this instance the Sixth Sunday in Lent is known as “Palm Sunday.”

The second approach is more severe, recalling Jesus’ betrayal by Judas, Jesus’ trial at the hands of the religious establishment, the acquiesce by Pontius Pilot to the demands of the crowd that Jesus be crucified, the scourging of Jesus’ body by the Roman soldiers, and, finally, Jesus’ agonizing death on the Cross. In this instance the Sixth Sunday in Lent is known as “Passion Sunday.”

I know that many will want to celebrate Palm Sunday in the traditional manner. To celebrate the joy of Christ’s entry into Jerusalem would help dispel some of the present gloom we all are experiencing. On the other hand, our Sanctuary will be empty, there will be no palms which we can waive, and, importantly in your Pastor’s mind, we will not have the opportunity to recall the pain and suffering of Christ’s crucifixion on Good Friday (April 10th this year), since that service, like all others for a while, will have to be suspended this year.

Accordingly, on this forthcoming Sixth Sunday in Lent, we will celebrate Passion Sunday instead of Palm Sunday and focus on the tragic aspects of Christ’s final days in Jerusalem. If you are apprehensive about being despondent next Sunday, please do not be. Think of our service as

a parallel to Good Friday, when in darkness and silence we strip the altar of its adornments-- a sign of mourning that Christ, it would seem, has been conquered by death!

All of this, however, is in preparation for the joyful celebration on Easter Morning that it was the other way around: Hallelujah, Christ has risen! He has conquered death for us all!

Please plan to join us for our virtual worship services on Passion Sunday (April 5th) and of course on Easter Sunday (April 12th). Also, please tell your family, friends, and neighbors, First Presbyterian Church continues to worship the Lord our God with all our hearts, all our souls, all our minds, and all our strength (Mark 12:30).

And now, a few technical notes. Either tomorrow (Wednesday) or the day after (Thursday), the Church Office will circulate by mail and by email copies of the Bulletin for our April 5th worship service. For those of you who receive emails, the Bulletin arrives as an attachment to the email. Although not essential to worship, if you want to use the Bulletin, please open the attachment and print it or otherwise have it close at hand while you watch the video.

Also, we received some very helpful feedback about our efforts last Sunday-- just as I requested. We are going to try some new things for this Sunday's worship service, and we are going to see how we might improve the sound. By all accounts, our new organ sounded *wonderful*. During the vocal portions of worship, however, the sound of my voice reverberated in the Sanctuary, thus making it difficult for some to hear the prayers and the devotional. We will be working on that. Meanwhile, please *continue* to help us with your feedback and comments as we strive to improve.

Finally, your Pastor is amazed by the power of social media. As this Newsletter goes to print, our Facebook page has had over 1,000 hits since last Saturday (meaning that many people looked at it), and our worship video has had over 350 views. It is possible to "like" our page (just click on the thumbs-up icon to indicate that), and, more importantly, it is possible for viewers to "share" our page with their friends across the country (or the globe, for that matter). If you believe, for example, a former member of our church would like to see what's going on at FPC these days (the life, the vitality, the commitment to authentic worship), then please invite them to watch our worship services on our Facebook page at the link I provided in the second paragraph of this Newsletter.

I close with some very practical advice I received recently from a brother in Presbyterian ministry. He said, "I'll be trusting www.cdc.gov for my Covid-19 updates and God for everything else." Amen!

Peace, grace, and mercy,
Your Pastor



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