



HAPPY MOTHERS' DAY!

In the United States, we celebrate Mothers' Day on the second Sunday in May, which is next Sunday (May 10, 2020). In the Presbyterian community, we have an expansive view of motherhood. Of course, we congratulate all those magnificent women whose hands have "rocked the cradle," who have cared for and nurtured the children whom they birthed, and who, by their love, care, and exemplary behavior, have thought their children how to live decent, worthy, and Christ-honoring lives.

God has also, however, blessed others with the life-nurturing qualities of motherhood, even if they have not themselves had children: the dedicated teacher; the favorite aunt; the kind neighbor; the foster mother and the adoptive mother--

countless examples abound. I had a male friend who was a single father as a result of the tragic death of his wife when his three children were quite young. As the children grew older and more appreciative of their father's efforts, one year they decided to celebrate "Mothers' Day" in his honor-- and a tradition was born.

May God bless all those who love and care for children, regardless of their circumstances. No matter on which side of heaven they are today, may God bless all the mothers, and all those who have embraced the finest qualities of motherhood, for their love, their devotion, their sacrifice, and their tenderness to God's children.



**THANK YOU FOR
RESPONDING TO THE CALL TO HELP CHRIST'S KITCHEN**

The response to our call last week for cookies, brownies, donuts, cakes, pies, and other desserts to help the volunteers at Christ's Kitchen feed the hungry and the needy in our community was heartwarming. By my unofficial count some 100 to 150 individual dessert servings were dropped off at the Church Office on Monday afternoon by many members of the congregation for delivery to the good folks at Christ's Kitchen the following morning (May 5th). Your pastor personally delivered the bounty, and I wish I could adequately share with you the expressions of gratitude I received on your behalf.

You will also be pleased to know that members of our congregation were very much present as individual servings of salads, fruit, and even a "main dish"-- along with plenty of desserts!-- were prepared, packaged, and placed in to-go boxes for those whom Christ's Kitchen serves.

In what Francis Miller and I hope is a sign of continuing good news, bakeries are starting to supply Christ's Kitchen once again, plus for the first time the number of noon meals being served is declining. For this reason, Francis believes that we do not need to repeat our call for extra desserts next week. If the situation changes for the worse, however, we will let you know. And of course, even if food supplies

are no longer needed, willing volunteers are always welcome to help on Tuesday mornings (when FPC members are at Christ's Kitchen in force) or on any weekday morning when you can help.

Again, thank you for your generous response:

*"Come, you that are blessed by my Father,
inherit the kingdom prepared for you
from the foundation of the world;
for I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink,
I was a stranger and you welcomed me,
I was naked and you gave me clothing,
I was sick and you took care of me,
I was in prison and you visited me."
Matthew 25:34-36*



**“VIRTUAL” WORSHIP SERVICES
ON
FACEBOOK/FPCOFVICTORIA:
FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER,
MAY 10, 2020**

Unquestionably, we will continue to post our Sunday morning worship services on the FPC Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/fpcofvictoria/>) while the church remains closed for public gatherings.

Again, therefore, we are making the Bulletin available for our May 10, 2020 worship service (1) by mailing it to our members who do not receive email and (b) for our members who receive this Newsletter via email, by providing this electronic link where you can find (and print, if you wish), the Bulletin: <https://fpcofvictoria.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2020-05-10-Bulletin-PDF.pdf> As always, if you have any trouble finding or printing the Bulletin, do not hesitate to call the Church Office for help.

Please remember, also, we are now posting not only our Newsletters but also videos of our worship service on the FPC website (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 a little more time (4 to 5 days) for a video that appears on our Facebook page to be transferred over to our website, but we will continue to make those transfers in an effort to reach a larger audience inside and outside the Victoria community. As a reminder, 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.

**SESSION WILL MEET BY VIDEO CONFERENCE
ON TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020,
TO CONSIDER “GOING FORWARD” PLANS:
YOUR INPUT IS REQUESTED**

The FPC Session will meet on Tuesday evening, May 12, 2020, by video conference to consider important issues facing the church in these trying times. As usual, we will review the financial statements of the church through the first four months of this year. After guiding the spiritual affairs of the church, the Session considers its duty of stewardship to be among its most important responsibilities.

Jim Stokes, our Treasurer and a currently serving Ruling Elder, informs me that so many faithful members of our congregation have found ways to keep their tithes and offerings current even though we are no longer able to “pass the plate” during our worship services. To all of you, the Session expresses its heartfelt thanks for your faithful, loving, and timely giving to support the church we all love so much. At the same time, our revenues are, not unexpectedly but not yet alarmingly, down from the levels we had budgeted as if we would have been meeting continuously in the Sanctuary on Sunday mornings.

We understand, also, that some of our members may be facing their own financial hardships in this time of a greatly weakened economy. To such friends, I invite you to contact the Chair of our Caregiving & Fellowship Committee, Gayla Whitaker, or me to express in confidence any cares, concerns, or hardships you are facing. Perhaps the church can help. Meanwhile, we encourage you to take care of your personal financial needs first and foremost.

At the same, if anyone notices that they have perhaps inadvertently delayed their planned periodic contributions to First Presbyterian Church, we would be grateful if you would carefully and prayerfully consider mailing, or dropping off, your contribution at the Church Office. We are doing our best to reduce our expenses (in utilities, office supplies, the use of contractors, and any other way we can think of). If we carefully manage our funds, we should, with your support, be able to resume public worship at full strength when the time is right.

The Session will also be considering the pivotal question of *when* to resume public worship at FPC. On this subject we shall be led by the Holy Spirit and by the recommendations and data provided by those whom God has gifted with the blessings of medical expertise. For your Session this is not a political issue, it is a public health issue.

As we consider how to proceed, we would very much appreciate input (via letter or email) before our meeting from interested members of our congregation. For example, do you believe we should reopen worship in the Sanctuary “as soon as possible?” Do you believe that the first Sunday in June (June 7, 2020) might be a

reasonable time? Do you believe that we should continue to wait until more testing becomes available or until some other public health benchmark is reached (e.g., a sustained decline in coronavirus infections in our area)? Would your answers be different if the Session could find the financial resources to continue broadcasting our worship services over social media (be aware, however, that “live broadcasting” is a much more complicated and expensive proposition than “pre-recording” our worship services as we now do)?

Naturally, at the end of the day, even if we reopen the Sanctuary, we will do so subject to appropriate social-distancing protocols. Moreover, we would not want anyone to attend who was not yet comfortable being present at social gatherings, even when such protocols are followed. First and foremost, we want to protect the precious lives that God has given us. That is the primary imperative by which we want our members to be led. Whenever we return to the Sanctuary, it will be, as always, to thank God for his many blessings and to pray that he guard, protect, and maintain the safety of all his children whether they are present in the Sanctuary or not.

**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@fpcofvictoria.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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