

**WORSHIP SERVICE  
DAY OF PENTECOST,  
MAY 23, 2021, 10:30 A.M.**

Next Sunday, May 23, 2021, is the Day of Pentecost. If you are feeling bold, wear something **RED** to church! A **RED** tie, a **RED** jacket, a **RED** skirt-- something to celebrate the birth of Christ's Church!

Our Scripture readings will be Joel 2:28-32a ("I will pour out my spirit on all flesh ..."); and Acts 2:1-21 ("All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit ..."). The sermon title is "The **RED** Fire of Pentecost," and the Bulletin is available here: [https://fpcovictoria.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/5-23-2021-Bulletin-PDF.pub\\_.pdf](https://fpcovictoria.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/5-23-2021-Bulletin-PDF.pub_.pdf)

C.F. Schneider will play, "Breathe on Me, Breathe of God," as our

congregational hymn, and Robert Wyatt will play, “Holy Spirit, Faithful Guide,” for our anthem. Please join us on our Facebook page or website for an exciting celebration of the Day of Pentecost!

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### **FPC SESSION UPDATES OUR CHURCH'S COVID-19 PANDEMIC GUIDELINES**

Since the inception of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Session has been carefully monitoring CDC guidelines regarding the safety of indoor gatherings, particularly the gathering of our members and visitors for in-person worship in our Sanctuary.

Sensing there might be a loosening of the guidelines as a result of the large number of wise individuals across the country who have obtained their full round of vaccinations, some six weeks ago the Worship Committee of the Session appointed a small group to consider when, in fact, it might be safe to resume public singing in our Sanctuary. As always, however, the members of the Worship Committee, as well as the entire Session, have insisted that our decisions be guided by science and reliable data.

With the recent announcement by the CDC that *fully vaccinated individuals* could resume participating in public activities without wearing a mask or physically distancing, except where required by federal, state, or local laws (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html>), the Session determined that it was appropriate to update FPC's COVID-19 Guidelines.

A copy of these updated guidelines appears at the end of this Newsletter.

Revised pamphlets containing these guidelines will be available at the entrances to the church this Sunday. Please read the guidelines carefully. Essentially, the Session has determined that the wearing of facemasks during our worship services will be optional *for those who have been fully vaccinated for at least two weeks*. Also, those who sit in the front half of the Sanctuary will be welcome to sing our hymns aloud.

The Session has asked me to be very clear in the following regard. If, *for any reason whatsoever*, a member prefers to continue wearing a facemask while at church, their preference will be respected. We fully understand the desire to be super-cautious. Moreover, those preferring not to sing or to be among those who do, are welcome to sit in the back half of the Sanctuary.

In making this common-sense accommodation, the Session does not want to appear to be endorsing separation or segregation-- such concepts are antithetical to all that Presbyterians believe about the inclusiveness of all God's people in our midst. *For the time-being*, however, this is one of those practices that appears to be wise and appropriate in the present circumstances.

I shall not repeat other details in the updated guidelines regarding such matters as the taking of the offering, the celebration of the liturgy, and like matters. Instead, I again encourage you to carefully read about those details in the Appendix that appears at the end of this Newsletter.

As God leads us out of the scourge of this pandemic, let us be ever mindful of those who have suffered greatly (including the loss of loved ones), not only in our nation but around the world. Let us ask God to grant his tender mercy and steadfast comfort to those who mourn, to those who continue to suffer, and to those who seek to rebuild their lives after this terrible time of hardship and tragedy.

Let us also remember not to let our guard down as things begin to return to a "post-COVID normal." Let us remain careful and cautious out there as we return to a life of community.

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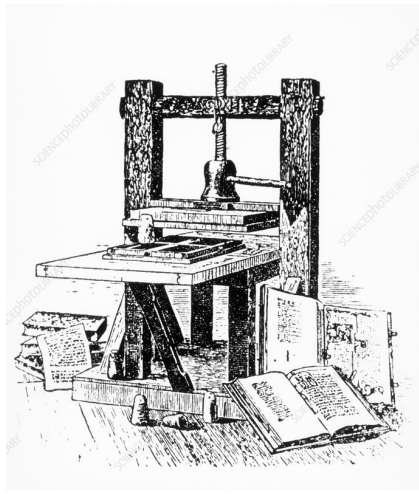


## **SUMMER VACATIONS!**

Many of us who have had our COVID vaccinations, including your Pastor and his wife, have begun to allow themselves to plan for trips, vacations, and that sacred occasion for so many of us-- visits with the grandchildren!

For all who will be traveling this Summer, may God follow you with his blessings and his protections. Our Treasurer, Jim Stokes, wants me to remind everyone, however, that the expenses involved in maintaining our church never take a vacation. Nevertheless, it is the proven experience of many churches that their operating funds sink dangerously low during the summer months. As you travel, therefore, please remember to mail your pledges and donations in a timely manner to the church office. In fact, if you forget, just go to our website, find the green "Giving" button on the home page, and follow the simple instructions. As I often say, pushing that green button is easier than shopping on Amazon, and a whole lot better for you!

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## NEWLETTER DELIVERIES

And speaking of vacations, Sally and I are going to make some long-overdue visits to see our grandchildren in Austin, Texas (during the Memorial Day holiday) and in Castle Rock, Colorado (during the Fourth of July holiday). On each occasion, we look forward to times of joy, rest, and relaxation.

The Worship Committee is well underway with its plans to provide guest preachers on those Sundays while I am away. You can be sure that FPC's dear friend, Bette Burris, features prominently among those plans.

Also, while I am away, we will periodically suspend publication of the Newsletter, although *we will continue to mail advance copies of the Bulletin to those who currently receive them*. Please be aware, therefore, that no copies of the Newsletter will be circulated, either by mail or by email, for these dates:

- May 26, 2021 (*next week*)
- June 2, 2021
- June 9, 2021
- and
- June 30, 2021
- July 7, 2021
- July 14, 2021

At the same time, please remember that, with the exception of **Friday, May 28, 2021**, when the church office will be closed for the day, the church remains open and available during the week to serve and assist you. Please contact Tasha Wolf, our Office Administrator, at 361.575.2441 or [info@fpcofvictoria.org](mailto:info@fpcofvictoria.org), with any questions or concerns you may have. Tasha is also here to assist church members and church committees in any way possible.



Finally, should any pastoral concerns or needs arise during my absence, please let Tasha know that you need to speak with me. I will contact you as quickly as my circumstances permit. In the past, I have been assisted by a host of loving Christians who have been able to help me meet the pastoral needs of this congregation. Both the congregation and I are blessed to have such a faithful group of God's servants available to provide care and comfort among God's children whenever needed.

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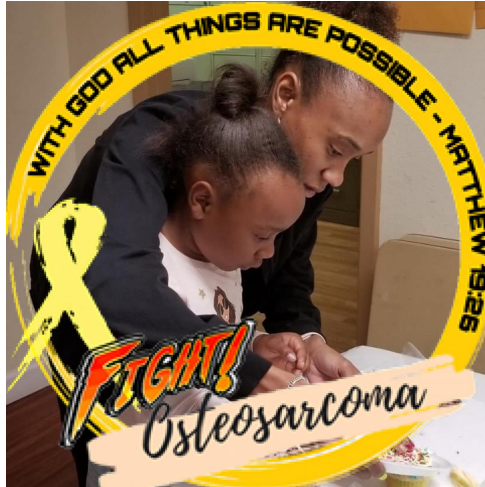


**JOIN FELLOW FPC MEMBERS  
IN SERVICE TO THE HOMELESS AT  
CHRIST'S KITCHEN**

In keeping with a long-standing commitment of service to others, several members of First Presbyterian Church, Victoria meet weekly to help prepare for the Tuesday meals served at Christ's Kitchen. Volunteers from First Presbyterian begin chopping fruit and vegetables for salads as well as cutting and boxing desserts on Monday afternoon between the hours of 1:30 - 4:30 pm. The remainder of our portion of the meal preparation is completed on Tuesday morning beginning at 7:00 a.m. Currently, enough food is being prepared to serve between 500-600 to-go meals. During this time, the safe practice of wearing masks is still observed, and no one (other than volunteers) is allowed inside the building.

If you would like to help by joining in during this food preparation, just come to Christ's Kitchen any time on Monday afternoon between 1:30 and 4:30 pm. Extra hands, in service to the less fortunate among us, are always welcome!

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**GRANDDAUGHTER OF REV. FRED HOBBS  
CONCERNS FOR KEIMRYN LEE,**

Several members have asked that we reprint the information from last week's Newsletter concerning the serious illness of one of the granddaughters of FPC's good friends, the Rev. and Mrs. Fred Hobbs. The eight-year girl, Keimryn Lee, is the daughter of Askaskia Hobbs, whom many of us know through her work at her father's church, Mt. Nebo Missionary Baptist Church.

Keimryn Lee is being treated for pediatric cancer in the Houston Medical Center. We shall pray for the welfare and prompt healing of this dear child. Any members or friends of our church who would like to provide much needed financial support to the Hobbs family should visit <https://www.facebook.com/askaskia> where there is more information in this regard. We understand, for instance, that visitors can buy a t-shirt to support Keimryn Lee emotionally and her family financially.

A special account has also been set up at the Texas Dow Employees Credit Union (TDECU) to receive contributions to help offset Keimryn Lee's considerable medical expenses. Keimryn Lee's mother, Askaskia, can be reached at 361.489.7458 for anyone to provide comfort and reassurance as well as to obtain additional information as to how best to assist the family in this time of trial.

As always, join us in prayer for the healing mercy and comfort of the Holy Spirit for our dear friends, the Hobbs Family, as they face this challenge. *"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."* 3 John 1:2 (KJV).

Peace, grace, and mercy,

Pastor Jim

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**APPENDIX TO NEWSLETTER:  
UPDATED COVID-19 PANDEMIC  
PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS  
FOR IN-PERSON GATHERINGS AT  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF  
VICTORIA, TEXAS**

**As We Enter**

- Facemasks must be worn *at all times* by those who have not yet been fully vaccinated for at least two weeks.
- For those who have been fully vaccinated for at least two weeks, facemasks are *optional*. Nevertheless, regardless of their vaccination status, anyone may choose to wear a facemask as they desire. Anyone wearing a facemask will be treated graciously and respectfully.

**While We Are Gathered**

- Seating
  - o Certain pews, which will be clearly marked, will be remain closed to seating.



- o Those who do not wear facemasks, and those who wish to sing, should sit in the front half of the Sanctuary.

- o Anyone who is reluctant to be around those who are not wearing masks, or around those who are singing, should sit in the back half of the Sanctuary.

- Worship

- o *Singing*: For vaccinated members, no facemasks will be required, and singing will be allowed in the front half of the Sanctuary. The lyrics to the hymns, (together with the appropriate Scripture lessons) will be printed in the Bulletin to minimize contact with the hymnals and Bibles in the pew racks.

- o *Passing of the Peace*: We will continue to maintain social distancing during the Passing of the Peace. Worshipers will stand in body or spirit and greet one another by waiving and other expressions of love.

- o *Offering*: An offering will be taken by the passing of the collection plates among the congregation. If you do not wish to receive the plate, simply raise your hand slightly to decline receiving it. The passer of the plate will understand and will honor your request. Offering plates will also continue to be placed at the front and back of the Sanctuary for everyone's convenience.

- o *Liturgy*: When indicated in the Bulletin, worshippers will be requested to stand in body or spirit as appropriate for the liturgy.

- o *Communion*: There will be no change to the way we currently serve communion. When served, communion will be voluntary. Those wishing to be served will come forward down the center aisle while maintaining appropriate social distancing. The Elders, wearing clean gloves, will place the host (the bread) into each communicant's cupped hands (please do not reach into the plate to take the bread yourself). The juice will be served in small plastic cups. Each congregant will take his or her own cup. There will be a separate receptacle in which to deposit each cup once it is used (please do not return the cup to the serving dish).

### **As We Depart**

- You are welcome to linger after a service to the extent you feel comfortable doing so. Please be respectful, however, of those who are trying to leave quickly so as to avoid contact with those who are not wearing masks.

- Please tell friends and neighbors who were unable to attend that our worship

services will continue to be streamed on our website ([www.fpcovictoria.com](http://www.fpcovictoria.com)) and on our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/fpcovictoria](http://www.facebook.com/fpcovictoria)). Those who participate via our website will also have the convenience of the appropriate Bulletin being there as well. Please remember, also, that while each service will be streamed live on Sunday morning, it will also be “archived” so that it can be played anytime afterwards.

### **A Final Note from the Worship Committee**

These protocols have been revised in the same manner they were prepared-- only after a great amount of research and prayerful deliberation. As before, these protocols remain flexible and subject to change, and thus we welcome input from members and visitors alike about their worship experience while these precautions are in place.

We rejoice that we are able at last to return to a more “normal” worship routine. At church and elsewhere, however, we must not let our guard down. The Coronavirus and its variants are still plentiful among us. Please remain careful and cautious!

When we published our first set of Public Health and Safety Protocols, we knew that many in our midst were still not ready to return to public worship. We understand. The revision of these protocols does not mean that we believe *you* should return to worship. Each of our members should continue to err on the side of caution. If you have even the slightest concern, we encourage you to stay home, join us on our website or on Facebook, and stay isolated until you feel comfortable venturing out. You will not be forgotten or overlooked, for we shall continue to carry everyone in our hearts and prayers. May God be with us all as we continue to cope during these uncertain times.

Amen!

