

ADVOCATE

May 2020

First Presbyterian Church
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New Church Officers

Each spring, we elect new officers to provide leadership for the church. Using the Presbyterian process, our Nominating Committee prayerfully discerns who might be good leaders for our church and then asks those people to be candidates for the position of Elder, Deacon, or member of next year's Nominating Committee. The nominees are then presented at a Congregational Meeting, and the floor is opened for additional nominees. There are seldom other nominees, so the nominations are then closed, and a ballot is cast to elect these people as our new officers.

Of course, this year, we are in a quandary because we cannot hold a Congregational Meeting. To solve this problem, the Session has decided on the following process:

1. The Nominating Committee presents the slate of candidates to the congregation through the *Advocate* (see below).
2. Then, you and other church members have the opportunity to make additional nominations. To do so, first you need to contact your potential nominee and get his/her permission to be nominated for that office. After you receive that permission, send the nominee's name to the pastor by 6:00 p.m. Friday, May 8.
3. If by May 8 we have no additional nominees for these offices, the Session will declare that the election is uncontested, and all the nominees presented by the Nominating Committee will be elected to their respective offices.
4. If we have additional nominees, the Session will decide at its May 11 meeting how to conduct the election, using the latest information on social distancing and large gatherings.
5. Following the May meeting, the Session will announce its decision in a special edition of the *Advocate*. Please note that we will be electing only Elders and Deacons now. We will elect a new Nominating Committee in the fall, hopefully in a more traditional fashion.

The Nominating Committee presents the following people for election as officers of First Presbyterian Church:

For Elder:
Mary Bricker (2nd Term)
Rob Rankin
Vicki Moon
John McElhaney

For Deacon:
Bonnie Moses (2nd Term)
Sue Zust
Anne Bates
Glenna Cameron



Session Holds Special Meeting on Reopening the Church

On April 28, the Session of First Presbyterian held a special meeting by Zoom video conferencing to consider when we will reopen the church. The elders have been following the Governor's directives on reopening, and they have read the Presbytery guidelines on this matter. The following actions were taken:

1. We will not be resuming in-person worship during May. This decision follows the guidelines of the Presbytery and the state. It will also give the Session more time to assess how to properly reopen the church when that time comes. No decision was made about resuming in-person worship beyond May—that decision will be considered at the regular May 11 Session meeting.
2. We will continue to broadcast our Sunday morning worship service on Facebook and look to improve its content and its delivery. We may also continue to broadcast our services even after we resume in-person worship because many in our church, especially those at a higher risk of the virus, will need to remain at home.
3. We will reopen the church office and resume our regular office hours (Mon-Thurs, 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.) beginning on May 11. Visitors to the church will need to practice safe distancing, sanitize their hands, and use other safety procedures while in the building. No group gatherings or meetings will be held at the church building until at least the end of May.
4. Session focus groups were created to examine the issues involved with reopening in six areas of concern: Sunday Morning Worship, Sunday Morning outside of Worship, Children and Youth, Small Groups and Special Events; Building Access and Sanitation, and Other Areas of Need. These focus groups will report at the May 11 Session meeting.

At the appropriate time, the church will reopen to allow worship and other ministries, but the elders want this reopening to be safe and thus, our careful approach to this process. In the meantime, the church continues to be the body of Christ—caring for one another, reaching out to the world, and always praising God.

Current Worship at First Presbyterian

As noted above, Rev. Gauen will continue to livestream our worship services on Facebook on Sundays at 10:15 a.m. After the main service, Kathy Gauen will livestream a separate Children's Message. We are doing this so that families can access the Children's Message separately from the rest of the service. Both the worship service and the Children's Message will be saved on Facebook for later viewing. If you miss a sermon, you can watch it anytime. An audio version of the service will be posted to our church's website (www.westervillefirstpresbyterian.org). Also, our organist, Lyn Meyer, is posting music recordings on the church website. In addition, a printed copy of the sermon will be sent as part of Pastor Gauen's daily messages.

The church is closed, but you can call or email Rev. Mark Gauen if you have a pastoral concern or a suggestion.



Walk to Jerusalem by Easter

January 12 – April 12

Once again, the walkers did not disappoint! We needed only about 6600+ miles to get from Westerville to Jerusalem, and we ended up with over 7800 miles! Next time, we can leave a little later or take a different route. Thank you to everyone who walked to make this such a big success.

A big thank you to Linda Backus for keeping track of the miles and to our tour guide Sue Bonvallet for providing such interesting information about the places where we stopped. It was a fun trip, with both physical and spiritual benefits for all!

In Christ,
Kim Hunt and the Health Ministry Team

Event Update

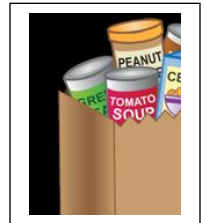
Due to the coronavirus, these projects and events are still on hold:

Reaching out to Refugees

Please continue gathering items for the CRIS Welcome Kit. Bring small items to the church when it opens and put them in the bin in the Gathering Place. Due to storage limitations, please keep larger things at home until we are assigned a refugee family.

Backpack Bounty

The schools are closed now, but in the fall, we will probably continue packing backpacks of food for hungry families at Huber Ridge School. In the meantime, we welcome more contributions of nonperishable food. If you don't have a Backpack Bounty menu to guide your purchases, we always need canned vegetables and canned fruit.



May 3 Gospel Concert



We had hoped that the St. Paul's AME Men's Chorus would be able to perform another amazing concert at our church on Sunday, May 3, but it will have to be rescheduled.

Manna Café

On March 25, Broad Street United Methodist Church sent us this notice:

“In the interest of the greater good, this week will be our last Manna Café until the Stay at Home Orders are lifted. The greater good is served best by us ensuring that everyone can obey that order. We are now aware that the National Guard is set up to feed people daily with a hot meal and a take-home box. I am confident that the homeless folks we serve will find that support and use it. This is unprecedented—I know that. I would not have made this decision unless I knew that the National Guard was here to care for the most vulnerable people.”

Therefore, the Manna Café meal we were scheduled to provide for Wednesday, May 13, has been cancelled. Thank you for your support of this mission program of the church. I will let you know when we receive information from Broad Street UMC that it plans to reopen Manna Café.

Linda Springer

Monthly Dine Out with Nine

Stay tuned for the date of our next get-together, where we will definitely celebrate being able to gather. Questions or suggestions? Contact Jim Hines or Bob Place.

Ladies' Night Out

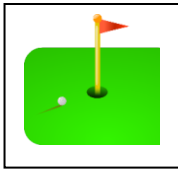
We must wait for the chaos to clear before we set a date for our next fun evening together. Questions or suggestions? Please contact Diana Westfall.

Vegetarian Dining Group

Watch for the announcement of our next dinner, folks! Remember, you don't have to be a vegetarian to enjoy the delicious food and friendly conversation at these meals. For more information, contact Beckey Stamm.

Possible Summer Activities Sponsored by the MEE Committee

No dates have been set for the events below; however, the committee hopes to host these popular activities, plus a summer Men's Breakfast.



JUNE

***GOLF OUTING & PICNIC LUNCH @ NORTON'S CABIN**



JULY

***BIKING EVENT** – With longer and shorter biking courses
***MEN'S BREAKFAST**



AUGUST

***CLIPPERS GAME**
***CANOE TRIP**

Kindness in the Time of Virus

Mary Bricker

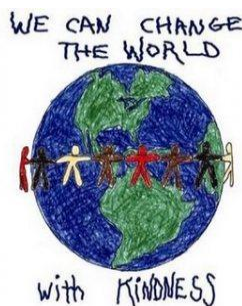
When we began the Kindness Project last summer, we had no idea into what waters we were about to wade. Do you remember way back last fall, when we were going to restaurants, football games, work, and school? Our world has changed dramatically in a few months. Last fall, we were working on letting others out in traffic in front of us, thanking others more demonstrably, and generally spreading good will. Here we are now, spring 2020, and we are seeing a virus all around us. We are seeing businesses closed and possibly going under because we have to shelter in place to avoid passing COVID-19 on to others. People are anxious, worried, and depressed. What's to become of us??

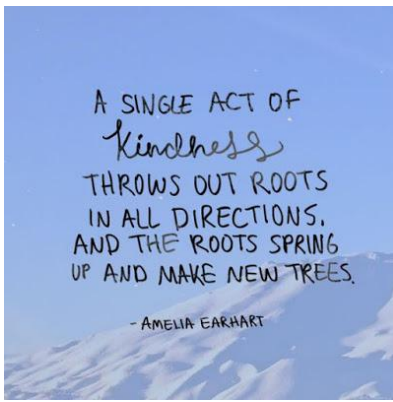


Something about this scenario curiously reminds me of Dr. Seuss' Grinch. As the story goes, the Grinch was fed up with Christmas and decided to try to shut it down. Now the Grinch, who obviously had a childhood of anger, deprivation, and abuse, (just one psychologist's opinion) decided to steal all the toys and decorations in the town and hurt others so they would not want to celebrate Christmas. The Grinch was relying on the model of behavior that he had been taught: when someone hurts you, lash out and hurt them back. That will show them! Then you will feel stronger and more powerful, and they will feel your hurt.

But the story doesn't go that way. The Grinch learned that there is more depth to human behavior than this. The Grinch learned that the Who's in Whoville were celebrating: coming together, singing, inviting the Grinch to join in. This became the remedy to the Grinch's small heart, which then grew, and he was also able to share, not lash out.

Remarkably, this is what we have been experiencing in the wake of COVID-19. In a time like this, we might expect people to hold on tight to their resources and hoard them, push others away, and keep to themselves. Many post-apocalyptic movies have focused on this theme. Now there *are* some of those grinches out there. But we hear every day about generous acts of kindness and selflessness. People and companies are donating multiple supplies and food to those in need. Neighbors are checking on each other and greeting each other in ways that they safely can. Parents are making up creative games and hunts for kids to find things in the neighborhood. Tech-shy baby boomers are jumping in and learning Zoom and other tech tricks to stay connected. I have seen lots of gratitude given to those who are working in risky environments, from health care workers to grocery stockers to maintenance workers. Teachers are going out of their way to help their students learn. In New York City, at 7pm every day, people bang on pots and pan, raising a ruckus to show support for health care workers.





In our own church, kindness is everywhere. The Deacons are checking on all of our members. The Session discusses ways we can be helpful to others. We are all trying to keep up with each other in the best way we can. We come together in safe ways—on the computer screen, in our cars in the parking lot, on social media. In our time of fear and anxiety, we do not let it overcome us. So many people have lost so much—jobs, proms, camps, trips, and even lives. But even in our sadness, we are able to pull out our kindness and gratitude.

Perhaps this is our resurrection. The virus cannot keep us in the tomb. We will not revert to our lower, survivalist instincts, angry and bitter at what we have lost and lashing out at others. Instead, we remember how Jesus lost everything on that cross and yet gave us more. Even in our isolation and “social distancing,” we will connect and find ways to give gratitude and kindness to others. We give because that keeps us alive in the spirit and connected to our higher purpose. And that connecting IS how we survive.

Thank you for all you are doing in this time of the virus. Your gifts are helping us to be the people God wants us to be. I am proud to be among you.



These Days

If you would like a copy of the *These Days* devotional book for April, May, and June, please let Pastor Mark know. He will have it sent to you. We have several copies and will mail them out until they are gone.

Spring Clean-up Day! Saturday, May 9, 9:30 a.m.

Tired of being cooped up due to the COVIA-19 virus? Here's a chance to help keep our church looking good while getting out in the fresh air and sunshine. Administrative Services has scheduled a **SPRING CLEAN-UP DAY for Saturday, May 9, at 9:30 a.m.** We will maintain strict social distancing and stay a full "rake's length" apart from each other.

So >> let's all get out and help with spring clean-up! Questions? Call Jim Hines.

A Virtual Garden!

Spring began Thursday, March 19. According to The Old Farmer's Almanac, this is the earliest date for spring in 124 years. This day may have slipped by many of us because our attention has been focused on all the changes in our lives caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Still, spring is one of the most beautiful seasons that God has blessed us with. Since we are limited to staying home except for necessary outings, we may not be able to enjoy as many of the emerging flowers, trees, and other signs of spring this year.

To help with that, the Health Ministry Team has organized a Virtual Garden Tour. Medical research has proven that looking at pictures of nature is calming, relaxing, and stress reducing. We are asking that you share your photos of God's beautiful world awakening from winter. These can be photos from your garden or yard, a neighborhood yard, a park, or a roadside.

We will be collecting photos until Memorial Day, Monday, May 25. Email your contributions to Linda Backus. Please include your name, the date the photo was taken, and a brief description of the location. Below is an example. Photos will be posted on the church's web site and updated weekly. Check out the beauty our members have already posted!

Do be safe when taking roadside pictures. We are all amateur photographers, so taking photos in focus is all we ask. Thank you for your participation.



March 26, Primula--primrose, Elaine Foley,
Brownstone Drive

Zhineng Qigong While “Sheltering at Home”



Hi, everyone! I'm Beckey Stamm, and I have yet another idea for you to occupy yourself while “sheltering at home.”

Perhaps you've read the listing in the church calendar that reads, “Qigong Practice.”

Perhaps you wondered what that is—or maybe you tuned it out.

Right now, when our gas tanks are full and we can't go anywhere, when our calendars show events we won't attend, when our lives are turned, if not upside down, at least awry—now may be the time to try something new—Zhineng Qigong.

What *isn't* Qigong? It's *not* exercise (though your balance and strength may improve). It's *not* rigid; we do “the form,” and you do what you can and don't do what you don't want to.

What *is* Qigong? It's a meditation that enhances our health. It's a gentle practice done with slow, easy body movements. It's a form that benefits body, mind, and spirit.

Why do Qigong? Our current situation causes stress, fear, isolation, and—well, you know them; I don't need to list them. Qigong is one way to help us relax, center us on the important pieces of life, bring us peace. Attending Qigong now, when social distancing isolates us, also brings us into cheerful, positive contact with other human beings, an important connection these days.

What equipment do you need? 1) Internet access, 2) email, 3) an open heart and mind

How can you participate in Qigong? It's offered on Zoom twice weekly: Tuesday, 5:30-6:30 pm, and Wednesday, 1:00-2:00 pm. To join, email me or call me. I'll email you the access code and directions on how to join us. If you have questions, call me. I'm always happy to talk about ZQ!

Looking forward to seeing you on my computer screen!

Beckey Stamm

Pike County Delivery

We just returned from Waverly, delivering food to the pantry. To our donators, they send a very BIG THANK YOU!!!!!!

Food pantry staff are able to order/request food from the government pantry in Cincinnati, but they never receive all of what they request.....and today was no exception! They received only 1/3 of what they had requested! So what we delivered really, really helped.

We will continue to collect and deliver nonperishable food donations for Pike County. You can leave your donations at church at the doors under the portico, and they will be moved inside daily. Or you can drop them off at our home at the garage doors (if it's not raining) or on the patio at the porch.

Again..... Keep up the good work...they really appreciate it!

Sharon & John Davis

Youth Activities

Dear parents,

We want to make you aware of several things we are doing to encourage communication, play, and spiritual direction with your kids during this time of quarantine. We know that things are stressful, and we do not want to add to your plate, but we do want you and your kids to know that we are thinking of them and trying to engage with them in any way we can.



Heather Hicks will continue to make videos for our younger kids (ages 3-5th grade). They will be posted to YouTube via the channel called “Discovery Den.” The logo is the little green handprint shown here. We will also continue to post these to our Facebook group. Two videos will be posted each week, one on Tuesday and one on Thursday. If you would like to hear certain stories, please contact Rev. Hicks at

education@fpcw.us, and she will try to make sure they appear in upcoming videos.

Heather is also doing several things for our middle and high-school youth. Each day there will be a “Boredom Buster” activity they can engage in at home. These will include fun things, as well as some “mission” type projects. Please keep an eye out for those ideas in the daily e-mails. We will also have a chance to meet via Zoom each Wednesday afternoon from 1--1:40pm. Our first Zoom meeting (April 22) will be reconnecting with one another and hanging out, while following meetings may involve games and activities we can do together. We would love to touch base with your youth group member. Please keep an eye out for the Zoom code number so you can join us. This number will be posted in the daily e-mails.

Blessings to you all,

Rev. Heather Hicks

What’s in Your Future?

If you are a high school senior, matriculating college student in a bachelor degree, associate degree or similar level of education, and a member of our church, it is time to think about applying for a First Presbyterian Church of Westerville Education Scholarship.

Let Rev. Gauen know that you would like an application, and he will mail one to as many families as he can. The due date for applications has been extended to Monday, June 15. If you wish to be considered for a 2020 Scholarship, the Scholarship Committee must receive all the following requirements by June 15.

- A fully completed application form (Incomplete applications will not be considered.)
- Two letters of recommendation, one academic and one personal/character
- A copy of your recent grade transcript

An application for a scholarship may be submitted every year you are a student, but a maximum of two annual scholarships will be awarded per applicant.

We encourage all who are considering post high school education to take advantage of the church's scholarship program. For further information about the program or if you have not received an application, contact Kathy Krotz.

Fabrics of Faith

Although the April Fabrics of Faith meeting had to be cancelled, members of this group have been busy making masks to give to those who need them. If you would like a mask (made with love), contact Pastor Mark, and he will see that you get one.



Being productive during "house arrest" is good for us; doing a project that not only keeps you occupied but helps during unsettling times is good for everyone! If you make and donate any masks, please share your experience. It would be good to know that First Presbyterian helped not only our first responders and the medical personnel on the front lines, but also the rest of us who need masks, too. Questions? Contact Beckey Stamm.

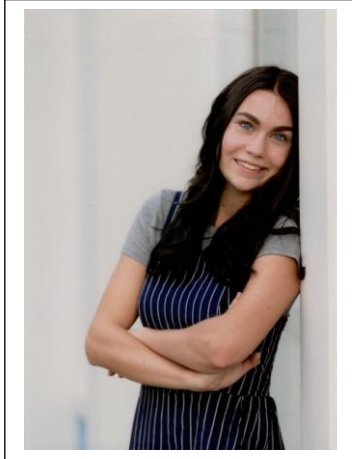
A little humor, care of Jim Hines:

While walking along the sidewalk in front of the church, the minister heard the intoning of a prayer that caught his attention. Apparently, the youngsters in the neighborhood had found a dead robin. Feeling that proper burial should be performed, they had secured a small box and cotton batting. Then they dug a hole and made ready for the disposal of the deceased.

The minister's son was chosen to say the appropriate prayers and with sonorous dignity intoned his version of what he thought his father always said: "Glory be unto the Faaaather..and unto the Son.....and into the hole he gooooes."
-- author unattributed.

Congratulations to Our Graduating Seniors!

Ally Dunlap



Ally Dunlap is not only graduating from Big Walnut High School this year, but she and her family are also moving in May to Palm Island, Florida! (That's north of Ft. Myers.) The daughter of Ryan and Deanna Dunlap, Ally says she loves the weather in Florida. In fact, her family vacationed for several years in the same house that will soon be their home.

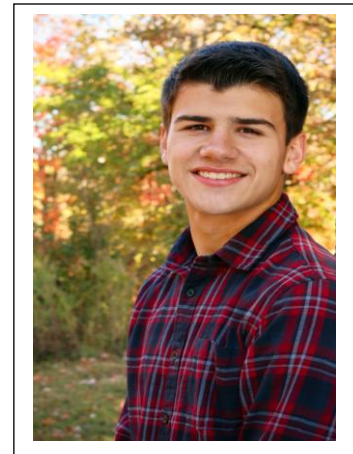
In the fall, Ally will begin working toward a degree in criminology at Florida State University in Tallahassee. She really enjoys watching crime shows and reading crime novels, so she hopes to make a career in this field.

At Big Walnut, Ally played varsity lacrosse and was in the National Honor Society and the National Art Honor Society. She has been very active at First Presbyterian, helping with Vacation Bible School and Wacky Wednesdays and providing childcare. She says she will miss being part of our church because it was really fun.

Drew Wright

Drew Wright is graduating from Westerville North High School and will enter the University of Cincinnati in the fall. There, he will major in mechanical engineering (which is not surprising as his mom teaches mechanical engineering!). Drew has helped with many of the church's youth activities, including the sub sale, spaghetti dinner, and blessing of the animals. This spring, he played a major role in the Youth Sunday service.

The son of Adele and Rob Wright, Drew enjoyed several sports at Westerville North, including soccer, wrestling, and bowling. An Eagle Scout, this summer he hopes to attend Philmont Camp in New Mexico, which offers many hiking opportunities for scouts.



Looking forward to college, Drew anticipates a new environment, new friends, and new experiences. However, he says that First Presbyterian has always been a place that will support him up, no matter the circumstances. He adds, "Thanks for the past 18 years. I hope to return!"

And Congratulations to the Virtual Newly Weds!

Dorothy & Alvin's Wedding



Dorothy Driskell and Rev. Alvin Lee met at The Chautauqua Institute last summer. After many phone calls, trips from one home to another (Alvin lives in Germantown, OH – two hours from Westerville), and meeting each other's friends and families, Alvin proposed January 10 after a wonderful concert they attended at the Cincinnati Symphony. Dorothy said, "Absolutely!!"

So after changing the wedding date at least four times, they went virtual. Dorothy says we need some JOY during the times we all are going through. The wedding took place on Wednesday, April 8, at 2:00 p.m. Pastor Gauen was in our church, First Presbyterian. Alvin and Dorothy were in his home library in Germantown. Dorothy's daughter (maid of honor) was in San Francisco, and Alvin's son (best man) was about five miles down the road. Dorothy said, "I feel like I am once again breaking the glass ceiling, but as a friend said, 'You always have so why stop now!'"

As soon as the OSU Faculty Club is open again, Dorothy and Alvin will have a big wedding at our church and a wonderful reception at the club. They, like the rest of us, hope that date will arrive soon.

Meanwhile, they ask for your prayers and blessings for their new marriage.

Jennifer & Cody's Wedding

Bev Etling's niece Jennifer Brown and Jennifer's fiancé Cody Vaughn are both in the Air Force and usually based in Turkey. However, they could not find a flight back to Turkey, so they decided to get married while they were still in Atlanta. The Air Force *could* extend their assignment in Turkey when they return.

They married on Palm Sunday in a quiet service at a First Responders park, having only Jennifer's mother and sister and Cody's parents present for the ceremony. The chaplain from their air base in Turkey performed the ceremony via Zoom (or FaceTime), and a local sheriff signed the paperwork. Who doesn't appreciate a good love story?



Adult Growth and Development

ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN			
Activity	When	Where	What
The Sunday Adult Class	<p><i>This class is suspended for the time being due to the pandemic.</i></p> <p><i>A notice will be sent out when the class can resume.</i></p>		
Shelter-in-place Bible Studies	<p>Tuesdays, 9:30-10:30 am</p> <p>Wednesdays, 7:00-8:00 p.m.</p> <p>Thursdays, 1:30-2:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Zoom Meetings</p> <p>-If interested, email Pastor Gauen.</p>	<p>The Book of I John.</p> <p>We will conduct an interactive Bible Study of this cherished book of the New Testament in three different sections.</p>
4th Monday Discussion Group	<p>4th Mondays, 7:30 – 9:00 pm</p>	<p>Zoom Meeting</p> <p>-If interested, email Pastor Gauen.</p>	<p>We are looking at the formation of the Bible through the book, <i>Inspired</i>, by Rachel Held Evans. Led by Rev. Gauen. This month, our class will be on Monday, May 25, 7:30 pm.</p>
Circle 4 Women	<p>3rd Thursdays, 11:00 am</p>	<p>Zoom Meeting</p> <p>-If interested, email Pastor Gauen or call Elaine Foley.</p>	<p>Our Presbyterian Women's group meets monthly for fellowship and Bible study. Led by Elaine Foley. Our next class will be on Thursday, May 21.</p>



Pastor's Page

"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." – Romans 8:37-39

Dear Members and Friends of First Presbyterian Church:

Last week the Presbyterian Church (USA) announced that this year's General Assembly, which was to be held in Baltimore, MD, on June 20-27, will be remade into an on-line assembly—another casualty of the pandemic. I am one of the four delegates from our Presbytery elected to attend this GA, but instead of going to Baltimore for a week, I'll be sitting at home, attending meetings through my laptop. The people at the national level of our denomination are now figuring out how such a General Assembly can be run, and I'll be learning more about my part in all this during the coming weeks. Personally, I am disappointed that I won't be going to Baltimore, a place I have never visited. And I am saddened that I won't get to see my friends from other parts of the country who were also planning to go to attend GA. However, I am still honored to be doing the work of the national church, and I will be part of some important decisions for the denomination. I covet your prayers over the next two months as I prepare for and "attend" this year's General Assembly.

Just a note, the next General Assembly will be held here in Columbus in 2022. On the hope that the problems we are facing today will be solved, and the GA will actually happen here, our Presbytery is actively planning for our part in hosting delegates from across the country and around the world. As we get closer to the summer of 2022, the Presbytery will be seeking volunteers to help with the myriad of tasks that will be needed to successfully manage the event. If you are interested in helping with the advanced planning for GA, let me know. The steering committee will be glad to share the load.

Yours in Christ,

Mark

Presbytery duties in May: I serve on the Presbytery leadership team that is meeting bi-weekly during this crisis to provide support and guidance to the churches and pastors of our Presbytery. The May Presbytery Meeting has been cancelled, and all business will be moved to the September Presbytery meeting. However, the Presbytery Coordinating Team, of which I am a member, will meet on the day of the Presbytery Meeting to oversee the work of the Presbytery for this time. All these meetings will take place via video conferencing. In addition, I still have several duties as moderator that will involve many phone calls and emails and more Zoom meetings.