

## Pastor's Ponderings

On Tuesday, June 30, the LA Times reported:

California plummeted deeper into a new coronavirus crisis Monday as new cases spiked to record levels, some hospitals filled up, and officials expressed growing alarm and frustration with people refusing to follow safety rules despite the increasingly perilous conditions.

We at the First Presbyterian Church of Corona adapted the following protocol last April:

We have chosen to follow Jesus' commandment to care for our neighbor, especially our most vulnerable neighbors (Matthew 22: 37-40), during the coronavirus/COVID19 pandemic. While we are not gathering at the church building, we have chosen to see this as a time for us to try new ways to worship, learn, pray, and stay connected ...after all, God is always doing new things (Isaiah 43:1-19)! In these difficult times, we are committed to continuing to find ways to be the church.

I have tried to walk at least two miles a day as part of my routine to stay healthy. When I leave the campus of Monte Vista Grove Homes, I am shocked by the number of people walking, jogging, or bicycling without masks. I realize that it is safer outdoors and when I am not near anyone, I take off my mask – especially as my glasses are fogging up. Yet, all too often, I find myself leaving the sidewalk and walking in the street when I see someone approaching without a mask. Don't they care? If they are trusting their luck, why endanger others?

It appears that we are now in for a long siege that is not being abated by leaders willing to take tough stands or citizens unwilling to follow the scientific, medical, and Biblical guidelines of caring for the greater good. Thus, we will continue to evaluate

ways to be an effective "virtual church."

We have had Session meetings, Bible Study, Sacred Space, Presbytery and Presbyter committee meetings via Zoom. The General Assembly of the PCUSA just met using virtual technology and the evaluation of the meetings was that it went well. (GA article is on page 2)

The Session continues to explore possibilities for the "virtual future." The Presbytery is offering grants for the purchase of broadcasting/streaming equipment. We have asked for bids to level the space in front of the church and use decomposed granite to create an outdoor safe worship/gathering space. We may seek ways to provide electronic help to people who have not yet been able to join in with the virtual world

Before the virus hit, we were considering a relationship with the New International Seminary in West Covina. President Lee and students from Cameroon visited us in worship and stayed for a fellowship luncheon. I was thinking that we were on the brink of great new possibilities. We have not forgotten. When and if the students return, we will likely appoint a task force to evaluate possibilities in the new reality of social distancing.

This crisis will change the church and the world. I pray that we will discern the healthiest and most effective ways to reform the church for the future.

Henry



## LOUISVILLE



Nathan Young produced the online General Assembly. The team ran the entire event in a large conference room at the Presbyterian Center. Photo by Randy Hobson.

For two weeks now, a key group of leaders, technicians, and individuals with a long track record of working behind the scenes of the General Assembly have been gathered in a large conference room at the Presbyterian Center to bring an online assembly gathering to life for the first time.

Countless laptops, extension cords, monitors, and cameras have covered the room while the production team, practicing social distancing, pulled together a four-day assembly.

As the 224th General Assembly (2020) came to a close on Saturday night, cheers and applause broke out among the team assembled on the second floor of the Presbyterian Center.

None was happier than the Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PC(USA). He said the outcome of this assembly would help map the strategy for future gatherings.

“This was a groundbreaking opportunity for us and I’m thankful for the staff for putting together a significant General Assembly that will change the trajectory of our work and move us into the 21st century in many ways,” he said. “This is a time of technology and we have to enter that world and figure out how to move in a different direction.”



Julia Henderson, interim director of assembly operations, worked with staff to pull together the online assembly in two months. Photo by Randy Hobson.

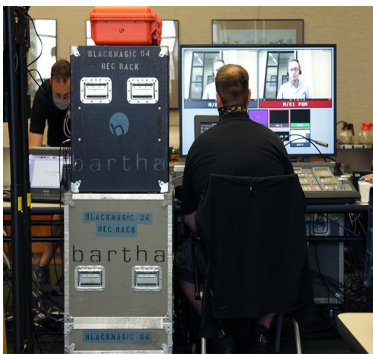
The Co-Moderators of the 224th General Assembly (2020), the Reverend Gregory Bentley and Ruling Elder Elona Street-Stewart, drove five and 11 hours, respectively, last week to take part in training and orientation. Bentley says it was worth it.

“It gives me great hope that we are headed in the right direction. It doesn’t mean we won’t have turbulence along the way and some challenges, but Elona and I both feel we are not dying, we are being reformed, retooled, and refocused for the journey ahead,” he said. “We were given the option of doing this from our homes, but we both felt we needed to be here because there’s so much support you need. It would have been a much bigger challenge at home instead of being here.”

“I understand the depth of the work to be done, but I know we have been blessed by being able to be the church that Christ has called us to be as Presbyterians,” said Street-Stewart. “It was a great event, and I’m excited that, in my senior years, I also get to say the word of God, bringing life to people and I want to be a part of that.”

When Julia Henderson was named interim director of assembly operations for the Office of the General Assembly last October, planning the denomination’s first online gathering was not what she had in mind.

“This assembly exceeded all of our expectations. We expected there would be a few hiccups along the way, but we rejoice in the work of the team and how we were able to seamlessly pull this thing off. We had new Co-Moderators that made our work easy as did our former Co-Moderators (Ruling Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and the Rev. Cindy Kohlmann),” she said. “We were a team that trusted each other and talked with each other and if there was a problem, we could quickly fix it. I can’t think of a better group of people to work with.”



Tech crews were scattered across a couple of floors at the Presbyterian Center for the 224th General Assembly (2020). Photo by Randy Hobson.

Nathan Young served as producer for the 224th General Assembly (2020).

“Even though we did this in two months, we did so much prep work in advance. We didn’t reinvent the wheel, we just took technology and tooled it for what we needed,” he said. “We looked at so many platforms to do audio and video and Zoom is so ubiquitous now, and we needed something that people know.”

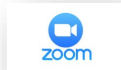
Young, who has worked six General Assemblies, said it would not have been possible without a good team.

“We’ve never had a team like this to work with before,” he said. “The size of the team and the way we all connected together was great. Everyone was so cohesive and we trusted each other like nobody’s business.”

Young says the church will always have some larger technological piece to future assemblies. “Now that we know we can do it, we have to keep doing something like this.”

## From your session

We met via Zoom in June:

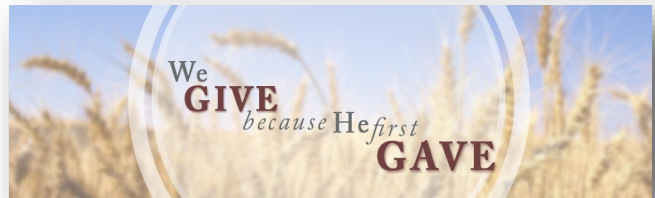


- ◆ We have asked for a bid to do something with the area in front of the church.
- ◆ Considering a task force to work on the idea of outdoor meetings at the church on Thursday evenings.
- ◆ May look into what would be involved in being able to stream our worship services.
- ◆ Sue Bain continues to post regularly to our Facebook page.
- ◆ A women's Bible study will begin meeting at the church on Tuesday mornings in September.  
*(more information later)*



<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>June 30, 2020</b>	<b>Year to Date Totals</b>
Income	5,745.00	46,477.40
Expenses	6,176.78	40,900.16
Net Income	-431.78	5,577.24

<b>DEACONS FUND</b>	<b>June 30, 2020</b>	<b>Year to Date Totals</b>
Income	50.00	1,095.00
Expenses	-0-	942.34
Net Income	50.00	152.66





## JULY BIRTHDAYS

- 1..... *Savanna Williams*
- ..... *Sierra Williams*
- 11..... *Loren Nelson*
- 23..... *Qi Liu Nyeango*
- 25..... *Mavis Hagan*

## JULY ANNIVERSARIES

- 17..... *Mike & Brittany Jager (2009)*
- ..... *John & Qi Liu Nyeango (1987)*



## PRAY DURING JULY FOR THESE FAMILIES

- Rita Riolta*
- Lynda Rodisch*
- Mike Say*
- Bonnie Smith*
- Ty & Elizabeth Talbert*
- Marcia Twitchel*
- George Usongo*
- Virginia Watson*



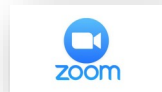
## July 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	



Due to the Stay at Home order that is in place, limited activities are scheduled. Worship is being conducted via the email message being sent out weekly. The message can also be found on our FB page and our web site.

### Ongoing activities



*Sacred Space*  
July 5, 12, 19, &  
26 9:30am via  
Zoom



*Shalom Class*  
July 2, 9, 16, 23  
& 30 10:30am  
via Zoom



*Session*  
July 18 10am  
via Zoom

**These activities will resume  
once we are able to be  
together again**



*Adult Bible  
Study Sunday*  
at 9:30am



*Worship  
Sunday at*  
10:30am



*Vietnamese Church*  
every Sunday at  
1:30pm



*Last Sunday of  
each month is  
Food Donation  
Sunday.*



*4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of each  
month, Women's  
breakfast, Original  
Pancake House, Norco,  
8am  
Loving Needles, 9:45am*





950 Ontario Avenue, Corona CA 92882



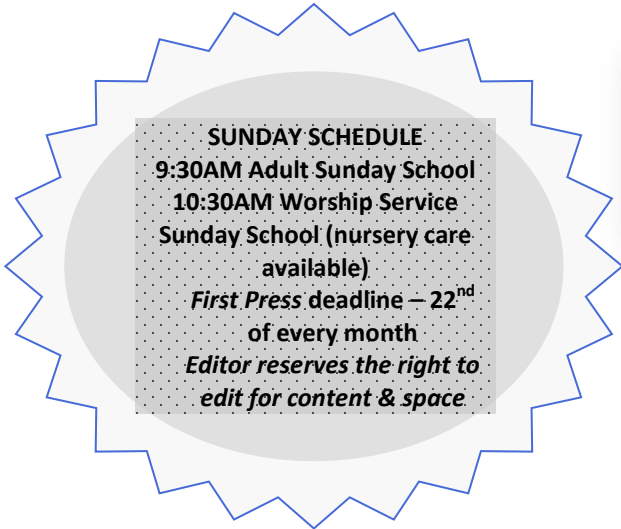
MAKING DISCIPLES OF JESUS  
CHRIST THROUGH WORSHIP,  
DISCIPLESHIP, FELLOWSHIP,  
MINISTRY AND MISSION

### Our Church Staff

Pastor (Transitional)	Henry DeGraaff
Administrative Assistant	Judy Hanson/Marilyn Mittelstadt
Accompanist	Delia E. Martinez-Samojluk
Church Treasurer	Terrie Burbank
Bookkeeper	Teri White
Parish Associate for the Arts & Spirituality	Becky Millhollin
Director of Social Media	Sue Bain



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Pastor: 626-808-7472



**SUNDAY SCHEDULE**  
9:30AM Adult Sunday School  
10:30AM Worship Service  
Sunday School (nursery care available)  
First Press deadline – 22<sup>nd</sup> of every month  
Editor reserves the right to edit for content & space



We're on the WEB  
<http://www.fpc-corona.org>  
[www.facebook.com/coronafirstpresbyterian](http://www.facebook.com/coronafirstpresbyterian)

