

# Presbytery Connect

Special Edition

March 9, 2020

## A Message from the Executive Presbyter

### *Things to think about with COVID-19*

For leaders in congregations, the current health crisis is new territory. After seeing a much smaller crowd than usual where I was in worship on Sunday morning, it occurred to me that there may be a few issues for you and your session to consider.

You will be the ones to make the best decisions about which events will continue as usual—including worship—and which you will alter in some way.

Here are the things you will want to talk about with your session and other leaders in your congregation.

- How will you continue to include those who are ill or afraid or following the recommendations or requirements of governmental officials in worship and other spiritual practices of your congregation? Do you have a way to produce a video of worship? Are you on Facebook live? Do you post your worship services to Youtube? Does your pastor post the sermon or prayers? This is a good time to increase your online presence so that all of your members and friends can stay connected to your group spiritual practices over the next weeks and months.
- Have you considered holding smaller events as Zoom meetings or by Skype or Facetime? For instance, do you have a Bible study that meets regularly? If it becomes important for people not to meet in person, have you helped them find a way to continue that practice electronically?
- What about pastoral care? This is the time to remind your Deacons, Elders, Stephen's Ministers, and staff that they should not make pastoral visits if they are themselves feeling unwell. This is also a time to think

about how to help people feel the care offered by your congregation without physical contact; do you have a robust ministry of sending written notes, making phone calls, and contacting your shut-in or ill members or those experiencing loss by electronic means?

- Do you have a way for members to make contributions electronically? The best way to do that is to have people set up Electronic Funds Transfer so that their contributions are made on a regular basis. (Your bank or the Presbyterian Foundation can help you with this.) Is there a place on your website where people can make an online contribution? Can people contribute by text? This is the time to improve all of these systems for your congregation.

But perhaps the most important thing your leaders can be doing now is planning about how you will get people back. For the next few weeks or even months, it is likely that there will either be smaller congregations present in sanctuaries; or we will make the decision or be ordered to cancel worship altogether. People will find out that there are other things to do on Sunday morning; they will find other ways to meet their spiritual needs. The trend in this country is already away from worship attendance. What kind of event will you sponsor, what kind of special worship will you have, what kind of celebration will you have to welcome people back to church when this is over? And that is what we need to remember—it will be over.

“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 Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 8:38-39

Sue Krummel, Executive Presbyter  
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**PDA "Preparedness for Pandemics" Resource**

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# Presbytery Connect

Special Edition

March 13, 2020

## **Dealing with the Coronavirus/Covid-19 Pandemic** *A Resource Guide*

In this time of uncertainty due to coronavirus/covid-19, the Presbytery of Chicago wants to support all of its congregations and members as we traverse our way through this pandemic. Conditions are changing rapidly and the more information we have the better. This resource is intended to help you with that information gathering.

On Monday, March 9, an email containing a letter from Executive Presbytery Sue Krummel went out as a special edition of Presbytery Connect. For those who missed that letter, [it can be found here](#). On Thursday, Sue recorded a video message of support as well. [It can be found here](#).

Over the past couple of days, resources have been collected that we hope will help congregations find new ways to minister through this time. As Sue says in ending her video, "Be brave. You've got this!"

### **From the Chicago Department of Health**

Even though the news is changing rapidly about the spread of the pandemic, basic information about coronavirus/covid-19 and how to protect oneself from it has not changed over the last few weeks. This [Chicago Department of Health Fact Sheet](#) covers the basics. Social distancing is the order of the day whenever possible. The current mandate from the City of Chicago is that there be no gatherings of 1,000 or more people for the next 30 days and that gatherings of 250 to 1,000 people are strongly discouraged.

### **From the PCUSA Stated Clerk**

J. Herbert Nelson, PCUSA Stated Clerk has sent a message to the Churches

concerning continuing to gather for worship. [That article can be found here](#) and contains information and links about live streaming of worship services and online giving.

### **Staying in Business**

John Fong, a member of First Presbyterian Church in Metuchen, New Jersey, has expertise in helping churches establish and better utilize digital communications for their ministries. He has developed the Digital Discipleship Ministry program and works with churches in three Synods (PCUSA). John has written a guide entitled "[Keeping PCUSA Churches Open for Business](#)" that he has shared for your use.

### **Live Streaming**

As J. Herbert Nelson said in his message, it is up to the Session of any particular PCUSA congregation to make decisions about worship. Live streaming is one way some congregations are staying connected and join together in worship even if they choose not to gather in person. Live streaming might seem beyond your capabilities, but it is not as difficult as one might think and requires little financial investment. In addition to the resources and information given in the PCUSA article referenced above, here are other links that might be helpful.

For those who have never done live streaming, this [Live Stream for Beginners](#) is a good place to start.

In Seattle, a United Methodist Church has posted a [blogpost about its experience](#) with putting together a live stream service in only three days.

Two platforms on which live streaming can happen are free: Facebook and YouTube. If your church has a Facebook account with public settings or a YouTube channel, people can watch a live stream even if the individuals do not have their own accounts. [Read this article from the YouTube Help Desk](#) for an Introduction to Live Streaming. You would, of course, have to disseminate the information about how to log on to the live stream.

At least one congregation in the presbytery has set up live streaming through a Zoom account to their YouTube channel. [This article describes that process.](#) This method has its advantages, but it will require a Zoom webinar account, which has a cost attached. The Zoom account could also be used for video meetings rather than in-person meetings.

## Copyright Issues

If you read any of the above articles about live streaming, you will see that one of the important issues to deal with is copyright infringement. Owning hymnals or a license for music to use in your worship space does not mean you have the right to live stream (i.e. broadcast) that music. If you choose to live stream on Facebook or YouTube and include copyrighted material, you run the risk of having the live stream interrupted.

There are two ways to deal with this issue. One is to buy a license for broadcasting, working within the terms of that license, and hosting the live stream on a paid live stream service rather than Facebook or YouTube, which are free. The other is to make sure that any music you use is in the public domain. David Maxwell of the [Presbyterian Publishing Corporation](#) has written [a letter](#) that contains information about both of those options with appropriate links about licenses and a list of hymns that are in the public domain.

## In Conclusion

Presbytery of Chicago staff members are willing and able to support you as you learn new ways of being Church in these days. Please reach out to staff members with questions and if we don't know the answers, we will help you try to find them. If you aren't sure which staff member to contact, send an email to [contactus@chicagopresbytery.org](mailto:contactus@chicagopresbytery.org) and your email will be directed to the best person to help with your particular question.

This is a lot to think about and absorb. And given how rapidly the pandemic landscape is changing, the days ahead might seem daunting. But knowledge is power and as you lead the congregation you love through this difficult time, do so knowing that God is with you, loving you along the way. If the work becomes exhausting, take some time to spend with God in prayer and go back and watch [Sue Krummel's video](#) for inspiration. "Be brave. You've got this!"

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# Presbytery Connect

News. Events. Tools. Resources.

March 16, 2020

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None of us have ever been through something like this before. There is no road map to follow. My grandparents lived through the Spanish flu 100 years ago, the last time there was a pandemic like this. But they are not around to consult. Churches had to close; thousands of people were sick and many [...]

Continue reading "[Navigating a Pandemic](#)" written by Rev. Sue Krummel, Executive Presbyter of Chicago Presbytery.

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## News.

### **Executive Presbyter Communications re COVID-19** *You've Got This!*

Since the last issue of *Presbytery Connect* was published two weeks ago, much has changed with regard to the covid-19 pandemic and, in fact, two special issues of *Connect* were published last week. Each contained messages from Sue Krummel, POC Executive Presbyter. The second also contained links to resources gathered to give POC members and congregations some information that might be helpful as we all find new ways of being the church in a world of social distancing.

Links to both of those special issues of *Connect* are found below. It seems that new information is available several times a day so as you look at the links in the resource document, especially if it relates to information about the pandemic itself, please make sure you have the most up to date information.

A few newer resources that may not have wide distribution yet have come to our attention. Those resources include:

- For those who are concerned about copyright issues for broadcast or live streamed worship, bible studies, etc. One License is offering gratis licenses through April 15. [Follow this link to read all of the details about their offer.](#)
- The Synod of Lincoln Trails is offering a webinar series for pastors and faith leaders in conjunction with LeaderWise. Go to "[Shelter in Place: Maintaining a Sense of Hope, Community and Belonging.](#)"
- The Presbyterian Youth Workers Association is taking steps to support its members with ideas and resources for ministry during this time. [Read more about it here.](#)
- The National Alliance on Mental Illness ([NAMI](#)) [has produced a lengthy list of resources](#) that you may find helpful, given the unique nature of learning to live through this pandemic.

Please remember that not all information that can be found on the web and elsewhere about this pandemic is reliable. Before you share anything, know its source and make sure that source can be trusted to provide accurate, vetted, and appropriate information. The Presbytery of Chicago pledges to do its best to follow this procedure; if you have questions about anything we disseminate or if we unknowingly provide inaccurate information, please contact us immediately.

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## **Presbytery Office Staff Availability**

*Working remotely - limited hours in office*

Given the directives for social distancing and professional advice about how to slow the spread of the covid-19 virus, presbytery staff will be working remotely as much as possible until at least the end of the month. All staff members are ready to support and assist you in whatever way possible, but know that the best way to reach them is through email. Those addresses are available on the presbytery website, [www.chicagopresbytery.org](http://www.chicagopresbytery.org). If you do not know to which staff member you should direct your email, send it to [ContactUs@chicagopresbytery.org](mailto:ContactUs@chicagopresbytery.org) and it will be routed to the appropriate

# Presbytery Connect

News. Events. Tools. Resources.

March 20, 2020  
SPECIAL EDITION

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## News.

### From Sue Krummel, Executive Presbyter *Suggestions for dealing with a pandemic*

Friends,

I have spoken to many of the pastors and chaplains in the presbytery over the past three days. Thank you to all of them for their thoughtful, innovative, and energetic leadership at this time in the midst of trying to manage their personal and family lives as well. I have heard such good suggestions, which I have detailed for you below.

When I was a child, I had all of the childhood diseases for which there are now vaccines. I have a vivid memory of being in quarantine with the measles for 14 days. My grandma came to my house, braving the quarantine, and brought me a little wrapped gift for every day of my quarantine and illness. I don't remember what any of the gifts were. I simply remember the love of my grandma.

How can we show love to one another through these days, however long they last? So many of the ways that pastors usually do this have been taken away from us—no visits, no worship, no handshakes or welcomed hugs.

My grandma and I spent a lot of time at church together in the kitchen and in worship. When I was a child, I probably did not think about the fact that her love for me reminded me of God's love for us. But, of course, it did. Use all of the resources that are now available to us to remind people of God's love and care and presence and strength even under such strange circumstances.

As mentioned above, the telephone conferences generated many ideas and suggestions about the best way to adapt our ministries in this time. Here are the suggestions that were generated during our conversations:

### Worship

- Livestreaming on Facebook live - all you need is a phone or other device with a camera. Everyone needs to be on Facebook.
- Youtube - remember there will be ads.
- Vimeo - apparently no ads.
- UStream - First Arlington Heights can help with info on this.
- Remember to have a time to call for the offering and show them how they can give electronically (see below).
- Send an order of worship by email with links to the sermon, the prayers, hymns that are in the public domain; that way people can watch it all at once or in pieces.
- Set up "Tech Deacons," people who are willing to take phone calls and can calmly walk people through getting online or on Facebook or whatever.
- E-communion - Let people know what time a pastor will be celebrating communion live online and ask them to have their elements ready at home so they can participate.
- Easter/Palm Sunday - some congregations around the country are planning for drive-in worship. Everyone stays in their own cars; the service is broadcast. One congregation is planning to get a palm branch to each car and then having a parade through their neighborhood waving their palm branches.

### Offering and Money matters

- Set up a way for electronic giving if you do not already have one - PayPal; Venmo; your bank can help.
- Remind people they can send a check through the mail.
- Have a way for them to safely contribute cash if they cannot do anything else.
- The Presbytery Coordinating Commission will be voting on Tuesday on a recommendation from the Stated Clerk and Executive to give every church a one month rebate on their per capita. This will cost the Presbytery \$80,000 if every church takes us up on the offer.

### Other Issues

- Many of our congregations have other groups meeting in the building. Remember, it is not that other group's decision about whether they will continue to meet. Your session makes those decisions about your building.
  - It is important for people to see the faces of their leaders and each other. Once in a while (or once a day) have someone do a video either live or recorded.
  - Prayer chains can be used to substitute for the sharing of joys and concerns. This should be by email not by public online platforms.
  - Keep track of your expenses for paying employees who are not working—musicians, child care, etc. There may be federal, state or municipal funds available at some point to reimburse employers for such expenses.
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## **Presbytery Office Staff Availability**

*Working remotely - limited hours in office*

Given the directives for social distancing and the soon to be enacted shelter-in-place signed order by Gov. Pritzker, presbytery staff will be working remotely. All staff members are ready to support and assist you in whatever way possible but know that the best way to reach them is through email. Those addresses are available on the presbytery website, [www.chicagopresbytery.org](http://www.chicagopresbytery.org). If you do not know to which staff member you should direct your email, send it to [ContactUs@chicagopresbytery.org](mailto:ContactUs@chicagopresbytery.org) and it will be routed to the appropriate person.

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## **Covid-19 Resources.**

Many links to resources were shared in the [March 13, 2020 Special Edition of Connect](#). The following resources are those we have gathered since that date or are ones that bear repeating.

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## **From the PCUSA**

This link contains a list of resources on various topics related to dealing with the current pandemic and continuing ministry to your congregation and the community: <https://www.pcusa.org/covid19/>

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# Keeping PCUSA Churches Open for Business

A Step-by-Step Guide by John Fong

John Fong has expertise in helping churches establish and better utilize digital communications for their ministries. He has developed the Digital Discipleship Ministry program and works with churches in three Synods (PCUSA). John shared this guide for your use: "[Keeping PCUSA Churches Open for Business.](#)"

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## Chicago Mayor's Faith Leaders

*Helpful insight from local faith leaders*

1. Utilize the website [www.chicago.gov/coronavirus](http://www.chicago.gov/coronavirus), COVID-19 Response Center, for updated information and to sign up for email updates. Call 311 with questions and concerns or email: [communityengagement@cityofchicago.com](mailto:communityengagement@cityofchicago.com).
  2. A funding resource (Chicago Community COVID-19 Response Fund) for community-based organizations including faith-based organizations: <https://www.cct.org/2020/03/an-open-letter-to-the-chicago-regions-nonprofit-community-covid-19/>
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## Forefront

Forefront is Illinois' statewide association representing both grantmakers and nonprofits, as well as their advisors and allies. Their mission is to build a vibrant social impact sector for all the people of Illinois. Click on this link and scroll down a bit and find a lengthy list of resources on a myriad of issues: <https://mailchi.mp/myforefront.org/forefront-update-on-covid-1548649?e=26cd17a292>

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## Social Distancing - The Impact on Self and Others

*Dr. Annie K. Reinking and Mary Beth Cunningham, LCPC*

This is a video discussion of the psychological and sociological impacts of social distancing. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U50avjQYjQU>

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# From Anxious Reactivity to Faithful Responses

*Sherry and Mike Meyer-Veen*

1. [Resource Guide](#)
  2. [Discussion Starters](#)
  3. [Images](#)
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