



## *A Message from Pastor Becca*

### ***When will we be able to worship together in our sanctuary?***

I sometimes joke that when I graduated seminary no one gave me an answer book. If anything, I left with more questions than I started with. Beloved, your session is working diligently to figure out how we can meet as the body of Christ in person, safely in the future. Right now, we do not have a date set to open our building again. This is so far beyond what anyone expected. Two weeks has turned into two months and beyond. I am grateful for your patience and your continued caution.

If I may, I would like to shift our perspective from ***when*** we can be in the building to ***how*** we can be the church from where we are.

As I said in the sermon last week, the church has never been closed because the church has never been the building. It has always been and always will be us. We have been finding all sorts of ways to be the church. I am confident you have found ways to be the church that I don't even know about. I know many of us have had time to have deeper conversations, to share about life, and grow in knowing each other. I know we have been feeding people. I know we have been sharing in small joys. I could go on and on in the ways we have found to be the church apart from our beloved community. I am filled with gratitude for this.

In light of recent events, I have been thinking even more about how we can be the church in new ways. Beyond our transition to online worship, beyond what we already do, what else can we be doing to love people? The church (we the people) encounters the world as it is. Our hope is that we can bring healing and wholeness, especially to those who find themselves on the margins. We are called to "do justice" (Micah 6:8). We faithfully believe that we are called to bring God's dream into reality on earth as it is in heaven.

As we look at all the ways racism has been brought into the light through headlines, this week has been brutal. Perhaps like me, in addition to imagining a new arrangement of wall décor in your house, and having deep gratitude for the luxury of central air conditioning, you may have also been wrestling with the news stories about racism in our world. Maybe you have thrown your hands in the air and asked, "What can I even do?" Maybe you have been overwhelmed. Maybe you took to social media to express yourself. Maybe you wanted to be sure people knew you are a good person.

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What can we as (white) Christians do about this?

Racism is sin.

We can start there. Racism is sin. Period. Full stop. No exceptions. That means that in our reformed tradition, we need to confess all the ways we fall short of ending racism and/or the way we become complicit in the racism around us. Yours truly has been wrestling with this and confessing/repenting/lamenting all week long.

Once we confess, we commit to doing better.

How do we do better?

We learn.

We listen.

We practice together.

We keep repenting.

As Maya Angelou put it, "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better." The problem for us is that it is painfully difficult to learn or, better yet, to unlearn things. It takes listening, *really* listening to voices that are different from our own. It means not interrupting, not defending, not offering counter points. It also means looking in the mirror and getting mighty uncomfortable. I have had some folks hold that mirror up for me and it is less than pleasant. The emotional response is overwhelming. The denial, the guilt, the shame, the being paralyzed by all that has been revealed.

Like I said earlier, I do not have the answers. I am committed to learning to do better. Over the next few months, I will be reading *Raising White Kids* by Jennifer Harvey and *I'm Still Here* by Austin Channing Brown. I want to invite you to read one or both with me and engage in open and real conversation around them. I already know a few things before I jump into these books: I will likely end up in tears reading them and I will be challenged by them. I pray you will join me as we commit to learning and doing better.

Surely, learning to do better is just as much being the church in the world today as the faithful work this congregation is already doing. May we keep living into what it means to be the church in 2020.

In Jesus' Love,  
Pastor Becca



## Session Report for June

Session discussed several items at the May meeting. Worshipping in the future for Faith members was another discussion item. Session agreed that holding a parking lot worship is not for us. Virtual worship services will continue for the foreseeable future. A group of Session members will start working with Pastor Becca to formulate a plan for re-opening the church for worship sometime in the future. Session decided to hold off on conducting a Congregational Meeting to elect elders and deacons until we can meet as a full congregation.

For financial transparency to our members, the letter below is about the church's finances.

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Dear Members and Friends,

First and foremost, we want to thank you for your faithful giving during this most difficult time in the life of our church and the world. As we continue to love each other by staying apart, it is important that the Session remains transparent with you. This pandemic and forced closure of the church building has left us with many questions about where we stand financially. The Session has taken several actions that are now complete, and we want to share that with you.

We have taken these actions in order to secure the finances of the church:

### **1. Payroll Protection Program**

We applied for and received approval for a \$50,548 loan to enable Faith Church and Small World to continue paying our staff and teachers for two months. The loan is part of the Federal Government's Cares Act and is payable over two years at 1% interest. However, a significant portion of this loan will be forgiven and thus not paid back based on a complicated formula.

### **2. Board of Pensions Health Insurance and Pension Waiver**

We applied and received approval for this waiver of medical dues and pension for Pastor Becca and her family for three months while they remain fully insured. This will save the church a total of \$5,415.

### **3. Zoom**

The Presbytery has graciously offered churches a grant to cover the cost of Zoom for one year. We purchased Zoom, and we have received reimbursement from the Presbytery.

### **4. West Jersey Hunger Grant**

The Presbytery has offered grants of \$500 to support emergency food needs for local feeding ministries. The Deacons, with Session approval, applied for and received this grant to help sustain our food shelf during this time of increased need.

We have also received a gift from the estate of Jim Slamon in the amount of \$25,000. This money is not earmarked for any one ministry. Session has voted to restrict the use of the money to purposes agreeable to the Session and voted on at future meetings. This means we will not be spending it on our everyday operating expenses unless the Session votes to do so.

We are so grateful for your generosity during this time. We endeavor to be excellent stewards of your gifts.

Sincerely,  
Virginia L. Magnus, Ed.D.  
Clerk of Session



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All of the extra photos in this issue were sent in by members!



## Deacons' Update

**FOOD:** It seems to be our topic for the past two months and for good reason!

With your help (and Pastor Becca's neighbors!), we've been able to restock our food shelf. We've left the tub outside the playground doors so **please feel free to continue to donate**. We are hoping to help out the Extended Hands Ministry in Mount Holly!

We decided to take some food to essential workers that are not always remembered. In the past weeks, we've delivered breakfast pastries and coffee to the **Medford Post Office** and lunch to **Medford's Neighborhood Services department** -- next up for this month are the municipal workers, borough office workers and police in Medford Lakes!

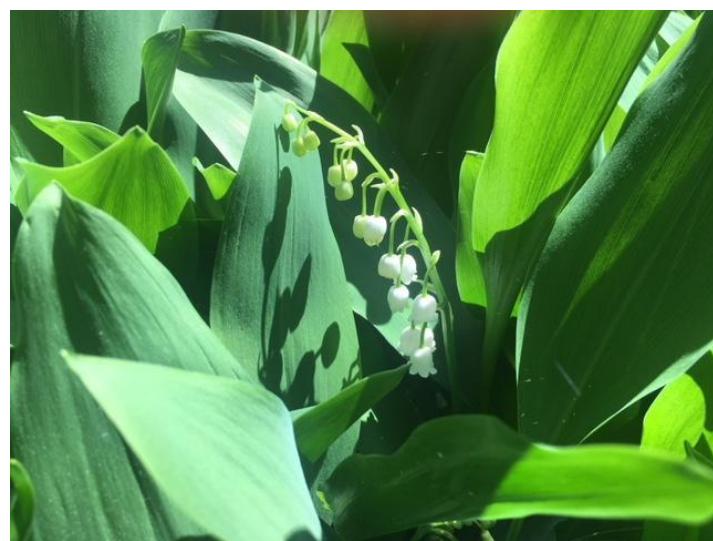




## Congratulations to Our 2020 Graduate!

Jenna is graduating from the International Honors Joint Degree Program with The College of William & Mary and the University of St Andrews. She focused her degree on modern history (primarily European) with a minor in German.

At William & Mary, she was fortunate to work as a Research Fellow at the Project on International Peace and Security. She spent her senior year writing a dissertation on medical experimentation at Ravensbrück concentration camp. In the future, she hopes to work in a research position at a think tank.





## Help Needed at Church!

Do you have some spare time? Are you looking to do something outdoors? We can use some help sprucing up the Children's Garden and area along the front sidewalk of the church. There is a lot of weeding to be done, and there are some bird houses in need of repair.

If you have an hour or two, here and there, please feel free to stop by and lend a hand. Many hands make light work!

The areas most in need of help are pictured below. **Thank you!**





## HOPE Garden Update!

This week marked the first harvest from the HOPE Garden, as the mission continues helping other people eat!

A donation of radishes, spinach and lettuce was delivered to St Vincent de Paul's food pantry in Medford, as well as to the Migrant Workers in Hammonton.

We are blessed to be able to provide nourishing food to those in need, especially during these difficult times.



## Hello Sunday School Families!

Thank you for sharing these wonderful photos of what you've been up to! We miss you!

Every two weeks, we've been emailing Bible stories, lessons and activity pages that the children can do at home together with their family. **Members of Faith**, if you have grandchildren or children in your life who would like to receive these emails, please let us know!





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## Gracemeals With Faith Update

The Gracemeals team is coordinating with the Christian Caring Center to begin making salads for distribution sometime in June. The CCC is currently getting food to people using social distancing and they are looking forward to adding salads to the menu. The team is working out the logistics of safety and distancing in our preparation process and will be feeding people as soon as possible!





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