

## PASTOR'S CORNER

Dear Friends in Christ,

Anxiety is understandably high as we learn more about the spread of this disease.

Here are some ways to help manage the fear and anxiety you may be feeling.

### Become educated.

When you know what the real dangers are, you can take steps to avoid or minimize them.

Accurate information is an effective antidote to unrealistic fears.

### Monitor your exposure to the news.

It's important to get the facts, but repeated news stories and images about the spread of a disease can be distressing. Be aware of how you and your family members respond

to news stories and limit television or screen time if it's making you feel anxious.

### Always be aware, but not always fearful.

Try to keep your thoughts in sync with what is actually happening, not what your worst fears may be. Constant fear that isn't based in reality can cause stress and be counterproductive. Notice if fear is becoming panic.

### Take a break.

Make it a point to spend time doing things you enjoy and that help you feel calm and balanced.

Try to shift your focus away from stressful thoughts.

### Reach out.

Stay in touch with family and friends through phone calls and social media. If you or a family member need to talk, please call me at 217-369-9816.

May the peace of Christ be with you all!

Ray Lantz  
Pastor

## PRESBYTIDINGS

### April-May 2020

Pastor Ray Lantz

Worship: 10:30 a.m. Cookies and Coffee: 11:30ish

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Website: [www.firstpresbygibson.org](http://www.firstpresbygibson.org)



## What makes for effective Matthew 25 ministry during a pandemic

by Mari Graham Evans |  
Presbyterian News Service

LOUISVILLE — As churches, worshiping communities and their leaders continue to grapple with the spread of COVID-19, some are finding ways to live into their commitment to the [Matthew 25 invitation](#). Launched in April, Matthew 25 calls on Presbyterian churches and groups of all forms to actively engage in the world around them, so that our faith is ignited in our efforts to act boldly and compassionately to serve people who are hungry, oppressed, imprisoned or poor. As of Friday, 437 churches, 37 mid councils and 11 groups have accepted the invitation. Despite disruptions and challenges that this pandemic has presented, churches are adapting to this new normal amid financial concerns, member anxieties and changing communication technologies. And while the nation continues to see a rapid rise in new cases, PC(USA)

churches are displaying an abundance of resilience, compassion and ingenuity in the middle of widespread anxiety.

Social distancing has required PC (USA) churches to rethink and rework how they do worship. [First United Presbyterian Church](#) in Belleville, Illinois is among the many churches to have turned to Zoom videoconferencing as an alternative for in-person worship and meetings. Yet the church, which is working on all three Matthew 25 focus areas ([building congregational vitality](#), [dismantling structural racism](#) and [eradicating systemic poverty](#)),

is taking its use of Zoom one step further by making it available to outside groups like [Healthier Together](#). “Many of our community change agents do not have the resources or technical know-how to gather online for meetings,” said the Rev. Rob Dyer, the church’s senior pastor. “We are becoming a valuable resource to others with what we have. That isn’t a change in what we do. “That is just a change in where we are needed.”

[South Presbyterian Church](#) in Rochester, New York, is an example of a community prepared for the shifts in worship.

The church has long been experimenting with alternative forms of “doing church.”

“When COVID-19 forced us into new paradigms,

we benefited from the prior practice we had in being flexible and thinking outside the box,” said the Rev. Laura Bachmann, the church’s associate pastor. That included rolling out videotaped messages and sermons at the onset and training members how to use Zoom. Social distancing has also created some surprising opportunities.

“We are learning how to pay attention to one another in new ways,” says Dyer. “Without the benefit and bias of what we see with our eyes when we gather for regular big events, like Wednesday youth nights or Sunday worship, we are now forced to reach out to the congregation in other intentional ways.” Ultimately, Dyer believes that the situation will create even more opportunities.

“The busy nature of most people’s lives has been a challenge to churches in general. We are finding that this environment of social distancing is opening up opportunities to get people’s attention again,” he said.

Members of South Presbyterian Church, according to Bachmann, are “pretty flexible, so they are doing really well with the changes.” This is due, in part, to the change they experienced selling their church building five years ago.

Remainder of article is on the back page.

Continued from front page. . .

The church sees the current changes as exciting and an opportunity to “grow in new ways, to encounter God in new ways and to raise up new leaders for new times and circumstances,” Bachmann said. None of it, she said, has come about without a struggle. “Of course, people are struggling, particularly with not being able to see one another,”

Bachmann said. “So there is fear and anxiety and loneliness too. We are doing our best to stay in touch with each other to mitigate these responses.”

While both churches continue to adjust to new routines and new formats, living out the Matthew 25 invitation is as top of mind as ever. Part of First United Presbyterian Church’s Matthew 25 ministry is a pilot pro-

gram where the church has “teamed up with a local social service agency to fill gaps in the current aid system,” Dyer said. “Much of this work can continue over email, phone, and other methods that don’t require personal presence. We are also able to reach out to our community partners to assess the actual needs of our community during this time.”

Bachmann said South Presbyterian Church is “trying to make decisions so that the needs of the least of these are uppermost in our minds.” “It is hard to live out Matthew 25 when you can’t be present in person and we are still working out how to do these things at a safe distance,” she said. “I feel like we have way more questions than answers, but I remain confident that God will not forsake us, that the new ideas and energy we need to implement them will bubble

up, that we will run and not grow weary. We will do it together — maybe not physically together, but spiritually together in prayer and praise and communication and love.”

*One Great Hour of Sharing is an embodiment of Matthew 25 ministry supported by thousands of Presbyterian congregations. For over 70 years, this Special Offering has supported the most vulnerable among us, responding to disasters, and addressing the root causes of poverty.*

*The Church’s response to the present crisis will begin with the most at-risk in communities across the country and around the world, as well as those facing spikes of racism in response to this disease. In this difficult time, we are still the church, together.*

As most of you know, April has been canceled at our church. Please pray for our quick return. Thank you.

## April 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4 9 am Bible Reading at Holly Brook
5 10:30 a.m. Worship <b>Communion</b>  <b>Matthew 27:11-54</b>	6	7	8 9:45 Pastor Ray reading to the HS children	9	10	11 9 am Bible reading at Holly Brook
12 10:30 a.m. Worship <b>Easter Sunday Communion</b>  <b>Luke 24:13-49</b>	13	14 Pastor Ray in Bowling Brook for a Presbytery meeting	15 9:45 Pastor Ray reading to HS students	16	17	18 Recycle  9 am Bible reading at Holly Brook
19 10:30 a.m. Worship  <b>John 20:19-31</b>	20	21	22 9:45 Pastor Ray reading to HS students  Game Night (Postponed)	23  <b>5:30 Session</b>	24	25 9 a.m. Bible reading at Holly Brook <b>FPC working at Food Pantry at Alco build.</b>
26 10:30 a.m. Worship  <b>Luke 24:13-35</b>	27	28	29 9:45 Pastor Ray reading to HS students	30		

Pastor Ray will be preaching on the scripture listed in bold on each Sunday.

## NEWS FROM OUR CHURCH . . .

Due to the COVID-19 Virus and the Illinois Stay at Home Order, our Church building will be closed for the month of April and NO staff will be on site.

Please note: The previous week's sermon will broadcast at 7:45 a.m. every Sunday morning. That will start this Sunday, April 5th.

The complete Sunday service is being broadcasted on Facebook Live. Our Facebook page is [First Presbyterian Church of Gibson City](https://www.facebook.com/FirstPresbyterianChurchofGibsonCity).

Please note: Online Sunday Services will be available on our Facebook Page noted below:

First Presbyterian Church of Gibson City

[https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=142499619134911&ref=br\\_rs](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=142499619134911&ref=br_rs)

Game Night for April 22nd has been cancelled. It will be rescheduled at a later date.

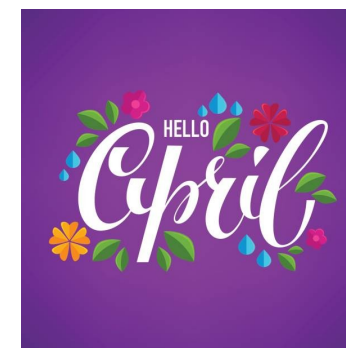
**Jeanette Hensley and Jerry Wissmiller:** Jeanette says they are doing well. She goes out to the grocery store and Dollar General and out to the farm every evening to visit Jerry. Jerry has a cleaning lady who comes in twice a week to help him and is doing well also.

**Dannon and Ruthie (Lantz) Dripps:** Ted Swanson called in some information about this very interesting couple. Ruthie is a professor at Washington University teaching art. She is doing this with Zoom right now (which is not easy) during the pandemic. She can get her family on ZOOM also and they are learning to use it. They had a bunch on ZOOM last night and they enjoyed each other for 2 hours! Dannon operates a movie theater (like the Edna theater used to be) and, of course, is out of work right now. But, people in his community of Portland, Oregon are still buying tickets to keep the theater afloat. That sounds like a very kind, caring community.

**Sharla Williams:** She finds it a little more difficult to teach remotely and misses school and her

students greatly. She is using Dojo for the parents who have questions and ZOOM for her students who have questions. She has found it very nice to slow down and enjoy her family and friends by different tech methods. She definitely is cooking more and she is finding time to read which she does enjoy a lot.

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES		Communion Set-Up
		<b>K. P. Duty</b>
		<b>Apr: Jean Williams</b>
		<b>May: Mary Jane Roth</b>
		<b>Second Sunday Offering</b>
		<b>Apr: Gibson Area Housing Rehab Foundation</b>
		<b>May: Because of Cody Ushers</b>
		<b>Apr: Trudy Lantz and Sharla Williams</b>
		<b>May: Dale Ashmore and Jean Williams</b>
		<b>Communion Servers</b>
		<b>Apr 5: Charlie Schultz and Danny Heustis</b>
		<b>April 12: Dale Ashmore and Trudy Lantz</b>
<b>April</b>	<b>May</b>	
<b>03: Nick Retherford</b>	<b>02: Emma Swanson</b>	
<b>06: Charlie Kerchenfaut</b>	<b>07: Jesse Swanson</b>	
<b>09: Katie Spangler</b>	<b>09: Trudy Lantz</b>	
<b>10: Darlene Kane</b>	<b>10: Ruth McClure</b>	
<b>15: Ann Spangler</b>	<b>14: Mary Jane Roth</b>	
<b>24: Bark Kirkpatrick</b>	<b>17: Ray Lantz</b>	
<b>25: Harry &amp; Dorri Groom</b>	<b>20: Mac and Ruth McClure</b>	
<b>27: Ron Clow</b>	<b>22: John Davis</b>	
<b>28: Tim Swanson</b>	<b>26: Ron and Mary Clow</b>	



**MAY 2020**