

Saints Alive!

Volume 18, Issue 5
May 2020
"Friends in Christ, Serving
Together with Love"



How will we begin to reopen the church building and church meetings to physical presence?

The session decided on principles for decision making, and will monitor the status regularly.

1. We will be guided by the governor's orders.
2. We will place safety above expediency.
3. We will proceed incrementally, probably opening to smaller gatherings before large ones.
4. We will maintain state government advised "social distancing" measures as long as they are in effect.

Zoom meetings

Tuesday Prayer meeting 3:30 pm
Wednesday Coffee Hour 3:00 pm

Essential Workers

We definitely want to say thank you to all our members who are Essential Workers in this time of the pandemic – hospital workers, sanitation workers, postal workers, grocery and restaurant workers, etc.

If you are an essential worker, or you know of someone that is a member of our church who is, please send me a photo of you/ them with a description of your/ their job. I would like to highlight each person every week in my weekly emails.

If you have any questions **and** to send the information, please email: alpresby@avonlakepc.org
Cindi Dansizen, Office Administrator



Help for you

This is the time to let people help you. **Free grab and go lunch & breakfast program for students, families and community members.** There is a simple form online for requesting the meals, and there are not any income requirements. Or you may call (440) 930-8215. They are making a drop off at Beach Park Towers, all schools and will deliver to residences if someone is restricted to home. **Avon Lake Schools.**

From Our Pastor Charlie



Dear Friends,

I am so proud of all the ways our congregation has reinvented itself to function as the church in this challenging time. At first it was such a crisis, and our efforts to shut things down to keep all safe were so paramount, that it seemed like we would have to go into hibernation, like a bear or groundhog, until the virus passed through the state. But that thought was fleeting, as our outdoor LED sign boldly proclaimed, "Our building is closed, but our church is Alive! Call 933-6240 for Help". After a month of the state "Stay at Home" order, we have adapted to the "new normal" amazingly well. I am sure Jesus is quite pleased with us.

I shifted all my efforts to change our ministry from high physical contact to making connections through technology (telephone, emails, texts, FaceTime, Facebook, Facebook live, YouTube, website, ZOOM) and mailings and old fashioned letters, and encouraging our church to continue and even advance our ministries in this crucial time. I decided to write a daily devotional (which has turned into "several times a week") and email it to you to help each of you draw on God's help. Knowing worship is crucial to the life of a church, I have been working with staff and members to temporarily convert worship to a full featured streaming worship service in which you, the online worshipper, are a full participant in a congregational experience of authentic worship.

In the last month, many, if not most of our committees have met through video conferencing. Our Session has been very active making crucial decisions to help our ministries continue in different ways. Our Deacons are reaching out to members offering help in any way that might be needed. One Circle has met via Zoom. A new prayer meeting has formed in response to our crisis, with about a dozen faithful people committed to praying together each Tuesday afternoon until this crisis is over. For fun and laughs, each Wednesday eight to thirteen members join on Zoom for a "coffee-break." We find that we can, and do have laughs as we find the funny in the strangeness of this time.

Our staff has responded with great creativity, intelligence and faithfulness as each has found ways to do their ministry with you in new ways. Be sure to thank our staff; each has been a superstar giving over and beyond in their efforts to keep us all connected, engaged, and linked with Jesus. Don't tell anyone, but Tarra Oppewall, our Director of Children's Ministries, has been channeling the spirit of Mr. Rogers in her weekly "Chapel Time" videos!

To no one's surprise, Next Step Ministries, the organization that brings missionaries to abide in our church in the summer, and the group with which we go on our mission trips, has cancelled all mission trips for the summer. It is not unexpected, yet is a huge sadness for our youth who were so anticipating going to Alaska. But that trip will happen, only it will be next summer. Our own building will not hum with the activity of interns and missionaries. We can look forward to that resuming next summer also.

Each week, with new technology both in terms of hardware and software, and with new skills learned, we have been adding more congregational elements to our streamed worship service. Building on the shoulders of those members who so faithfully videoed our service with their phones, we are creating an immersive worship experience. The first service in this "stay at home" time was only me in front of the camera. In last week's worship, we sang along with the Elder's of Jazz (with lyrics superimposed over the video), sang a hymn live along with piano accompaniment and a soprano, we watched a fabulous children's sermon, listened to a member share her experience of Christ in our quarantined time, heard the scripture read by one of our young adults, offered our prayer requests through Facebook comments, and listened to a sermon. We left worship tapping our toes and joyfully moving with the rhythm of those great musicians playing "When the Saints go Marching In!" Big kudos to Jay and Carter Knox, who gather all the prerecorded elements and combine them as the service is going on for our worshipping joy. As my dad would have said, they are each as "busy as a one-armed paper hanger" in the sound booth making it all happen flawlessly.

In normal times, we would have celebrated Tom Metzger's life after he died peacefully from natural causes on April 11. How hard it was for Joan, his wife, to not be able to see him in person the weeks leading up to his death, and when he died, as he was quarantined in a nursing care facility (Town Center Main Street). She was able to FaceTime with him in his last week, and that was a comfort. I had talked and prayed with Tom on the phone just two days before he died, a conversation in which he spoke of his trust that God was with him and asserted his confidence in heaven before him. Please pray for Joan in her grief. We will have a memorial service for Tom when this time is past, as we will also have memorial services later for Betty Lou Wallace, who died in Tennessee in her daughter Beth's home March 19, and Ruth Meyer, who died in Canton, Ohio in February.

Pastor Charlie (continued)

I want to thank each of you for generously supporting the church through this crisis. Thank you for the pledges that have come in through the mail, through direct deposit, and through online giving. You are keeping your church strong and able to fulfill its vision in this extremely challenging time.

As I write, conversations are happening in the government and at business levels about how and when to reopen our economy. You can trust that our Session is monitoring the situation and will make prudent decisions that put safety first, as we determine how to safely reopen our physical building, and return to meeting in person. Large group worship will be the last thing to resume.

As you read this, if you are not connected to the ministries of the church, please reach out to Cindi Dansizen, our office manager at 933-6240 who will help you find out how you can get connected. I do not want anyone in our church to be forgotten or alone through this time.

Well, that is all for now.

Be wise! Love God! Love your neighbor!

Pastor Charlie

Session Meeting Notes

The Session met on April 20. Highlights of their meeting were:

- ◆ Giving has kept the church near breakeven through March. Thank you to our faithful members!
- ◆ The Deacons are finding ways to reach out to members during the shutdown, offering assistance such as deliveries. (If you need assistance, please contact Cindi in the church office.)
- ◆ A task group has formed to apply for a forgivable loan, from the Payroll Protection Program through the federal CARE Act, to help cover salaries and utilities.
- ◆ Pastor Charlie presented a list of principles to guide us when and how to return to normal church functions.
- ◆ Pastor Charlie has focused his work on inclusion, one our Key Ministry Areas, and has learned new ways to use technology to keep us all connected.
- ◆ Human Resources is considering ways to support staff salaries during the shutdown.
- ◆ The new Sling Studio equipment used to present improved worship services online will be funded through the Memorial Fund.
- ◆ The painting of the foyer will proceed during the shutdown, with the contractor abiding by social distancing and health safety rules.
- ◆ The Avon Lake Memorial Day parade was cancelled, so we will not be marching in it.
- ◆ Plans have been made to update and improve our website.
- ◆ Next Step will not be using our facility this summer, as they have cancelled all mission trips.
- ◆ The Mission Committee wants to get the word out that the city of Avon Lake is distributing food to those who need it. Members in need are encouraged to take advantage of this.
- ◆ Ways to recognize our graduating high school seniors are being considered.

Elizabeth Shoemaker, Clerk of Session

Church building



On March 24, we closed the church building until the Session decides it's safe to open. The Session decided to open the doors for the painters on Monday, April 27 to start painting. We hope to have the entryway foyer, narthex, hallway to the security doors and kitchenette painted by the time we meet in church again. Phil, our Maintenance Man has already painted our bathrooms in the "newer" part of the building. Our hope is that when you return, everything will be fresh and "new" like the season of Easter!

Christian Education

WHEN I WAS A BOY AND I WOULD SEE
SCARY THINGS IN THE NEWS,
MY MOTHER WOULD SAY TO ME,
"LOOK FOR THE HELPERS.
YOU WILL ALWAYS FIND PEOPLE
WHO ARE HELPING."

TO THIS DAY, ESPECIALLY IN TIMES
OF "DISASTER," I REMEMBER MY
MOTHER'S WORDS AND I AM ALWAYS
COMFORTED BY REALIZING THAT
THERE ARE STILL SO MANY HELPERS
-SO MANY CARING PEOPLE
IN THIS WORLD.

~FRED ROGERS

THE EDUCATORS'
SPIN ON IT

Greetings ALPC Families,
How are you doing? I mean that question from the bottom of my heart, and only wish I could see you in person to talk about it. This life in quarantine effects us all in so many different ways; while we are all in it together, our experiences vary greatly. I keep you all in constant prayer, trusting that God will meet you right where you are on the spectrum of feelings and experiences.

This week I have been mindful of Galatians 6:9, which is a great verse to share with your children too. "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." I find it so encouraging that the Bible speaks to us about not growing weary of doing good, because honestly, some days I am weary. I bet you and your children feel weary sometimes too. Remind yourselves and your little ones that all these steps we are taking together are all greatly important.

These collective acts of doing good will heal bodies and hearts and will reap a harvest that we all can celebrate at the proper time.

I know you and your family will continue to find creative ways to do good. It has warmed my heart many times to see the good you all are doing in your neighborhoods. Allow me to list the wonderful gestures I have noticed just from a couple messages and Facebook posts from our members: Pictures are being mailed to church members, painted rock and egg hunts left for people to find on walks, signs placed in grandparents yards to show love from a distance, chalk messages left on sidewalks and windows painted to encourage those passing by, cookies given to healthcare workers, virtual ice cream socials, masks being donated to those in need, and siblings are crafting together! You all are amazing! Keep up the good work and let me know what I've missed!

I look forward to the day I can see your children in church again, but until then I will continue to send mail to our youngest members and put a weekly children's message online.

I would love to hear from you and to know how your family is doing at this time. Please reach out to alpctarra@gmail.com!

Until we connect again, know you are in my thoughts and prayers,
Tarra Oppewall

Online Communion

Next week's May 3rd worship service online will be with Communion. Have a form of bread (cracker, cookie, slice of bread) and a form of juice (cooking wine, good wine, apple juice, water) ready to use as we will take Communion together.



**ONLINE
COMMUNION**
A Substitute for the Real Thing?

The Helpers

We have members of our congregation that want to help. If you need anything at the store or pharmacy, or wherever, and you can't or don't want to go out, please contact the church office (440-933-6240), or Cindi (440-231-3528) and your wish is our command!

Cornerstone Preschool

First, I hope you, your family, and loved ones are safe.

It is sad, scary, and confusing how everything has come to a screeching halt. It was eerily quiet walking down the school hallway today. I miss the lively children belting out their circle time songs, the sound of squeaky tricycle wheels in the Big Room (Hart Hall), the laughter and excitement on the playground. We could all use the familiarity of the hugs, high fives and smiles we share. Now, all I see is an empty, dark building with lonely toys, student artwork left behind and teacher's materials scattered about, as though tomorrow would be another day at school. Boy were we wrong! COVID -19 has shut down our school for the rest of the school year.

This has caused all of us to adjust and adopt new ways of working from home. We are dividing our time between teaching children and managing family time. My hat goes off to the parents and our teachers for doing a wonderful job of adjusting. I am impressed with the teacher's creativity to bring preschool learning to the parents through Zoom meetings (story time, show and tell, lessons, yoga, science experiments, puppet shows, etc.), Blooms, Facebook, Google Docs and learning apps.

Parents, I am impressed with the way you are juggling working, parenting, teaching and taking care of your homes all while having the kiddos home full time. I absolutely love seeing the teacher/family sharing through videos, pictures, learning activities, art and social time experiences. I can tell you are doing a wonderful job keeping your children happy, healthy, and engaged.

Don't forget to get your children moving as well. Physical fitness is important for brain growth in children. It will make them more focused and less impulsive, it improves their concentration and attention, they will have faster reaction time, it improves their memory, it improves their cognitive skills and they become fit and healthy.

I know we are all feeling anxious and overwhelmed, but please remember happier days are coming! Make sure you are taking care of yourselves. You know the saying... "If Mama Ain't Happy, Ain't Nobody Happy!"

We realize families may be low on crafting material-we would like to share our supplies so that the kiddos can continue being creative and thinking outside the box.

We will be assembling craft bags that the parents and their children can come pick up from Cornerstone. They will be placed in bins outside the school doors on Monday, April 27th from 1:00pm to 3:00pm. I look forward to visiting with the kiddos from a distance.

Stay safe and be happy!

Julie Erker, Director of Cornerstone Preschool

Our children are little heros, too.



Missing their grandparents, extended family, friends and school.

Lack of normal routines.
Loss of structure to their day.

Parents who are stressed, worried, scared and just *different*.

Overhearing talk and news without an understanding of what they hear.

NoCrySolution.com

Give your little hero more cuddles, more one-on-one playtime, and an extra dose of patience and forgiveness.

Evangelism

The Evangelism Committee is sorry to report that the Avon Lake Memorial Day Parade has been cancelled for this year. We have enjoyed representing our church in this community activity but it has been cancelled because of the coronavirus.

Our committee does, however, continue to serve our church by meeting through Zoom conference discussions where ideas and suggestions are shared for ways to reach out to our members on the ALPC Website and on their birthdays.

Respectfully Submitted, Barbara Graves, Co-chairperson

Mission Matters

"If you hung your problems out on a clothes line and your neighbor hung out theirs, would you take your own problems back at the end of the day." June Gitzen

Unfortunately, the **April Lunch Bunch Lunch was cancelled**. We will let everyone know about the May meal as soon as we know. On a positive note, we shared food that we would have used for our March and April lunches with CRS. (Community Resources Services) The Hamilton's dropped off our donation of dry pasta, canned fruit and vegetables from our Lunch Bunch cupboard and said that CRS volunteers were very grateful.

Thank you for donations made to One Great Hour of Sharing and our Easter offering to Haven Center. Other organizations that need support are CRS serving Avon, Avon Lake and Sheffield families [CRS](#) and Second Harvest of North Central Ohio. [Second Harvest](#)

We are planning to collect snacks for CRS for summer lunches in May or June. Let's help families any way we can this summer! Details will be announced soon.

We will stay in touch with Leon regarding clothing and bedding donations.

"Breaking News" Next Step Ministries has cancelled all mission trips this summer due to the Covid19 virus. Unfortunately, that means our youth group will not be able to go to Alaska this summer. Also, we will not be hosting Missionaries at ALPC this summer. Let's hope that we can help our young members be a part of a meaningful local mission.

Please feel free to pass on any mission ideas to committee members.
Beth Janis bjanis1383@gmail.com

Deacon News

Hello ALPC,

Like most of you, we are hunkered down and working from home. I've enjoyed the broadcast church services but it's not like being there and seeing you. The deacons have a meeting this week to brainstorm ideas for fellowship from afar so more to hopefully come on that.

I asked the deacons to share some good things they have experienced from this social distancing/quarantining and virus mess. So, below are some of the responses I received:

Joy: It is rough staying at home, but it's good stopping the virus. At least we can keep in touch with e-mails, phone calls and notes. I know my faith will get us through this. Remember God doesn't leave us. I feel the holy spirit working.

Mike C.: Walking or bike riding twice a day. Reading and drinking red wine.

Jeff: I am finding this a time of reflection. What is important in my life? Interactions with nature, family, friends and God, that I took for granted are now a treat. My life has slowed down so I enjoy each moment.

Cathy: I am enjoying seeing all my neighbors outside and visiting with them. Also enjoy web conferences for work and having colleagues' kids, family members, pets, etc... join the meetings. It is nice to see and get to know their families a little better.

Sybil: All of the event cancellations were initially disappointing, then surprisingly liberating. Now there is time. Time to remember what is important & what isn't. Time to question how we can do things differently in the future. Time to realize that the way we did things in the past doesn't need to be the way we do things in the future. And that's ok. It might even be better.

Mike R.: My dog, Maizey, loves quarantining! She gets attention, freedom to roam the house, and barking at squirrels has increased... more toilet paper buying. Personally, I've seen people being friendlier. Going for walks or bike rides... people say hi and wave more. I've gotten the spring/early summer chores done early for hopefully, more boating time when the weather warms up.

Fins Up and keep'em safe! (If you don't know what Fins Up means, it will give you something to research and give you a bit of insight into my chill time.)

Sincerely, Mike Reighard, Deacon Moderator

Worship & Spiritual Life

Greetings from the Worship and Spiritual Life Committee!

It has been over a month that we have been unable to worship together in person in our sanctuary or in our Coffee House service. We hope that, instead, you have been watching our services on Facebook or on YouTube! With each week, additions have been made to the service to greater emulate the feel of an in-person service. The availability of a bulletin (either printed from the link in the weekly email or brought up on another window of your device), the use of past ALPC choir audio and video recordings, the pre-recorded accompaniment to the hymns, and the inclusion of a children's sermon are some of the enhancements that we hope are deepening your worship experience. In addition, the church has purchased a program named SlingStudio that is much better able to work with our soundboard and integrate all of the technology needed to produce a smooth, flowing stream of video and sound.

We hope that you have also been able to continue to feel connected to your ALPC family through Charlie's daily emails and the packets that have been prepared and sent to every household. We would also like to encourage you to join a prayer meeting or a casual coffee hour meeting via Zoom. If you have not "Zoomed" yet, do not be intimidated! Zoom is easy to navigate and a tutorial can be found on the ALPC Facebook page under the "Videos" heading. The prayer meetings have been held at 3:30 Tuesdays and the Coffee with Charlie meetings are typically 3:00 Wednesdays. Check the daily email from Charlie to confirm the time.

We would like to remind you that if you have been unable to view a service live, they remain online on both our ALPC Facebook page and on our ALPC YouTube channel. We hope that you were able to view all of the Holy Week services. They were all very meaningful and beautiful, complete with recorded readings by several members of our congregation and the Communion table decorations changing to reflect the mood of each service. We hope that you were as moved by the setting, the words and the music as you would have been had we worshiped together in-person.

There are many adaptations that have been made so that we may continue to worship during this time and as a result many thank yous to be given! First of all, thank you to Carter and Jay Knox, for all of the time they have spent at the church and in the sound room making all of our broadcasts happen, each and every service! Muriel and Tarra have had to adapt to doing their jobs in a much different manner! Thank you to Tarra for her excellent, smoothly recorded children's sermons and to Muriel for spending hours searching the video and audio archives for music that can be added to the service which allow us to see and/or hear our choir once again! Many thanks to Doug Day for providing the recorded accompaniment for the hymns each week. And thank you to all of the volunteers willing to record themselves for the Holy Week services. You all did a great job! Also, thank you to Cindi for compiling and mailing the packets to each home. And finally, thank you to Charlie for his spiritual leadership and his work to keep us safe and connected as a church family. Thank you, also, Charlie, for changing the Communion table decorations each service.

Do you have your calendars marked for May 31st? That is both Pentecost Sunday and Music Sunday and we will be celebrating Muriel's 50+ years of music ministry during the service and at a celebration following! We certainly hope that we can all join at the church for this event, but realize that we may have to adapt our plans if we are still sheltering at home!

We will continue to meet and worship remotely until it is determined that it is safe to meet in-person. Please continue to worship with us online and encourage others to join us! As always, your feedback and suggestions are always welcome!

Written by Sarah Waggoner on behalf of the committee: Donna Bradley, Dave Brunner, Muriel Homer, Margre Lind Mills, Beth Shoemaker, Jeff Spenser, Pastor Charlie, Cris Till, Marcy Uhl, Sarah Waggoner and JoAnn Wainscott.

Comfort Blankets

My dear friends—In the last edition of *Saints Alive!* I described a mission project of making child size blankets I am undertaking during this time of isolation. Unfortunately, the ALPD can not use the COMFORT BLANKETS at this time. Therefore, I still encourage you to make a donation that can be given to CRS, Neighborhood Alliance, or any of other local agencies that protect children. If you would like to participate by knitting, crocheting, quilting, or creating a home-made child-size COMFORT BLANKET that would be wonderful! Thank you so much! Please contact me, Kathy Leopold, at 440-242-5086 or leapinleok@hotmail.com anytime. Stay safe!

Property



Hello all. We hope and pray everyone is doing well and we pray that things get better around the world as well as here at home. We look forward to the day we can get back to our church and work on some projects. Painting the narthex was just underway when we got the word to stay home. The narthex was being prepped to paint by moving items off the wall and fixing some holes, scratches, etc. This will be the first painting project once we can get back to our church. The color was chosen to invite you in with a sense of comfort and calmness. The narthex floor is covered with numerous items but no worries as it will be taken care of. There will be a "work day" once we get organized and the "stay-at-home" order is lifted. We hope this will be in mid May. Some work day project ideas are: leaf raking,

weeding, ditch clearing, and window cleaning (inside and out). A few of us may try and work outside to get a head start depending on the weather.

Unfortunately, Next Step will not be with us this year. This will give us the opportunity to clean out the shed and get rid of items in and around the shed that are no longer needed. We will also be able to continue painting down the hallway, finishing at Hart Hall. We will miss the Next Step missionaries, but at the same time we can make good use of the time to renew the look of the church.

By the time you are reading this newsletter, Phil will have our riding mower working which should save some money in the long run. Also, an estimate came in from Surface Engineering for just about \$6,900.00. This would be to refurbish the parking lot and finishing with painting the yellow stripes back on the parking spaces.

Peace and Health be with you. Jim Janis 440-522-9496

Avon Lake Presbyterian Church Mission Statement

In awe, we Receive God's Grace and Gospel.
In gratitude, we Respond with Worship and Servanthood.
In love, we Represent Jesus Christ
as we minister to transform lives
in family, community, and the world.

Sunday Worship on Facebook Live at 10:00 am
Tune in on Sunday to www.facebook.com/avonlakepc
Search YouTube for Avon Lake Presbyterian Church Worship for the video after the service

(440) 933-6240

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Email: alpresby@avonlakepc.org

Pastor
Custodian
Director of Children's Ministries
Director of Music
Director of Preschool
Financial Secretary
Lock-up Custodian
Maintenance
Office Administrator
Treasurer

Rev. Charles E. Swartz
Carl Douglas
Tarra Oppewall
Muriel Homer
Julie Erker
Lynn Morway
Ed Homer
Phil Stryczny
Cindi Dansizen
Marcy Uhl