

Presbyterian Church of Radford's

Oct. & Nov. Staff Letter

From the Pastors

November 5, 2020

Dear PCR Family,

Well, we meant to send out this letter in October, yet here we are in the first week of November. We apologize for the delay! We have a lot of important updates for you, though, so please take some time to read this carefully.

Your pastors are driving to Texas to see Kelsey's family for the first time in a YEAR! We are so excited, and can't wait to meet her niece who was born in January. We'll be gone Nov. 9-23, so for Sunday Nov. 15th and Sunday Nov. 22nd, PCR will do at-home worship. The worship service will go live at 11am, and Sylvia will send out the link and worship documents on the Friday before (as usual). The Rev. Emily Rhodes Hunter will be preaching and leading worship. If any pastoral care emergencies come up, please contact the Rev. Sara Jane Nixon (of New Dublin Presbyterian Church) at (864) 378-7687 or pastor@newdublin.org

So, what have your pastors been up to in October? Well, we've spent a lot of time researching and planning our next worship pivot as the weather shifts. This has involved learning more about COVID-19 and how it spreads, as well as learning about live streaming, and working with Session and Session's COVID-19 Administrative Commission to understand what our standards of safety are. We've also been planning for Advent, and working with Stewardship on the campaign for 2021. It's been a month of behind-the-scenes work, but we hope that you can see the fruit of this planning in the rest of this newsletter!

Speaking of behind-the-scenes work... have you seen our [updated website](#)? Not only does it look different, but it's also more robust under the hood, meaning that it can hopefully handle more traffic and a wider variety of functions. We're excited for the possibilities! There is a photo gallery on the website, and if you have photos that you'd like to share there, please contact David Lyerly (dlyerly@msn.com). The website is still a work in progress, and we are so thankful for the work and initiative that David has put into it.

Alright, it's time to get into all of the things that are coming up in our life as a congregation! **Keep reading for the COVID-19 update, Advent groups and events, Nominations, and updates from our DCE, Georgeanne Lavery.**

May the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all!

Your Pastors,
Kelsey and Peter

COVID-19 Update

As we said above, we and the Session have spent the past month researching and brainstorming how we will all worship together as the weather gets colder. This week, the Session's COVID-19 Administrative Commission voted to continue worshipping outside, but we will start using an FM transmitter, so that folks can remain in their cars for the service.

These are the factors that we considered as we came to this decision:

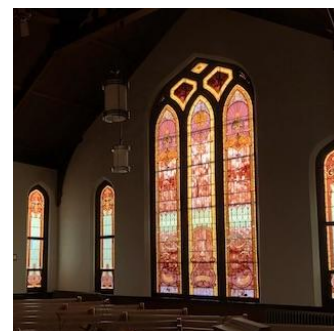
- There is more and more evidence that COVID-19 is mostly spread through aerosol - that is, through the microscopic droplets that we exhale, and that can linger in the air for hours. [Dr. Linsey Marr \(professor at Virginia Tech\) has a succinct video](#) about this, and you can find much more detailed information from Dr. Marr and other scientists who are researching this at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/FAQ-aerosols>
- The best analogy for aerosol transmission of COVID-19 is second-hand smoke. If someone was smoking in our sanctuary, it wouldn't take long for the smoke to disperse into the whole room, and then everyone in the room would be breathing some of the smoke. Wearing masks would help to prevent one's "smoke" from reaching other people, but any speaking or even moving would result in more "smoke" (aerosols) in the room. Over a long period of time, such as the length of a worship service, the "smoke" (aerosols) would fill the room and the risk of transmission would increase. Staying 6 feet apart from one another would not be enough to guarantee a lack of infections.
- COVID-19 cases are at record highs in our country right now, and the cold weather will likely only make things worse. Aerosols spread more efficiently in low-humidity air, and people will gather inside more, leading to more spread.

Session's standard of safety right now is to not spread the virus to anyone at a PCR worship service. Session also believes that it is important for worship to be accessible to as many congregants as possible. Moving indoors would exclude worshipers who are 65 or older with underlying health conditions (which is 85% of people who are over 65, according to the CDC). Remaining outdoors but in cars would mean that at-risk people in our congregation would still be able to come to worship in relative warmth. We will have to adapt to the weather, and sometimes we'll have to do at-home worship, but we are optimistic that we'll still get to worship together in relative safety.

Individual & Family Use of the Sanctuary

Session reminded us that PCR's sanctuary is a source of great comfort to many of you, so we will make the sanctuary available for individual and family use starting the first week of Advent and continuing indefinitely. Reserve time in the sanctuary via this link: <https://pcradford.appointlet.com/s/pcr-sanctuary>

We've set up the reservation system so that reservations can only be made three hours apart. This will allow any aerosols from worshipers using the space to diffuse before another family group enters the sanctuary.



Advent

The first Sunday of Advent is November 29th, and the theme for this year is Those Who Dream. One of the scripture passages for Advent is Psalm 126, and this line jumps off the page: “When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.” What does it look like to live as those who dream? The prophets, the psalmists, John the Baptist, Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph, Simeon, Anna, the shepherds and the Magi—they were all dreamers. They received, discovered, and responded to God’s dreams for the world. In Advent, we step into the mystery and awe of God’s dreams & pray they shape our reality.



This theme is for the dreamers in all of us—those who dream of a deeper connection with God and those who dream of a better world. It’s for those who dream of comfort and for those who have given up on their dreams. It’s for those whose dreams have been crushed and for those who show us that dreams take time. Join us this Advent as we dream alongside prophets and angels, Mary and the Magi. Join us as we seek and sow God’s dreams for our world.

With that in mind, we have a few different Advent opportunities for you all (and don’t forget to check our DCE Georgeanne’s section for more on the pageant, wreath making, and gingerbread house kits!)

Advent Hymn Study

Sundays during Advent at 9:30am

Kelsey will be leading a study on Zoom on four different Advent hymns, with resources from Mary Louise Bringle, who has written many hymns and worked on the Glory to God hymnal. If you’re interested in taking part, email Kelsey at pastorkelseyhfh@gmail.com (and feel free to ask for pointers on how to use Zoom if you haven’t tried it yet!).

Advent *Visio Divina* Group

Thursdays during Advent at 7pm

Peter will be leading a *visio divina* group on Zoom, using Christian art related to Advent. What’s *visio divina*? It’s like *lectio divina* (prayerful meditation on scripture), but prayerfully meditating on art as a way of opening our hearts to God.

Daily Devotional

We have a wonderful daily devotional for the season from A Sanctified Art, and we’re excited to share it with you! We will send out a digital copy to everyone the week before Advent begins, and we will also have some printed copies available in the church office.

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Advent (continued)

Christmas Pageant

Airs on Sunday Dec. 20th at 5pm

Your creative and tech savvy Director of Christian Education, Georgeanne Lavery, is adapting the Christmas pageant to an online format! More information in her section of the letter.

Angel Tree

How to participate:

- Open the [Link to the file](#) (on Google Drive)
- Select an Angel (or 2 or 3) and claim them by entering your name on the spreadsheet
- Then purchase and wrap the gifts, and include a tag on each package with the Angel number.
- Deliver to the church office by Monday, December 7.

These gifts are for the members of The Recovery Center in Pulaski which is a day program for challenged adults in the NRV and the same program for which we have been doing Angel Tree gifts for the last few years.

If you have questions or cannot open the spreadsheet, please let Sherry Oxley (oxleys@verizon.net) or Florence Mogen (fhmogen@gmail.com) know and they will help.

Nominations

The PCR Nominating Committee (Including: Debbie Chase, Charles Allen, Coley Thomas, Rebecca Dunn, and Lin Young) is requesting church members propose the names of possible elders to be considered for the session class of 2023. Members proposed must currently be considered Active Members and be willing to serve. The Elder commitment is three years duration and includes monthly session meetings and active committee involvement. Once the Nominating committee receives the names proposed from the congregation, a slate of potential elders will be developed and will be presented at a congregational meeting where the congregation will vote to elect four elders for the next class. Their tenure will begin January, 2021. Names may also be proposed at the congregational meeting.

Present Elders serving PCR are:

Class of 2020 – Alice Collier, Teresa Coulthard, Janell Dobbin, Rebecca Dunn

Class of 2021 – Hugh Miller, Lin Young, David Darnell, Debbie Chase

Class of 2022 – Judy Hood, Annyce Levy, B J Munsey, Coley Thomas

Please submit the names of individuals (you have confirmed are willing to serve) you would like to propose as elders to the nominating committee by November 22, 2020.

Pending Session approval, we will hold a congregational meeting on Nov. 29 to vote on nominations.
Thank you for participating in this important commitment to PCR.



History of the Christmas Pageant

The Christmas pageant has been around for a long time in various forms. Some credit St. Francis of Assisi with the first Christmas pageant (or Nativity play) when he celebrated Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve 1223 in front of a full-size manger scene with live animals. Others date the first Christmas pageants back to the medieval mystery plays, where the story of Jesus' birth was included in dramas about the life of Jesus. Christmas pageants are found all over the world, but it's not clear when children became involved in them.

However it came about, we now find the Christmas pageant in most Sunday schools, with the children and youth of the church acting out the story of the birth of Jesus from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The pageant is often presented in a worship service, either on the last Sunday of Advent or on Christmas Eve, and usually includes traditional Christmas carols or original music.¹

2020: A virtual Christmas pageant

Calling all actors and actresses!



Do you want to be a part of PCR's Christmas pageant this year? Do you want to stay safe at the same time? This year we will be performing our annual Christmas pageant through Zoom. We will film actors and actresses as they perform with their fellow stage members. Our rehearsal schedule will work around the schedules of those who want to volunteer. All ages are welcome to this new experience! Clips will be put together to create the entire pageant. It will be aired on a Sunday during the advent season.

If this interests you or someone you know, please send Georgeanne Lavery an email, pcrdce@verizon.net by **Thursday, November 12.**

Parts

| | |
|----------------|---------------|
| Mary | Angel Gabriel |
| Joseph | Isaiah |
| Narrator | Shepherds |
| Angel | Caesar |
| Wise men/women | Star |

Let me know **ALL** the parts you are interested in. You may get to play a few different parts. After Nov. 12th I will then figure out what days and times people are available. From there I will schedule practice and performance.

¹ "New Ways of Doing the Christmas Pageant - Practical"

<http://www.prci.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/New-Ways-of-Doing-the-Christmas-Pageant-booklet5.pdf>. Accessed 26 Oct. 2020.

PCR Advent Events

Advent wreath making

Sunday, November 29 after worship service.

After worship service there will be stations with advent candles, foam rings, and greenery. At these stations you will be able to pick up the material you will need to make your own family advent wreath when you go home. All PCR families are welcome to get supplies, not just families with kids. :)

Gingerbread house decorating kits

Drop off decorations

Sunday, November 29 at worship service.

Pick up your decorations

Sunday, December 6 at worship service.

Unfortunately we are not able to gather around and decorate our houses together this year. To help feel apart of this special event, we are asking families to bring in one or 2 pre-packaged decorations you would normally bring. Decorations could be pretzels, shredded wheat cereal, different types of candies, and many more. Using sanitary conditions, those decorations will be combined together in a bag for families to pick up the assortment the following Sunday. As you decorate your gingerbread house at home you can enjoy the diversity of PCR's decorations and the many loving hearts that contributed.

Christmas Pageant

Airing Sunday, December 20 at 5pm.

Practice and filming *Will work around schedules of those who want to participate.*

This year our pageant will be pre recorded using Zoom. Practice and filming will be done as a complete scene. There are many scenes in our pageant. Actors will be given a script, a Zoom background, and a cleaned costume. Alex and Hutson will be providing musical transitions. The complete film will be aired Sunday, December 20 at 5pm. We are looking into doing a PCR watch party for this. Watch for more to come! An encore airing will be on Christmas Eve.

