



PCR Post

A Newsletter of the Presbyterian Church of Radford

From the Pastors

April 16, 2021

Dear PCR Family,

A lot has happened since our last PCR Post letter, or at least, that's how it seems to us! Kelsey did continuing education over Zoom with her CREDO cohort (an amazing program for pastors offered by the PC(USA)'s Board of Pensions). Even though it was in the middle of Lent, it was a renewing experience, and Kelsey feels blessed to be connected to some amazing pastors all over the country.

Peter worked with lay leaders at Grace Episcopal Church to do a joint Palm Sunday processional, but our plans were thwarted by the rain. Still, he appreciated the opportunity to connect with our neighbors, and we hope to come together for something else in the future. Instead, we spent a few hours on the office porch distributing palms, and the Women's Fellowship Circle picked up palms to share with our homebound members.

We as a congregation observed Holy Week together with an outdoor Maundy Thursday Communion service, as well as an online-only Good Friday service. Peter concluded the Lenten book study Sunday school class, and Kelsey preached on a beautifully sun-drenched Easter Sunday. Like most of our colleagues, we did four services in eight days, which always feels like quite the feat when you consider that one service usually involves anywhere from eight to twelve hours of prep work. Peter also set up Stations of the Cross in the sanctuary, utilizing resources from A Sanctified Art, and Kelsey did a lot more video editing than usual!

Alright, what else have your pastors been doing with their time? We've been doing pastoral care, Peter has continued to lead a weekly UKirk Bible study, we moderated Session, we met with the COVID-19 Administrative Commission, and we're currently working on returning to indoor worship on May 23rd! If you missed that letter, we've included the same information in this newsletter. We've definitely been keeping busy.

On a personal note, we got our second vaccine shots this week! This is such a huge relief, primarily because of Kelsey's pregnancy. We announced via email a couple of Sundays ago that we're expecting a baby due October 4th! Pregnancy increases the risk of severe illness and

death from COVID-19, and the vaccine gives our family a level of safety for which we are so grateful.

Once we've made it past the waiting period with our vaccines, we will return to having office hours at church. You can expect at least one pastor to be in the office Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday between about 10 and 2. Friday is a flex day for us - we might be in the office, although ideally one of us will be finishing their sermon and the other will be calling and visiting folks who are homebound or have pastoral care concerns. Why only one pastor in the office? Office hours are an intentional time for us to be available for unscheduled visits, which means being open to continued distractions that can make it difficult for us to focus. We each work 20 hours per week, and we try to give PCR our best, most focused 20 hours. Sometimes that means working 6pm-10pm from the dining room table, but we get more done in those hours than if we worked more hours at a different time of day!

Of course, we're happy to take calls Tuesday through Saturday during the day and early evening, and we're flexible on setting up times to meet one on one. You *could* call us on Sunday, but we're usually busy with worship. Monday is when we recharge and do not check email or schedule meetings. If there is a pastoral care emergency (a heart attack, for example, or death) please call us any day or time. We do set our phones to "do not disturb" overnight, but if you call twice within three minutes, the second call will get through to us.

Once we clear the waiting period after this last dose of the vaccine on April 27th, we will change our personal policy around indoor visits. We will be comfortable with masked, short indoor visits with others who have been vaccinated (30 minutes or less), meals outdoors with others who have been vaccinated, and outdoor visits with anyone, regardless of vaccination status.

Alright, this has been a long letter, so we'll stop here. We are so looking forward to getting to spend time with you without having to worry as much about spreading COVID, and we are certainly looking forward to modified indoor worship. We hope that you are getting to enjoy the beauty and warmth of spring!

Your pastors,

Peter and Kelsey

Church Picnic

The Fellowship Committee is organizing a church picnic for May 16th, directly after worship! We will have catered box lunches for everyone, but please bring your own beverage.

Email Sylvia [pcradford@gmail.com] with your lunch order by May 2nd!

These are the options:

Sandwich:

- Turkey breast
- Forest ham
- Italian BMT (salami, spicy pepperoni, ham)
- Cold Cut Combo (ham, salami, bologna)
- Tuna
- Veggie Delite
- Spicy Italian

Bread:

- White
- Wheat

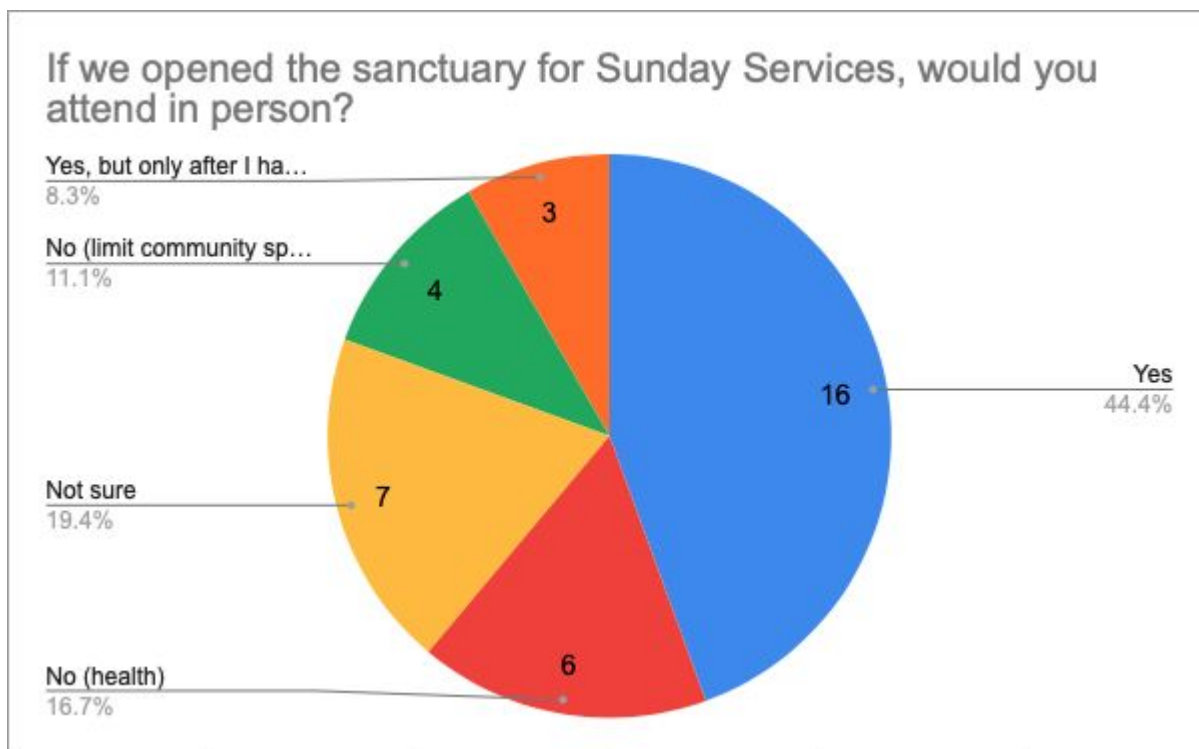
Chips:

- Regular Lays potato chips
- Baked Lays potato chips
- Baked Lays BBQ chips
- Nacho Doritos
- Cool Ranch Doritos
- Sea Salt & Vinegar potato chips
- Jalapeno potato chips
- Sun chips harvest cheddar



Indoor Worship and Congregational Survey Results

As you hopefully saw in our recent COVID-19 update to the congregation (sent via email on April 12th) we aim to return to indoor worship on May 23rd, which is Pentecost Sunday! We will adjust our plans if there is a major spike in cases in Radford, but we remain hopeful. Why worship indoors in May and not before? The vaccine has made a huge difference. First, PCR's staff is almost fully vaccinated, and we are the ones who don't really have a choice about being in worship on any given Sunday, and second, the survey results indicate that many of you are vaccinated as well! We received 36 responses to our congregational survey, and 70% of respondents had completed their vaccinations, with another 28% who had already received their first dose. When we asked folks if they would attend worship in person, these are the results:



Now, 36 people is definitely not the entire congregation, but we hope that this sample size gives us a decent snapshot of our vaccination status as a congregation and willingness to be indoors for worship. We (your pastors) were surprised that the percentage of folks willing to worship indoors wasn't higher, but we and the COVID-19 Administrative Commission figure that this percentage could shift as we get closer to our goal of May 23rd. This is also why we are going full steam ahead with setting up live streaming in the sanctuary. On the following page, we've included the safety measures we will be taking (which were also in the update letter).

Safety Measures for Indoor Worship

While the vaccines are very effective at preventing hospitalization and serious illness, it is still possible to contract COVID-19 and spread it to others (although the hope is that the vaccine helps reduce our ability to spread the virus). With that in mind, we will still need to take safety measures, particularly to protect those among us who cannot be vaccinated, like our children. These measures include the following:

- Sign up for worship ahead of time so that the sanctuary is not too full, and we can do contact tracing if there is an exposure at church
- Wear a mask fully covering the nose and mouth (we will have masks available for those who need them)
- Maintain physical distance of 6 feet from people not in your family group
- Refrain from congregational singing and minimize congregational responses to liturgy
- Refrain from speaking in the sanctuary, or speak quietly
- If you travel, wait a minimum of 10 days before returning to worship, especially if you had high risk contacts (e.g. spending time with people outside of your immediate family group). This is particularly important because we do not want to spread unknown COVID-19 variants to children, since they cannot be vaccinated

Additionally, we will:

- Sign people in as they arrive to worship
- Prop open the doors during the service to improve ventilation with air from outside
- Greet one another on the lawn in front of the office after worship, instead of remaining in the sanctuary
- Livestream worship for those who cannot attend an indoor service

In the event that there are more people who want to be at worship than we can accommodate with physical distancing protocols, then some folks will have to stay home. Those individuals/families would have priority attendance the following week.



From the DCE

Celebrating Easter at PCR is a beautiful way to start the month of April! Our Easter Egg Scavenger Hunt was a huge success. The talent of the congregation was on full show Easter. Many took a stroll around the church to admire the many different eggs.

Thank you for doing an **EGG-cellent** job!! :)



Committee Updates

MISSION COMMITTEE

The Mission Committee of PCR does the mission work of the church both locally and through the Presbytery. The Mission Committee coordinates presbytery offerings each year like the Joy Offering, One Great Hour of Sharing, The Mother's /Father's Day Offering, and the Blanket Offering. The Committee is also involved with local Missions like the Clothing Bank, Beans and Rice, Our Daily Bread, the Elf Shelf and other local mission opportunities both with financial support and volunteer support.

The Necessities Pantry is a major mission project of PCR. The pantry provides necessities like cleaning supplies and hygiene supplies each month to residents of Radford in need, and has been operating monthly throughout the majority of the pandemic. In April, the New River Health District set up a drive-through vaccine clinic at the pantry. We were so thankful to be able to serve our pantry clients in this way!

REPORT FROM THE TREASURER

We are now three months into the church's fiscal year. Giving is running ahead of this time last year and spending is also lower, which is good start to the year. The church finished last year with a nice surplus. The session have approved using some of the surplus to cover the costs related to the upcoming building renovations.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

The Worship Committee did a wonderful job gathering flowers for and assembling the Easter flower cross! If you missed it, check out the beginning of the worship video for Easter Sunday, which is on PCR's Facebook page.

