

Image: Great Rivers Presbytery moves worship online on March 15th to connect with the people in hope and faith during the COVID-19 pandemic.

GOOD NEWS from the Presbytery of Great Rivers

*We are called to share Christ's love by partnering in service,
uniting in worship, and risking in ministry.*

March 20, 2020

Let Us Pray



Every week during 2020, we offer up different church names so that we can pray for our entire Presbytery community. You are welcome to follow this calendar as you will! The full list can be found on our website under the Churches tab or by clicking [here](#).

This week on our prayer calendar. . .

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Forward to a Friend



(This will send this week's newsletter as an email to a friend!)

For Headline News
Happening Around
the PC(USA),
[click here](#)





Coal Valley - First Presbyterian Church

2431 First Street, Coal Valley, IL 61240
Rev. Tim Snart
Kelli Sandusky, Admin Assistant
Joyce Stephens, Clerk of Session & Treasurer
[Website](#)
[Facebook Page](#)



Danvers - First Presbyterian Church

201 E Main, Danvers, IL 61732
Rev. Tim Mitchell
Pam Kester
Cynthia Wurmnest
Mr. William E. Peterson
[Website](#)
[Facebook Page](#)

Mark Your Calendar

MARCH

Committee on Ministry

Tuesday, March 24
10 am - 3 pm
Peoria-First Federated LTC
Via ZOOM only

APRIL

Office Closed

Friday April 10
Monday April 13

Committee on Ministry

Tuesday, April 28
10 am - 3 pm
Peoria-First Federated LTC

Administrative Team Meeting

Wednesday, April 29
11 am - 4 pm
Peoria-First Federated LTC

Leadership Team Meeting

Thursday, April 30
10 am - 2 pm
Peoria-First Federated LTC
Springfield-Third

[Click here for the PGR Calendar](#)

Join Our List



In Our Prayers

Let us please keep the family of Sheila Sheer in our prayers--her son Andy died after a long battle with cancer on March 6th. Memorial service was in Kansas City, but local funeral arrangements are being postponed until June. We are comforted that Andy did not spend one night alone in the final months of his life.



A SECOND COMMUNICATION ABOUT COVID-19

Friends, I have sent a second communication (timestamped 1pm, 3/22.20) about our presbytery's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with new links for resources as anticipated challenges emerge. Please know that the situation on the ground is continuing to change hour to hour, so please follow the directives of the CDC and local authorities on most responsible courses of action.

"...The challenges you are facing are manifesting in a number of different ways, and so we continue to trust you that you are best suited to know how to lead your people through them and be a steadfast witness in your community. Right now, the Presbytery of Great Rivers is on standby to help out in any way that we can. If you are experiencing any kind of hardship, please let us know and we will walk with each other through it. If you are looking



for locations that offer online worship, please see the Facebook page of Great Rivers Presbytery, where we will continue to share news and updates. As I have expressed before, I have so much gratitude for all of you doing ministry in these challenges..."

Please click [HERE](#) for full text.

FREE WEBINAR FOR MINISTRY DURING SHELTER-IN-PLACE

The Synod of Lincoln Trails invites you to a free webinar series to help you lead your people in and through the Covid-19 pandemic.

Shelter in Place:

**"Maintaining a Sense of Hope, Community and Belonging:
A webinar series for pastors and faith leaders serving during the Covid-19
pandemic"**

Three different webinars will be offered by LeaderWise on the following dates
(you need not attend all three, but you must pre-register):

March 25: 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm Eastern / 12 pm - 1:30 pm Central

April 1: 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm Eastern / 11 am - 12:30 pm Central

Thank you, pastors and faith leaders ~

For your incredible, extraordinary, faithful and adaptive ministries during these incomprehensible times. There is truly no playbook for this, and we are all feeling the isolation that runs so counter to our deepest understanding of "community."

Won't you join us for some online learning, community and fellowship?

For the next 3 Wednesdays, our trusted partners at LeaderWise will be presenting 90-minute Zoom webinars on pastoral topics related to leading your church communities in and through the Covid-19 pandemic.

Let these free webinars inform, strengthen and nurture you ~ as you do the same for others in and beyond your congregations.

To receive the link for the first Zoom, please contact me at sara@lincolntrails.org. You must contact me to receive the Zoom link and instructions -- we want to make sure that there is room for everyone.

(Zoom is a free, video-conferencing tool that you can use with your phone, and/or your computer, laptop or tablet. It's an online, virtual way for people to attend a meeting or gathering from any location. During the live webinar, only the presenters will be seen on the screen, but you may type in questions you'd like to ask them.)

I am holding you in strength and prayer as you lead God's people through this bewildering time. Let us know how the Synod can help you. We are all in this together, and we are still being led by the ever-present, ever-loving God who called you into ministry. Take heart and be of good courage!

In Christ,
Sara

the Rev. Sara Dingman,
Synod Executive

PROACTIVE ACTION PLANS ACROSS THE PRESBYTERY (as of 1pm

3/20/20, subject to change)

- Alexis, Norwood: suspending worship
- Biggsville: cancelled and are canceling in-person worship-using weekly newsletters with devotions, prayers, daily bible readings (and comics), session is checking on church members each week.
- Buffalo Hart: closed through the end of March, with possible extension. Working on virtual streaming online options.
- Canton: suspending worship until Palm Sunday
- Clayton, Federate: no worship through March. Encouraging catching up on live worship as they practice using Facebook for sharing video.
- Clinton: suspending worship through the next few weeks
- Danvers: suspending worship through March, plans to record
- East Moline: suspending worship for two weeks, looking at virtual church live
- Elmwood: suspending all in-person church activity until end of March, using phone calls, videos, newsletters
- Geneseo: suspending worship 3/22-29, considering streaming options
- Ipava: cancelling worship reaching out to each other once a week by phone
- Rock Island, South Park: ceasing all in person gatherings at the church and corporate worship until April 5th at soonest, meal ministry for community on, mission and ministry continuing
- Knoxville: canceling worship gatherings
- LeRoy: suspending all church sponsored activities until Governor lifts bans on schools, posting prerecorded video Sunday morning
- Macomb, First: suspending in person worship until tentative day of April 19, limiting use of building, finding alternative ways to be church in weeks ahead, mid-week meditations and private Facebook group
- Macomb, Scotland Trinity: cancelling worship, reaching out to each other once a week by phone
- Milan, First: cancelled coffee hour fellowship, 5th Sunday luncheons, bible studies, incorporating new sanitation measures for worship space and changing worship practices to limit contact
- Morton, First: suspending worship through March
- New Windsor: suspending all public services and events through Saturday April 4th, scriptures and sermons to be shared by email and Facebook, prayer requests shared by social media, offering accepted by mail.
- Peoria, Westminster: suspending worship
- Pekin: not only in person meetings from 3/15 until further notice
- Petersburg, Central: canceling in-person worship for next two Sundays at least, working on posting videos online and sharing sermon and bulletins by mail, deacons calling people on regular basis
- Quincy, Ellingham Memorial: canceling worship gatherings for next two weeks-updating Facebook page and exploring streaming possibilities for online, with pastoral contact of cards and calls for those not online
- Rio: suspending all church activities for rest of March
- Rock Island, Broadway: church office, events and meetings closed March 16th-March 30th. Worship on.
- Rock Island, Good Shepherd: in-person worship cancelled 3/22, more info forthcoming
- Rock Island, Gloria Dei: livestreaming worship
- Springfield, Korean: postpone meetings at the church indefinitely until reports of COVID-19 improves, worshipping online via YouTube Live starting 3/22.
- Springfield, Hope: worship suspended on 3/15 until further notice
- Springfield, Knox: canceling worship until all clear, calling and texting members
- Springfield, Third: suspending worship until end of March and quite possibly longer, postponing Easter Festival, making plans to go electronic with Bible Study on webpage, Facebook, and email.
- Springfield, Westminster: all in-person gatherings have been temporarily suspended, working on preparing online services.
- Tallulah, Rock Creek: closing church and suspending all activities until April 5th
- Warsaw: suspending worship, working on livestream through Youtube
- Washington: suspending in person worship as of 3/20, visits by appointments only, sermons posted on website, communication by newsletter
- Woodhull: building closed until April and all functions closed until reassessed on March 29, sermons and bible studies prerecorded and posted by YouTube on Facebook
- Yates City: canceling worship until March 31st

ALTERNATIVE WORSHIP POSSIBILITIES...

A number of different churches are testing alternative ways of connecting to each other on Sunday morning or during the week. Please keep an eye on the presbytery Facebook page for suggested links to be connected with local worship. Here is a shorter list of those who have been offering this alternative:

- First Presbyterian Church of Springfield, Illinois, Rev. Susan Phillips, 10:30 via Zoom.

- First Presbyterian Church of Normal IL , Rev. Matt Wilcox, 8:30am and 11am by livestream and saved upon ending: <https://livestream.com/firstpresnormal>

- United Presbyterian Church of Peoria , Rev. Debra Avery, 10 a.m.

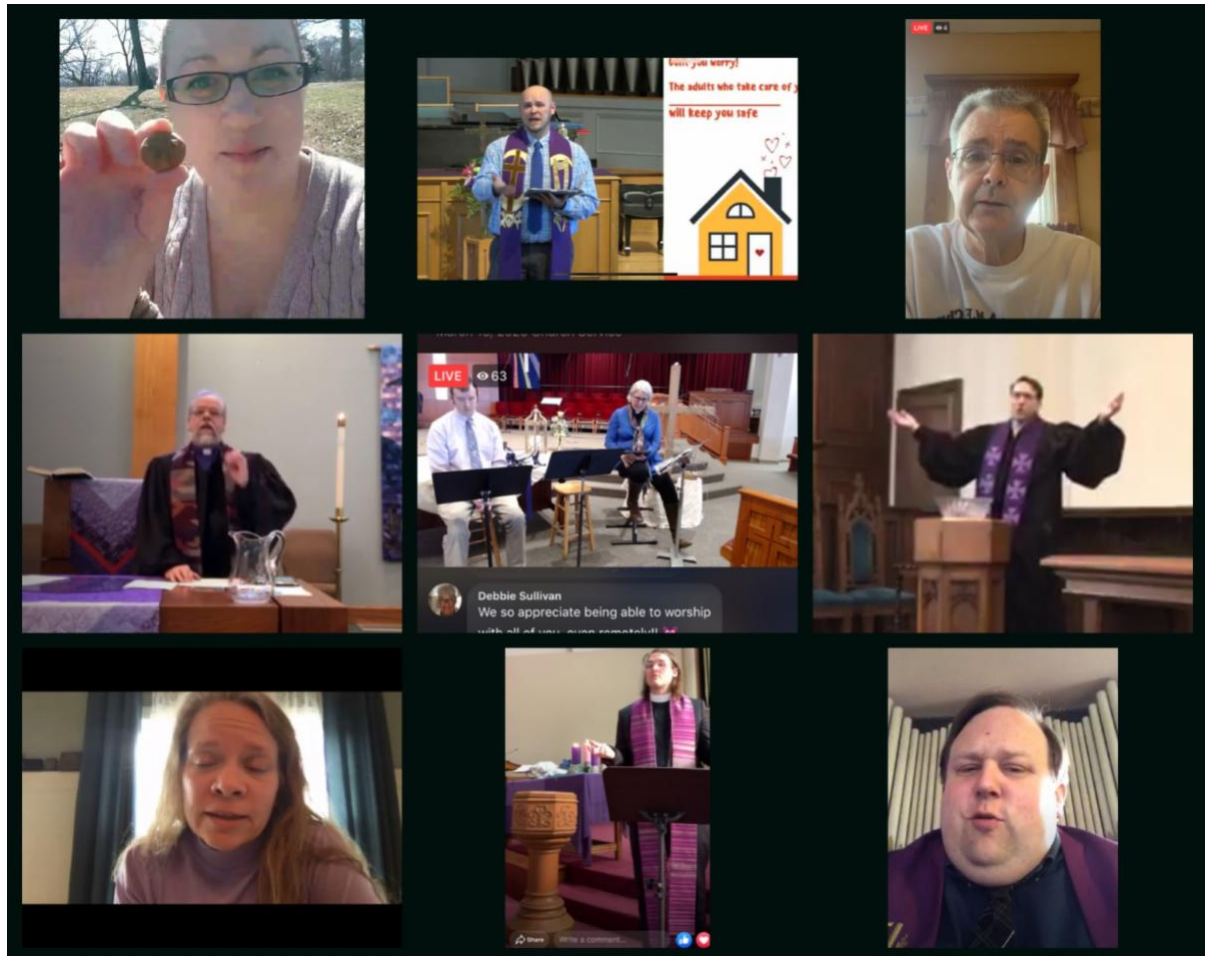
1) their Facebook page

2) YouTube from any smartphone, computer, or tablet: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAf9XQ9MUHNGaXdQQRSk6yQ>

- Norwood Presbyterian Church, Commissioned Pastor Gary Denise Pullen, 10:30am on Facebook live, on his personal page.
- St Luke Union Church, Rev. Andy Gifford, 10:30am on Facebook live.
- First Presbyterian Church of Lincoln, Illinois, Rev. Adam Quine, 10:00am by Facebook live (older recorded sermons also on church website)
- First Presbyterian Church Jacksonville, IL, Rev. Jonathan Warren, 10am by Facebook live.
- First Presbyterian Church of Farmington, IL, Rev. Andy Sonneborn, 10:30am by Facebook live.
- Gloria Dei Presbyterian Church RI, by Facebook live and saved.
- First Presbyterian Church of Galesburg, Rev. Ann Elyse Van Winkle, daily bible studies by Facebook live.
- Hope Presbyterian Church of Springfield, Rev. Chuck Goodman by Facebook live.
- First United Presbyterian Church of Leroy, Rev. Annie McMillan and United Church of Woodhull, Rev. Cheyanna Losey, often have recorded Youtube videos of their services posted either before, or later in the day.

Here is a link to the lectionary readings :

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/.../revised-co.../2020/3/15/>



A Call to Prayer For Church Leaders

"For our sacred duty to provide space for the divine, from proximity or quarantine, for the blessing of a multitude of ways we can share our message of healing and peace-may God fill the spaces between us with sanctifying love.

For the always-blessing to seek together God's Word in our time and place, how God has always dwelt with us in disruption, even as the temple burned and Pharaoh's chariots emerged and the crowds were hungry-may God reveal the presence of hope through you today.

For the way we are connected and are connecting, for surprising ways we grow



closer even in distance, for the unscheduled sermons preached and miracles performed on the road in search of the altar, for the greatest impact of raised dais and small screen, of phone and voice and precious letters typed by tiny fingertips-may God bless your "pulpit" today.

For the opportunity of a platform, for a moment to share good information and instruct each other in communal care, for wisdom of drawing from resources untainted by falsehood and manipulative partisanship, and for beloved people who may need help knowing the way-may God use you as an instrument of truth.

For resilience amidst the rush of details and stalking questions and unseen concerns we know await tomorrow, for faith to be centered where we are right now, right where and how we need to be-may God fill you with non-anxious presence so your truest self may shine.

For peace of mind and calm of heart, for the gates you opened by locking doors, for the spirits you settled by showing care, for the gift of someone being for you what you have been for others, and well deserved holy rest later-may God bless you with the reward of self and peace and sleep and Sabbath.

And for you, pastor, for the way you partnered with your local wisdom-bearers, how you listened, nudged, affirmed, questioned, comforted, spoke out, leaned back, challenged, made plans, changed plans, and led your people through strength and whisper-may God reveal the good fruit in the leadership you have shown.

May all our spaces be sacred, spaces filled with gratitude and grace, and may you today be a vessel for the divine.

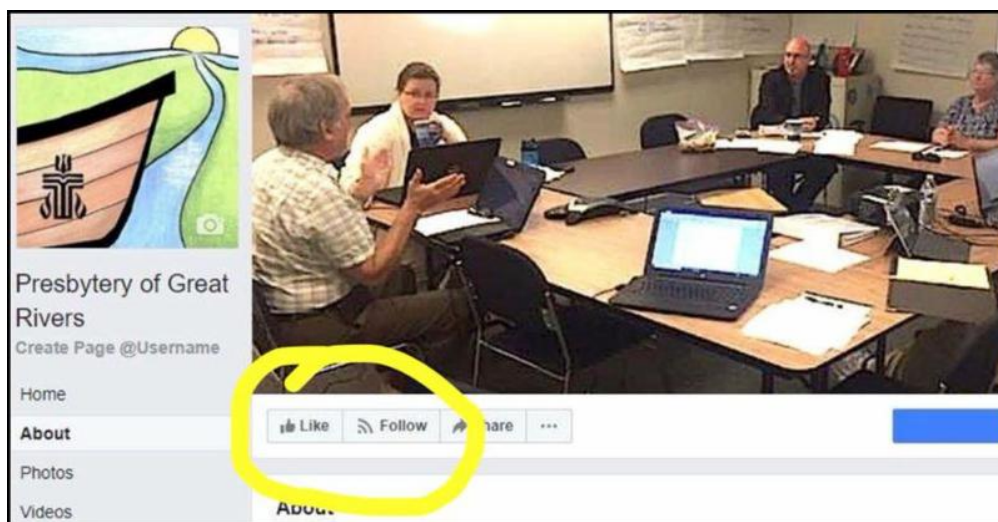
Amen."

Ryan Landino, 3/15/20

Get Connected!

Be sure to encourage your congregations, sessions, and even your church newsletter editorial staff and volunteers to be sure to sign up for our presbytery newsletter and follow our Facebook page so you don't miss out on what is going on in our community of churches!

Have you liked our "Presbytery of Great Rivers" Facebook page?



Have you signed up for our "Good News from Great Rivers" email newsletter?



