

gather



*Image: Sarah Dobson, member of First Presbyterian Church of Jacksonville, IL and teacher at the Illinois School for the Deaf leads a tutorial on how to lead the Passing of the Peace from safe physical distancing in American Sign Language.*

## 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.*

June 19, 2020

*It continues to be the recommendation of the presbytery that  
you be safe and wise as you fulfill your mission during this  
pandemic. For an official statement on guidance from the*

*presbytery, please see the [5/19 Statement on COVID-19](#) from the Leadership Team. For the most up-to-date resources on worship during this pandemic, please see <https://www.pcusa.org/covid19/>. If you or your congregation are experiencing any hardship as we endure this pandemic, please let us know how we might be able to help.*

[PCUSA News](#)

[Synod of Lincoln Trails](#)

[Board of Pensions](#)

[PGR Calendar](#)

[Presbytery of Great Rivers](#)

## Let Us Pray



### **Media, Community**

Community Presbyterian Church  
Ellison & Maple, Media, IL 61460  
Debra Gillam, Clerk of Session  
John Link, Treasurer



### **Middletown, First**

201 S. Clinton, Middletown, IL 62666  
Myra Dobey, Clerk of Session  
[Facebook](#)



### **Milan, First**

First Presbyterian Church  
1620 1st St W, Milan, IL 61264-3300  
Rev. Dr. Dale Dykstra  
Mary Orwig, Admin Assistant  
Carolyn Garcia, Clerk of Session  
Virginia Brown, Treasurer



### **Monmouth, Faith United**

Faith United Presbyterian Church  
200 S 8th St, Monmouth, IL 61462  
Rev. Brandon Ouellette  
Sarah Torrance, Admin Assistant  
Lorna Blackford, Clerk of Session  
Andrea Crum, Treasurer



### **Monmouth, Sugar Tree Grove**

Sugar Tree Grove Presbyterian Church  
2210 M-A-M Trail, Monmouth, IL 61462  
Rev. Dr. Daniel Ott  
Sherrie Moore, Clerk of Session  
Myra Bell, Treasurer



### **Morton, First**

First Presbyterian Church  
1020 E Jackson St, Morton, IL 61550  
Mike Claver, CLP  
Lori Lewis, Clerk of Session  
Mike Johnson, Treasurer



from  
**Lament to Hope**  
*Lamentations 5:20-21*

## **VIRTUAL 224th GENERAL ASSEMBLY HAPPENING NOW**

Watch the livestream on the 224th GA website by [CLICKING HERE](#)  
or on the Facebook Spirit of GA page by [CLICKING HERE](#).

### **How will this work?**

Committee members have a couple of days—with intentional community-building as well as official proceedings—to get to know one another in the process of looking carefully at their business and making recommendations to the full assembly. The process includes the opportunity to refine proposals and consider the merits of various proposals on the same topic. The full assembly subsequently votes on committee recommendations, rather than on the overtures, reports, and commissioners' resolutions as submitted.

Because of the limits of the online setting, business is not being referred to committees in this assembly; all items will be considered directly by the whole General Assembly without the benefit of committee discussion and discernment. This format necessarily restricts the amount of business that can be processed faithfully. If any two commissioners, simply by being recognized to make and second a motion, could propose a new item of business that the assembly would then be required to debate and act upon, the amount of time required could be significant, with little initial discernment of which items merit attention by the body. Every piece of General Assembly business is important! But not all important items need General Assembly action in order to have their goals accomplished.

If you are viewing the livestream, English speakers may be wondering why the Moderator sometimes seems to proceed so slowly. Spanish and Korean speakers are listening for simultaneous interpretation in order to understand what's going on, and while our interpreters are fast, instantaneous is obviously impossible. Some delay is required in order for our whole community to participate fully.

*Let us please keep our commissioners, Maura McGrath Nagle, Diane Luddington, Penny Frame, and Chuck Goodman in your prayers!*

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## **A POEM ABOUT THE LABORS OF OUR PASTOR**

Written by Elder Tim Chipman from First Presbyterian Church of Jacksonville, shared during a session meeting back in April and shared with permission (language adjusted to be gender nonspecific)

*“Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.” -1 Timothy 5:17*

**Our pastor runs on ideas. Seminary probably didn't train them for “such a time as this,” but because our pastor is a critical thinker and problem solver, our pastor is more than capable of channeling their thoughts where they ought to go, of asking the right questions for the here and now. Think about it: how fortunate we are our pastor runs on ideas.**

**Our pastor runs on energy. And gasoline. OK, maybe a little less on gasoline these days. Visiting others is one of their core values and strengths. How is a pastor to reach out and touch another when it's forbidden? Their car may not**

be traveling, but their heart is beating. Keep up if you can! Our pastor runs on energy.

Our pastor runs on faith. They have allowed themselves to be reached by the tender glance of God and thus feels compelled to be that tender glance in the world.\* These days, as many look longingly out of their windows, our pastor is looking toward others as they always does--longingly with compassion. Good thing our pastor runs on faith.

Our pastor runs on prayer. Though this person is often a human *doing*, they are learning--and helping us all learn--how to live as human *beings*. We cannot see behind the scenes. We cannot count the hours spent on bended knee. We cannot underestimate the value of their words uttered on our behalf. Amen! Our pastor runs on prayer.

Our pastor runs on grace. Unmerited favor. Undeserved blessing. Unasked for goodwill. Unexpected abundance. This is what has saved and is saving their soul. This mystery of grace has met our pastor. May they continue to meet it. May we continue to meet it. And may grace ever lead us home. Praise God our pastor runs on grace!

\*Idea borrowed from Michael Mather's "Having Nothing Possessing Everything", 2018

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### **Passing of the Peace Using Sign Language Tutorial**

Here is a wonderful video by Sarah Dobson, member at First Presbyterian Church of Jacksonville and teacher at the Illinois School for the Deaf, leading us in a tutorial on how to do the passing of the peace in American Sign Language. This video was made as a gift for the people of Great Rivers Presbytery upon the occasion of our first virtual presbytery assembly so we can gather to conduct our worship and business safely.

For Youtube Video, [CLICK HERE.](#)  
For Facebook video, [CLICK HERE.](#)



## **A Statement on Racism and the Death of George Floyd from the Illinois Council of Churches, May 30, 2020**

"The Illinois Conference of Churches decided, many years ago, to be an intentionally anti-racist organization. This concern of ours springs from our understanding of the Christian faith which we together profess. Jesus, the Son of God become human, bonded himself to all human beings, without exception. We are to recognize his image in every human being.

We know well that racism has a threatening grip upon all in American society, including Christians. We enjoy no immunity from "America's original sin." Our anti-racism is an ongoing struggle with the ways in which our own perceptions of human beings have been formed and deformed. We repent of our racism even as we shine a light on the manifestations of this sin, which can easily be found throughout our history and right up to the present day.

The death of a black man, Mr. George Floyd, handcuffed and apparently cooperative, at the hands of four police officers who held Mr. Floyd on the ground with a knee to his neck for over eight minutes while Mr. Floyd can be heard saying, "I can't breathe," has sparked a conversation on race our churches and culture often prefer to avoid. We await and work for the day—with what we believe is holy impatience—when all human beings are afforded equal justice under the law of this nation and the law written on the human heart by our God.

We do not condone all the ways in which the outrage of citizens in cities around the nation has been expressed. We do, however, recognize that feelings of outrage and lament are fitting and Biblical witnesses to injustice.

We, the Leadership Team of the Illinois Conference of Churches, speak out against all racism and racist actions. We ask all persons of faith to join us in prayer and self-examination, asking God to help us see God's image in the faces of our neighbor and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves."

The Leadership Team of the Illinois Conference of Churches



E. Garnet Fay  
Gregory Krohm  
The Reverend Kevin Laughery  
The Reverend Matt Matthews  
The Reverend Catiana McKay  
The Reverend Gary McCants  
The Reverend Galda McCants  
The Reverend George Pyle  
The Reverend Walter Carlson

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## **Guest Preaching Link from our Neighbors from the Synod of Mid-America**

In the spirit of encouraging rest and team work as we lead God's people through this pandemic, here is a way to get an available guest preaching link for the Scriptures assigned to June 28, from the Synod of Mid-America. Please contact Landon Whitsett at [landon@synodma.org](mailto:landon@synodma.org) for more information.

Scripture: *Genesis 22:1-4; Romans 6:12-14*

Title: "Brought Back From Death to Life"

Themes: *Sacrifice, our bodies as living sacrifice, work for justice and peace, God transforming the world toward goodness, overcoming the power of sin*

Preacher: Rev. Brian Ellison, Stated Clerk, Synod of Mid-America

You can sign up for the sermon links at: <http://synodma.org/join-our-mailing-list>

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## **UPDATES ON CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES:**

### ***Stewardship Kaleidoscope 2020:***

Due to the ongoing impacts on health and limitations affecting travel the Stewardship Kaleidoscope planning committee has made the difficult decision to postpone this year's conference. While we are very disappointed that we will not be able to be together in person in September, we are planning to share important stewardship resources, fellowship, and support virtually. Details about our online offering will be coming soon, but in the meantime mark your calendar for three Tuesdays in the fall, September 22nd, 29th, and October 6th. We will be virtually together from 11:30 - 1:30 eastern on each of those days, and can't wait to share more soon. If you have already paid for registration please contact Robert Hay at [info@stewardshipkaleidoscope.org](mailto:info@stewardshipkaleidoscope.org) and indicate if you would like a refund, to transfer your registration to 2021, or apply a portion to this year's virtual gathering. We pray that you are in good health and strong spirit, and look forward to being together again soon.

### ***Lombard Mennonite Peace Center Offerings***

The Lombard Mennonite Peace Center's offering for *Mediation Skills Training Institute, Clergy Clinic for Church Leaders*, and single-day events (*Conflict Transformation Skills, Healthy Congregations, and Leadership and Anxiety in the Church*) will be offered ONLINE on your preferred electronic device in the comfort of your home or office. We will offer four sessions of *Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders* this year between August and November on the following weeks: August 3-7, August 31-September 4, October 5-9, and November 16-20, 2020. Early-birds registrants can receive a **\$200**

**discount.** To learn more, please consult this [MSTI brochure](#). To register online for any of our events, go to: <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/producer/720852>. With questions or concerns, please contact our office at 630-627-0507 or [Admin@LMPeaceCenter.org](mailto:Admin@LMPeaceCenter.org).

## *Covenant Gathering 2020*

Covenant Gathering will be online this year, in the form of "A Taste of Covenant Gathering". Click on the webpage for details and registration by [CLICKING HERE](#). Rev. Jimmie Hawkins from the PC(USA) Office of Public Witness will be a special keynote speaker, and Rev. Ryan Landino will leading a class on Spiritual Practices.

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## **Looking for Alternative, Online Worship? (PLEASE LET US KNOW IF ANYTHING HAS CHANGED!)**

Here are several possibilities for connecting to different worship spaces around the presbytery. This is a listing of the last Sunday's offerings of different churches providing worship. Please let us know if there have been any changes so we can keep our list updated!

- Alexis-Norwood Presbyterian Church, Commissioned Pastor Gary Denise Pullen, 10:30 am on [Facebook](#) live, on his personal page.
- Bloomington-Second Presbyterian Church, Rev. Trey Haddon, Rev. Elissa Bailey, 10 am, streaming "drive-in-worship service" online, [secondpres.com](http://secondpres.com).
- Bloomington-St Luke Union Church, Rev. Andy Gifford, 10:30 am on [Facebook](#) live.
- Buffalo Hart-Buffalo Hart Presbyterian Church, Rev. Sarah Iliff-McGill, 9:30 am, via [www.buffalohartpc.com](http://www.buffalohartpc.com)
- Chatham-Chatham Presbyterian Church, Rev. Jim Reitz, by newsletter and email, to access, email [jareitz@chathampresbyterian.com](mailto:jareitz@chathampresbyterian.com)
- Coal Valley-First Presbyterian Church, Coal Valley and Beulah, Rev. Tim Snart, worship posted on YouTube [https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCiqgUcXCqN\\_ftlk5EP8Odeg](https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCiqgUcXCqN_ftlk5EP8Odeg)
- Delavan-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Jean Sparks, found on their webpage [firstpresdelavan.org](http://firstpresdelavan.org) or directly at <http://firstpresdelavan.org/virtual-worship>.
- East Moline- Presbyterian Church is posting pre-recorded services on YouTube and can be found here [www.youtube.com/channel/UCo0q4ViGTm1-qHYv02Ubbqw](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCo0q4ViGTm1-qHYv02Ubbqw)
- Elmwood-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Marla Bauler, worship led by Zoom (link can be obtained by pastor), then posted afterwards to [Facebook](#).
- Farmington-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Andy Sonneborn, 10:30 am by [Facebook](#) live.
- Galesburg-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Ann Elyse Van Winkle, 10 am by [Facebook](#) live
- Geneseo-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Tim Doty, 10:30 a.m. streaming brief worship service of Scripture, meditation and prayer to [Facebook](#) live
- Jacksonville-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Jonathan Warren, 10 am by [Facebook](#) live.
- Leroy-First United Presbyterian Church, Rev. Annie McMillan, recorded YouTube videos of their services posted later on their [Facebook](#) page.

- Lincoln-First Presbyterian Church of Lincoln, Rev. Adam Quine, 10:00 am by [Facebook](#) live (older recorded sermons also on church website)
- Monmouth-Sugar Tree Grove United Presbyterian Church, Faith United Presbyterian Church, Monmouth, and Monmouth College collaborating on joint 10:30 am Sunday worship service, posted to Youtube: <https://m.youtube.com/user/monmouthcollege>
- Macomb-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Erin Marth, 10 am, Zooming online worship services (upcoming services posted weekly at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/firstpresmacomb/>).
- New Windsor-New Windsor Presbyterian Church, Rev. Mark Bedford, worship videos and links shared by [Facebook](#)
- Normal-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Matt Wilcox, 10:00 am by livestream and saved upon ending: <https://livestream.com/firstpresnormal>
- Peoria-First Federated Church, Rev. Frosty Krummel, look for streaming and video on their [Facebook](#)
- Peoria-United Presbyterian Church, Rev. Debra Avery, 10 a.m.
  - their [Facebook](#) page
  - YouTube from any smartphone, computer, or tablet: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAf9XQ9MUHNGaXdQQRSk6yQ>
- Peoria-Westminster Presbyterian - Peoria Rev. Denise Clark-Jones, 10 am, streaming online <https://westminsterpeoria.org/>
- Petersburg-Central Presbyterian Church, Commissioned Pastor Stephanie McCullough, worship posted on website <https://www.central-pres.org/worship>
- Reynolds-Hamlet Perryton is posting pre-recorded services since Easter weekend. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJY95CjdOLr4Vs1bzK0SX3g>
- Rio-Rio Presbyterian Church, Rio (and Sunbeam Presbyterian Church of Aledo), Rev. Maura McGrath-Nagle, 9:00 am by [Facebook](#) live.
- Rock Island-Gloria Dei Presbyterian Church, Rev. Drew Nagle, 10:30 am, by [Facebook](#) live, and posted afterwards.
- Rock Island-Good Shepherd, Rev. James Benson, sermons posted on website on Sundays, [www.goodshepherdpres.org](http://www.goodshepherdpres.org)
- Rock Island-South Park Presbyterian Church, Rev. Blake Severson, worship shared by YouTube, [https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCWRIYrkt6ZkaejzWVAj\\_yDQ](https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCWRIYrkt6ZkaejzWVAj_yDQ)
- Springfield-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Susan Phillips, [www.LincolnsChurch.org](http://www.LincolnsChurch.org) has links for Sunday 10:30 live worship and Wednesday 5:30 service.
- Springfield-Hope Presbyterian Church, Rev. Chuck Goodman, 9:30 am by [Facebook](#) live
- Springfield-Korean United Presbyterian Church of Springfield Rev. Jaechul Kim, streaming by YouTube live (Korean language) [Facebook](#) page.
- Springfield-Third-Presbyterian Church, worship recorded and posted later on Sunday to [Facebook](#).
- Springfield-Westminster Presbyterian Church, Rev. Blythe Kieffer, Rev. Trajan McGill, Rev. Christian Choi, 10 am worship streamed online, [www.wpcspi.org](http://www.wpcspi.org)

- Woodhull-United Church, Rev. Cheyanna Losey, recorded YouTube videos of their services posted on [Facebook](#) page.

FRIENDLY REMINDER TO NOT FORGET TO MAKE SPACE FOR THE SPIRITUAL PRACTICE OF GIVING OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS!

## 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?



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