

We Remain the Church United in Worship and Ministry

By the Reverend Bob Dahlgren, Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, West Plains, Missouri

Eight weeks ago, before Covid-19, our church had a website (rarely visited), a Facebook page (minimally used), and email addresses and cell phone numbers for most of our households. Quickly we've had to learn a great deal more about Facebook and email groups, not to mention adding Zoom and YouTube to the mix.

On Saturday afternoons, an abbreviated worship service is recorded, compressed and uploaded to YouTube along with a .pdf of our worship bulletin. This includes a prelude and postlude of music in public domain and a cover page. The link is emailed to members and friends on Sunday morning.

We also record a short devotion, posted on Facebook and YouTube, on Wednesday afternoons. We did a well-attended worship service live on Zoom on Maundy Thursday which included numerous readers, music, and communion. We also plan a Zoom communion service on Mother's Day.

For those who do not have internet, the sermon is sent in written form. Our deacons continue to be in contact with church family. Our session, deacons and committees meet by Zoom.

We are looking at returning to our sanctuary the first Sunday in June. Session will meet later in May to discuss social distancing and other safety measures before we resume.

Our session realizes that our ministry needs to use social media in some way beyond Covid-19. Our members and friends have greatly appreciated this ministry. But if we are to continue, it will require more equipment and greater assistance because it is extremely time consuming. I am grateful for the time and assistance I have received from my wife, Celeste, and church office administrator Ruth Hones for the many hours they have contributed as we have weathered staying at home.

Although we may not be meeting in our sanctuary, we remain the Church united in worship and ministry.