This Sunday has been a long time coming! For over a year the present pandemic has kept us from worshipping together in the Chapel or Fellowship Hall or the Sanctuary. But at long last - when our covid-fatigue has just about gotten the best of us - our commitment to keeping one another safe, and our being careful and patient, and the amazing science that has given us multiple vaccine options, is making it possible for some of us to come together in worship again.

Will this in-person worship of God be everything we want it to be? Certainly not. Our numbers will be limited. Our movement within the sanctuary will be restricted and pre-scripted. There is only one worship option instead of three. The rest of the building remains closed for the present. And yet, despite all these limitations, God will still be glorified by our praises and prayers, our singing and sharing; and our attention will be focused on the Word - whom we know and name as Jesus!

While we are a long way from what we considered a normal Sunday at church on March 1, 2020, this Sunday, April 18, 2021, is the first step, a new beginning toward the future into which God is calling us. Whether we are in the sanctuary or watching the service live, or catching a recording after the fact when we have time, I encourage us all to listen for and pay particular attention to the Holy Spirit this Sunday. Where and how is God's Spirit guiding us in this time? With a sense of growing hope, how do we stay committed to and responsible for one another in the First Presbyterian Community? How are we being called to help all the people of the world have access to the vaccine resources we enjoy?

While limited in-person worship is indeed exciting, we also know that the pandemic is far from over and that we must still exercise great caution. To this end, the Church Reopening Task Force is set to meet at the end of April and review the experience of two in-person Sundays, and look at the present state of covid numbers, and give us guidance on next steps for us as a congregation.

As we continue to pray for each other, and for all who are afflicted by this horrible disease, let us also pray for the wisdom and faithfulness of our church leaders as they continue to guide us forward.

Bill Smutz
May 23, Pentecost Sunday, we will receive one of four special offerings of the PC(USA), the Pentecost Offering. A gift to the Pentecost Offering helps the church encourage, develop, and support its young people, and also address the needs of at-risk children. 40% of the Pentecost offering can be retained by individual congregations wanting to make an impact in the lives of young people within their own community. The remaining 60% is used to support children-at-risk, youth, and young adults through ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Gifts can be made to the church, designated to: Pentecost Offering. Please give as generously as you are able. Thank you.
Work Camp Fundraising Opportunity!

First a Thank You! Our *Mile Buy Mile* fundraiser last month raised more than $10,000 toward our van rental costs for our mission trip this summer! Thank you!

Now for another opportunity to support our Work Camp trip to Colorado Springs this summer - Savers FUNDrive! We are collecting clothing, shoes, textiles and jewelry from now until June 6th. We will then take everything that is donated to our local Savers Thrift Shop and they will donate 50 cents per pound for our trip! See below for more info.

Questions can be directed at Rob Monroe - rmonroe@kirkwoodpres.org.

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**CLEAN OUT YOUR CLOSETS and DONATE TO WORK CAMP?**

Yes! It’s really that easy - and no we are not making students wear your old clothes!

We are partnering with Savers to do a FUNDrive - we will be collecting the items listed on the list below and will be delivering them to Savers on June 8th. In exchange for our collection and delivery they will be giving us 50 cents per pound - which can add up really quickly! ALL funds raised will go to Work Camp 2021.

**What we accept**

All items must be in good, clean, and sellable condition.

- **Clothing** Men’s, women’s and children’s
- **Shoes** Men’s, women’s and children’s
- **Textiles** Towels, sheets, blankets, pillows, curtains, tablecloths
- **Accessories** Hats, mittens, scarves, ties, socks, purses, wallets, backpacks, bags

**We will be collecting through Sunday, June 6 so that we can deliver the next week. Bags can be left on the porch by the doors on the Jefferson side of the building. We will have a bigger drop-off event one weekend later in the process.**

Thank you for your help!

Contact Rob Monroe with any questions - rmonroe@kirkwoodpres.org
The Deacons have been involved in a variety of projects recently and want to thank you for the various ways you have been involved in making several of them a great success.

We want to thank you for your help in the children’s clothing drive. Three car loads of clothing were taken to the Sunshine Ministries operations this past week thanks to members of the congregation, the Preschool and neighbors of the Deacons, all contributing to the drive. The staff at the facility were thrilled with the response and gave a tour of the clothing boutique and small grocery store where mothers in the program are able to choose clothing, toys and food for their families. There are paid positions and volunteer positions open and if you want to see more information about their program go to their website at www.sunshineministries.org.

The Deacons also oversee the Live Streaming of our worship services and would love to have a few more members for their team. If you are interested in learning about this ministry please contact Frank Darr at frankdarr@gmail.com.

Easter cards were sent to those homebound or those undergoing treatment or recovering from illness earlier this month. Members will continue to share greetings and holiday wishes on a regular basis throughout the year to about fifty people in the congregation in addition to the birthday cards sent to the homebound.

Thank you for your support of the One Great Hour of Sharing taken during the Easter season. See more information about the next denominational special offering taken at Pentecost on page 2 in this email update.

Last but not least, responding to a request from one of the School District social workers we purchased reusable water bottles for young children in the schools as the water fountains are turned off during the pandemic.

Again, thank you for your support of the Deacons and the Deacons Fund which allows us to respond to needs of those in our St. Louis Community.

**KirkCare** continues to receive many donations from our church and others in the area. An updated list of desired items, both food, personal and home care items is listed below. In addition, the suggested foods for **KirkCare’s Meal-A-Month** is:

**APRIL:**
- Canned Ham, Scalloped Potatoes
- Canned Mixed Vegetable,
- Canned Fruit Cocktail

**MAY:**
- Treet or Spam, Flavored Noodles
- Canned peas, Canned fruit, Soap
  *Optional: cereal, toothbrushes*

**KIRK CARE PREFERRED ITEMS-NON-PERISHABLE UNEXPIRED FOODS**
- **MEATS** (Spam/Vienna Sausages)
- **STEW**
- **CHICKEN & DUMPLINGS/CHICKEN ALA KING**
- **CHILI**
- **CANNED FRUITS**
- **APPLE SAUCE**
- **PUDDING & FRUIT CUPS** (Non-refrigerated)
- **PEANUT BUTTER**
- **JELLY/JAM**
- **PASTA/NOODLES**
- **PASTA SAUCES** (Canned)

Continued on next page…
The Grief Support Group is meeting on the 4th Monday of each month from 3:30pm-5:00p.m. The next meeting is Monday, April 26, in Fellowship Hall. For more information, contact Ellen Hitschler at ln4cats@yahoo.com or Mary Ann Shaw at mashaw5@sbcglobal.net.
CHRISTIAN CONCERNS  
SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 9:30AM  
Email Ann Miller to be added to the Zoom list at ann.willie@hotmail.com

We welcome two professors from Webster University to our Sunday morning zoom series.

4/18 - Following the theme of American history, Dr. Theodore D.R. Green, Ph.D., Professor of Teacher Education at Webster University, will speak about "George Washington: The Man and the Myth".

4/25 - Dr. Gwyneth Williams will speak on Religion and Current Constitutional Debates.

In May: On the first four Sundays in May we welcome Steve Danzer, son of Jinny and Dean Danzer, Professor of Anesthesiology at the University of Cincinnati and director of the Neurological Center at the Children’s Hospital in Cincinnati will speak on a series of issues such as Religion and Science, evolution, DNA and scientific thinking.

BOOK GROUPS

Tuesday, Book Group, 10:00am on Zoom
Continuing our focus on the issue of slavery in our nation, the Tuesday morning book group will begin a discussion of the book “Destiny of the Republic” by Candice Millard. We will meet beginning at 10am on April 20th via Zoom for about four weeks. At our first meeting we will discuss part one. To be added to the zoom list please contact Karen Blanchard at kblanchard@kirkwoodpres.org.

Fourth Wednesday Book Group, 1:30pm on Zoom

April 28th: NOMADLAND, by Jessica Bruder. A book about the ways in which people deal with poverty in our country with courage and wisdom as they move from one part of the country to another looking for work.

May 19th: WHERE THE FOREST MEETS THE STARS, by Glendy Vanderah, a book about the mysterious arrival of a young girl and the secrets she helps to unravel that helps two adults reclaim their lives along with hers.

If you would like to be on the invite list, please let Karen know at kblanchard@kirkwoodpres.org.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GIFTS TO THE ’14 FOR 14’ CAMPAIGN
Thank you to all who have contributed to the Campaign for David Holyan’s portrait. Preliminary work has been done by the artist, Lisa Ober. We look forward to its completion and to see it hanging in the Lounge along with the previous Heads of Staff. Thank you again for your generosity.

Sharon Croissant
**Alleviating Hunger**

* Breakfast Casseroles for St. Patrick’s Center: St. Patrick’s Center provides opportunities for self-sufficiency and dignity to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Individuals and families build permanent, positive change in their lives through safe and affordable housing, sound mental and physical health, and employment and financial stability. Please join us by preparing a delicious breakfast casserole for St. Patrick’s Center. Check out our web site for the recipe. For more information, please contact Julie Nesvig at j.nesvig83@gmail.com.

* Bridge Bread: Bridge Bread Bakery is a non-profit social enterprise in St. Louis that provides supportive employment to people without safe and stable housing. Through meaningful work they become valued, contributing members of our community. Bridge Bread bakers create delicious breakfast rolls, breads, brownies, and other bakery items. While we are not selling Bridge Bread in the gathering space at this time, we still ask for your support of this organization. Please visit their retail store at 2639 Cherokee Street, or consider making a financial donation. For more information, visit www.bridgebread.org/. Thank you.

* First Pres Vegetable Garden: Calling all gardeners! We need your help in planting our vegetable garden this spring. Our garden is located on the church grounds. This summer it will be filled with yummy vegetables, which we donate to local food banks. If you are interested in getting your hands dirty, while helping others, please contact Julie Nesvig, at j.nesvig83@gmail.com.

**Eradicating Systemic Poverty**

* Thank you to those who brought School Supplies and Healthy Snacks for the Project for Kirkwood Students: Thanks to all of you for your generous donations. We collected dozens of school supplies and lots of healthy snacks for Kirkwood students. We will be back in the fall to ask for more donations, so stay tuned. Thanks again, everyone.

* St. Joseph’s Housing Initiative (SJHI) knows that people need safe, peaceful home environments to thrive, and owning one’s home is a major step forward in the path of financial independence. On May 1st, at 9 AM, join community neighbors and SJHI volunteers for a morning of SPRING CLEANING! Our plan is to sweep and to clean two south St. Louis alleys. Our job is to pick up trash from sidewalks & street, rake up & dispose of winter yard waste, collect and prepare bulk trash for pickup. SJHI will obtain cleaning supplies (brooms, rakes, shovels, bags, etc.) from Brightside (or bring your own). To join the First Pres team, please contact Sharon Croissant, at scrois822@gmail.com. We will have a good opportunity to learn more about this local mission.

* Room at the Inn (RATI) provides immediate, temporary shelter to homeless women and families in the St. Louis region. In addition, RATI works with them to create an individualized plan back to self-sufficiency, including referrals to other human services agencies. Then RATI mentors them to improve their chances for success. Due to the pandemic, RATI is changing their mission model, from housing needy families in local churches (First Pres was a long-time host for these families) and will now be expanding their existing facilities. At this time of transition, RATI is looking for the following volunteers:

1) **Reading Buddies for the afternoon to read to preschool children:** Do you love sharing a good children's book with a preschooler? RATI is promoting early literacy by inviting volunteers to share their time reading to preschoolers. Books and after reading activities are provided. Thursday afternoon from 1:30-3pm or from 3-4:30pm is available for readers. To learn more, please contact Tim Morrison at timothy.lee.morrison@gmail.com, or go to roomstl.org. Thank you.

2) **Drivers for Head Start Transportation during the week:** Looking for a great opportunity to serve? Are you available Thursdays and Fridays at 8:15am-9:15am and/or 12:30pm-1:30pm to help transport children and parents to Head Start? Drivers will pick up parents and children at the shelter and transport them to Head Start in our RATI van, returning the parents to the shelter. They will then pick up parents from the shelter to get their children and return to the shelter. Requirement: Driver's License.
THE NEXT TWO WEEKS

Sunday, April 18
9:30am  Christian Concerns Class - Zoom
11:00am  Worship Service
1:30pm  Choir Singing Pods - Sanctuary
7:00pm  Sr. High Fellowship

Monday, April 19
11:30pm  Staff Meeting - 030

Tuesday, April 20
8:00am  Preschool
10:00am  Book Group - Zoom
6:30pm  New member Committee - Zoom
7:30pm  Session Meeting - Zoom

Wednesday, April 21
8:00am  Preschool
7:00pm  Bell Choir Rehearsal - Choir Room

Thursday, April 22
8:00am  Preschool
10:00am  Prayer Time - Sanctuary (sign-up required)
7:00pm  Section Leaders rehearsal - Sanctuary

Friday, April 23
8:00am  Preschool

Saturday, April 24
10:00am  Prayer Time - Sanctuary (sign-up required)
11:00am  Men’s Bible Study - Zoom

Sunday, April 25
9:30am  Christian Concerns Class - Zoom
11:00am  Worship Service - Live Streamed
7:00pm  Sr. High Fellowship

Monday, April 26
8:00am  Preschool
11:30am  Staff Meeting - 030
3:00pm  Grief Support Group - Fellowship Hall
7:00pm  Con Spirito Committee - 029

Tuesday, April 27
10:00am  Book Group - Zoom

Wednesday, April 28
8:00am  Preschool
12:00pm  Chamber Music Society Reh. - Sanctuary
1:30pm  Book Group - Zoom
7:00pm  Bell Choir Rehearsal - Choir Room

Thursday, April 29
10:00am  Prayer Time - Sanctuary (sign-up required)
1:00pm  Chamber Music Society Reh. - Sanctuary
7:00pm  Section Leaders Rehearsal - Choir Room

Friday, April 30
8:00am  Preschool

Saturday, May 1
10:00am  Prayer Time - Sanctuary (sign-up required)
11:00am  Men’s Bible Study - Zoom

SEVEN WAYS TO CELEBRATE EARTH DAY!

1) Plant a tree
2) Plan a day to do litter pick-up
3) Reduce your plastic use
4) Hike or bike to a local fishing spot or park
5) Create indoor garden planters from recycled tin cans
6) Host a clothing or fishing gear swap
7) Teach your kids about conservation