

Mitchells Presbyterian Church Monthly Newsletter

April 2021

Pastor's Corner

Grace and Peace to everyone!

“And you will have confidence, because there is hope; you will be protected and take your rest in safety” – Job 11:18

As I sit down to write these words during Holy Week, I take comfort in those words from Job and I find myself reflecting on hope, one of the trifactas of our Christian journey (faith, hope, and love). I want that hope that gives courage and confidence, no matter what is happening in my life. And while I believe it, some days its feels hard to hold onto. I get anxious and wonder if the hope I try and hold onto will ever come to pass. Paul must have heard me because he had something to say about that too. In Romans 8:24-25 he says, *“For in hope we were saved. Now, hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.”*

As our worlds have been turned upside down this past year, we all have had to wait with patience as we hoped for things to get better; that a vaccine would come; that the virus would be stopped; that no more of our family or loved ones would become sick or die. It's been a trying time and unfortunately, it's not over. But just like the bulbs and blossoms that are starting to burst out as Spring as arrived, we are emerging with renewed hope as we all get vaccinated and begin to gather again safely with our friends and family.

As we enter this Easter Season (the next 7 Sundays) may our hope in the future be fueled by resurrection hope and may that be the fuel that inspires us to love and to continue to work, even in those times that we can't see it, for the breaking in of God's reign.

Here is a poem on **Hope** that I found written by Beth Briggs:

We hope for your presence, Lord of life,
For everywhere there is storm and strife;
We long for your voice to say, “Be still, “
 Bending the elements to your will.
We hope for that day of near release,
When earth will be filled with joy and peace;
When never again shall there be tears,
 But only happiness through the years;
When the lame will walk, and blind eyes view
 The healed rejoicing and praising You.

We hope for God's glory through the night
To dispel earth's shadows and bring the light.
And in the morning, we hope and pray
For strength to work for another day.
We hope soon your words to hear, "Well done,"
And know the victory at last is won.

Easter Blessings to all – Pastor Mike

Upcoming Dates to Remember:

Maundy Thursday – April 1st. Video posted on YouTube that evening

Good Friday service – April 1st. Video to be posted on YouTube

Easter Service & Congregational Meeting – April 4th at 11:00am in the MPC Parking Lot. Bring flowers for the cross!

In-Person Worship Services to Resume April 11th

Because a large number in the congregation wish to resume in-person worship, Session has approved a plan to do just that beginning Sunday, April 11th. There are others who, for various personal reasons, feel it is too early to return to church. Those persons can rest assured that the in-person services will be recorded and uploaded to YouTube as we do now. The only difference being that viewing will be available later on Sundays.

You are strongly urged to remain at home if you feel even slightly ill.

Session's decision was based on attendees following guidelines established by the Safety and Security Committee (SSC). The SSC formulated protocols last July, but they were never implemented. The new guidelines, shown below, reflect the current body of knowledge we now have about Covid.

Please read and understand the following:

- Services will be held in the Sanctuary. Because attendees will be spaced farther apart than usual, there may not be sufficient seating. Any overflow will be directed to the Fellowship Hall whose speaker system has been upgraded so that attendees can clearly hear both the pastor and the music from the Sanctuary.
- Only two doors will be used:
 - The front door of the Sanctuary
 - The main Fellowship Hall entrance door by the Pastor's Office.
- Everyone is requested to observe social distancing.
- It is requested that attendees socialize outside and not gather in the Fellowship Hall for socializing.
- Except for the pastor and organist, everyone is encouraged to wear a mask. Attendees will be asked to provide their own masks, but some will be on hand for those who do not have one.
- Before services, the SSC will place a hymnal on each pew location where a person may sit. Ushers will ask attendees to choose a seat accordingly. A family unit of more than 2 may fill in between two hymnals.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided at the entrances.
- Bulletins will be available at the entrances.
- Instead of passing collection plates, a collection plate, including envelopes, will be placed in the Narthex. If the Fellowship Hall is needed for overflow, another collection plate will be made available there.
- If used, microphones should remain in their mic stands.
- The choir will be seated in its normal location and lead in the singing of hymns.
- An acolyte may participate in the service.

The SSC will be reviewing these protocols regularly so that restrictions can be relaxed in a timely manner when appropriate.

Session News

Summary of Actions at March 2021 Session Meeting

- Session approved the reopening of in-person Worship Services to begin on Sunday, April 11, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. Members will be asked to follow the protocols that will be developed by the Safety and Security Committee. There will be no Sunday School or Coffee Time until a decision by Session is made.
- Approved the request by the Presbyterian Women to meet in the Fellowship Hall beginning in April.
Next Session meeting will be in-person on Sunday, April 11, 2021 in the Fellowship Hall following the Worship Service.

Presbyterian Women

After a full year of not meeting due to Covid, the Mitchells Presbyterian Women will meet April 13 at 6:30 p.m. in the church Fellowship Hall. There will be a devotional and then Kim Hicks will lead us in Chapter 11, "Trusting God with the If Onlys" in our Woman's Guide, *Calm My Anxious Heart*. (Finally!!!). We will have a very brief business meeting. Bring your own drink and there will be no refreshments served for your safety. We will social distance, and masks are recommended.

Asking God's blessings for each of you,

~Debbie Long-Smith, Moderator

Men of the Church

The Men of the Church will NOT meet in April (Maundy Thursday). See you in May!

Safety and Security Committee (SSC)

Nothing new to report.

Church Events/Information

Note from Susan Wahleben

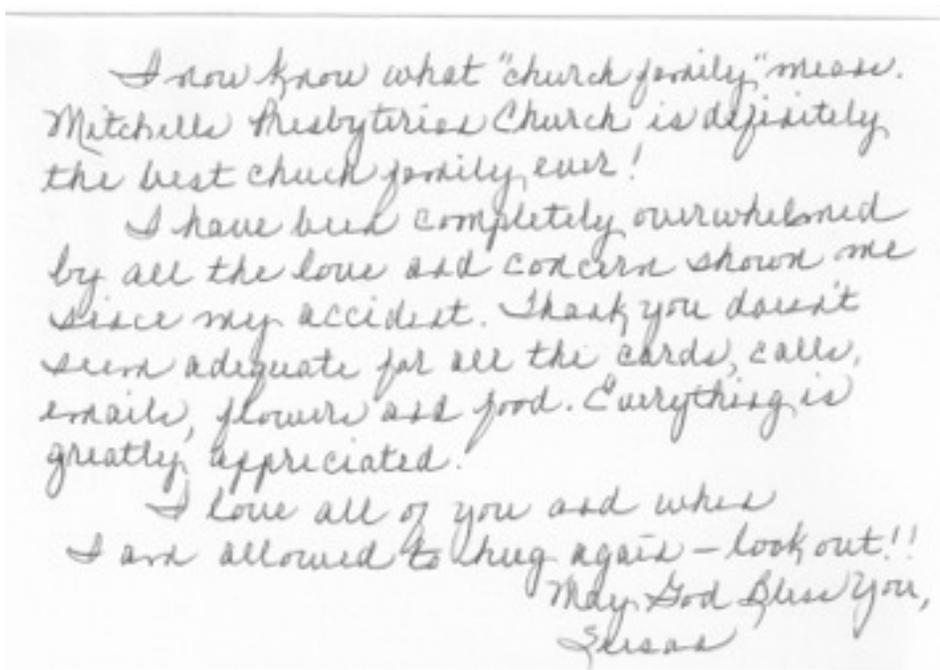
I now know what "church family" means. Mitchells Presbyterian Church is definitely the best church family ever!

I have been completely overwhelmed by all the love and concern shown me since my accident. Thank you doesn't seem adequate for all the cards, calls, emails, flowers and food. Everything is greatly appreciated.

I love all of you and when I am allowed to hug again- look out!!

May God Bless You,

Susan



Address change for Dot Faulconer

Effective March 15, 2021, Dot is a resident of assisted living at The Culpeper. Visitors are allowed if they wear masks and pass a temperature check at the main entrance.

Dot Faulconer
Main St. Room T11
12425 Village Loop
Culpeper, VA 22701

Worship Committee

In response to requests, Mitchells has decided to have a parking lot service on Easter Sunday at 11:00am. Bring flowers for the cross for the Easter service and remember to wear masks and remain socially distant.

Barbara Waters, Chairman – Worship Committee

Information for The People of Mitchells Church

The Annual Congregational Meeting that was scheduled to follow the Palm Sunday service will be postponed until after the April 4, Easter Sunday Worship Service. Members of the congregation are asked to have names ready to nominate for the 2021 Nominating Committee. Three members from the congregation will be elected.

For Easter Sunday's parking lot Worship Service, April 4, beginning at 11:00 a.m., congregants are reminded to follow the directions of the members of the Safety and Security Committee for parking instructions. Congregants should wear a mask and follow social distancing protocols when they are out of their cars and interacting with others.

There will be a celebration of the Lord's Supper during the service. Attendees are asked to bring their own elements (bread, crackers, juice, etc.) and eat and drink them as instructed by Pastor Mike.

Session has voted to return to in-person Worship Services beginning Sunday, April 11, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. Please check your newsletter and emails for the adopted safety protocols. There will be no Sunday School or after Worship coffee time. Session will make decisions regarding when they will resume as circumstances allow.

The Session, Pastor Mike, and the Safety and Security Committee thank you for your understanding of their actions during these trying times. These decisions have been made with the utmost consideration for the safety of all of God's people who call Mitchells Presbyterian Church home. They also look forward to seeing you in live and in-person on April 11.

God Bless You and God Bless Mitchells Church.

Donations to MPC

Any donations to the church can be mailed to:

Mitchells Presbyterian Church
P. O. Box 98
Mitchells, VA 22729

All mail is being picked up twice a week and deposits are being made by Ron Evans, the church treasurer.

Mitchells Presbyterian Email Prayer Chain

The church has developed an online prayer chain. If you wish to be a part of this prayer chain, please send an email to **prayersofmitchells@gmail.com** and your name will be added.

This prayer chain is being overseen by Patti Weaver. If you have prayer requests, you may email Patti at the above email address or call her at 540-547-9319.

Please note that this prayer chain is not to be confused with the Presbyterian Women's email chain. While the PW's email chain does include prayers, its main purpose is to keep the PW informed as to what is going on within their group.

The Prayer of Mitchells prayer chain is for prayers and will reach out to anyone wishing to be included.