

NPPC UPDATES

Life changes by the minute. Yesterday, Knox County issued a “safer at home” order, shutting down all but essential functions. No question but that Blount County will soon follow suit.

Even before that happened, we on the church staff had decided that the wisest move was for all of us to begin working from home. Today (Tuesday 3/24) will be a day of packing up, transferring essential files, and finalizing communication plans. By Wednesday morning, we will all be connecting from our home offices or kitchen tables.

A few notes:

- We will still be available! Email or call us as you need. The staff contact list is on page 3 of this issue. Call the main church number, type in the extension of the staff member you need to reach, and leave a voicemail. Those voicemails are then sent to us via email and we will call you back. We want to respond quickly and appropriately to your questions or concerns.

But it's also important that we not burn out our staff members in a crisis. “Working from home” doesn't mean 24/7 availability. Office hours will remain 7-6, Monday-Thursday. Just like your doctor's office, we'll return calls by the end of the day, or the next business day (depending on when you call). Obviously, if there's a crisis, we'll be all hands on deck. But in this stressful time, please grant our staff members the grace—and the space—to step away and recharge.

- If you have a pastoral emergency, call the main church number (865/983-0182). You will be given an option to press 1 and leave a message for the pastors.

Those messages are forwarded immediately, and a pastor will be in touch with you. (Note: “My son has been in a terrible accident” is a pastoral emergency. “I need Suzy Schmodmatz's phone number” is not. I know you know that, but maybe it's worth a reminder.)

- Financially, this is a very strange time for us. Even while we are away from the building, the session has committed to paying all our employees their normal weekly income. That is absolutely the right thing to do, and I know you agree. No workers or their families should suffer because of a pandemic over which they have no control. But the reality is that when we're not physically gathering for worship on Sundays, it's difficult to estimate our weekly giving. Contributions drop; patterns are disrupted. Would you consider one of these options?
 - Set up your giving through an automatic draft from your bank account (that's what I do, and it's wonderful. I never have to think about it!) Visit the “Give” page on the church website for details.
 - Give weekly via an online donation: on our website, click on “Give” or “Donate.” It's just like buying something from Amazon or anything else you pay for online. You will be asked for a few details, and it's an easy way to make a donation via your credit card.
 - Do you want to go old school and mail a check? We're happy to receive that. We have systems in place to collect and respond to mail. Just please remember that in this season, processing time may be extended by a week or two.

- The Welcome Table will continue as a to-go ministry as long as we are able to do so. The “safer at home” order is exactly the right thing to do, but food service is deemed essential. So until we are told otherwise, the Welcome Table intends to continue providing to-go meals for those who need them.
- 90@9 will move to Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, on Facebook Live at 9a.
- The session met via videoconference last night, and agreed that we continue to cancel all in-person gatherings (including worship) until further notice. But we also agreed that whatever the first Sunday is that we're all back in the sanctuary, it'll be “Easter Sunday” for us – even if that is May or June or whenever.
- Since we'll all be working from home, we'll be recording our own segments of worship services independently. Gregg will be stitching all of those together into a video which will be posted on our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/NewProvPres/>). So it won't be “Facebook Live” anymore, but we'll host what's called a “Facebook Watch Party” where everyone can still check in with one another. More information coming about that later in the week.
- I will continue to send updates about plans and opportunities for the congregation as they arise, but probably just once or twice a week at this point.
- Many of you have asked the best question of all: “How can I help?” Stan and Gloria are contacting our members who live alone or may not have Internet access to find out about their needs, be they groceries

or just conversation. If you'd like to volunteer to help out, email gloria@newprovidencepres.org. I especially encourage you to reach out to your own neighbors. Maybe even just write a note and leave it on a neighbor's door with your phone number. There can never be too much kindness in the world.

■ Finally, let me tell you what outstanding and committed staff and officers we have at New Providence. As the book of Esther says, they are exactly the right people "for such a time as this." I am honored to be able to serve alongside them.

Whew! That's a lot of information, but hang onto it and refer back as you need. Please stay in touch.

It is (always) a joy to be the church with you!

Emily Anderson

OFFERING GROCERY & ESSENTIAL ITEMS PICKUP/DELIVERY

In light of homebound church members, we would like to support you by assisting with grocery pickup/delivery. If you are in need of someone to pick up groceries and essential items or if you are in need of food, please contact Loudon Young (828-423-2565, loudon@newprovidencepres.com).

We can pick up your orders placed with Kroger, Food City, or Walmart through their websites. If you do not have internet access, please call Loudon and means will be made to take care of your needs.

Volunteers - we have several members who have expressed interest in helping out in this area. If you are interested in helping out in this area, please contact Loudon.

A MEMBER'S THOUGHTS ON GIVING

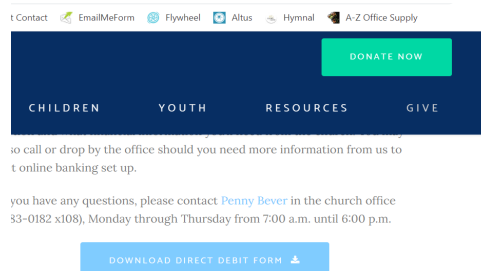
For years now, NPPC has offered automatic giving through electronic funds transfers (EFT) for the congregation to donate regularly and painlessly. I recently learned that I was one out of about 25 members that donate this way and was shocked at the low numbers as this is the easiest thing I've ever done. I choose EFT as it allows for easier budgeting and since these are recurring payments, I know exactly how much will be transferred to NPPC from my bank and when. Many of my bills such as my mortgage, car loan, and even student loan are handled this way since they are regularly scheduled amounts. I can honestly say that I have never, not once, had a problem with any of these transactions.

Why the call to sign up for automatic giving? We are in a strange time and anything we can do to reduce spreading disease is important. This may help our staff keep the church running smoothly without having to leave their house. This will allow our staff to be physically distanced without getting the mail, counting the checks, entering them into the systems, then depositing them every week.

Another way is to donate via the online donation link, which many of you have recently visited. Thank you! If you find the form cumbersome, or just too long to get through each week, consider automatic giving. So, how do you sign up for automatic giving? First, visit: <https://newprovidencepres.org/donate/> and under automatic giving, click the blue button to download the form. Once the form is complete, attach a voided check and mail to NPPC (see image below). This could be the last thing you need to mail to the church!

Peace and love to you all,

Meredith P. Goins



GREEN TEAM: EARTH DAY 2020

"We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there 'is' such a thing as being too late. This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action." - Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The "Fierce Urgency of Now" is the theme that was adopted by Creation Justice Ministries to frame the observance of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. In the months before COVID-19 came along, this seemed like a very prescient and compelling theme. It still is, I believe, but its meaning has been overshadowed by a different sort of "today." With meetings, gatherings and events cancelled, and much of my energy spent trying to keep anxiety at bay, I'm finding it hard to feel much of a sense of urgency, and certainly not a fierce one. So this isn't the piece I had intended to write, but 50 years of activism towards protection of our earth shouldn't go unrecognized.

Earth Day started as a result of a 1969 oil spill in Santa Barbara. Senator Gaylord Nelson (WI) responded to that crisis and the realization that no one was talking about protection of the environment by getting the ball rolling on a nationwide education and media blitz, scheduled for April 22 of the following year. Back then, industries were poisoning our water, soil and air, and our cars were fueled by leaded gas. On April 22, 1970, people all over the country, of all political, economic, social and faith persuasions, came together to say things had to change.

Much progress has been made, but in the face of climate change and other environmental threats, so much more is needed still. Saint Francis of Assisi said, "Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible." The health of our largest ecosystem, planet earth, starts with the health of its individual inhabitants. We on the Green Team send our prayers and best wishes for the health of New Providence members, friends, and extended community.

MEDITATIVE THOUGHTS

In the year 2000, Robert Putnam, a professor of public policy at Harvard, published his book *Bowling Alone*. Even if you've not read it, I expect many of you have heard about it. It deals with what he calls "the loss of social capital," the idea that the fabric of our connections with each other has frayed. Putnam's evidence shows that over the last half a century we have signed fewer petitions, we belong to fewer organizations, we know our neighbors less, we get together with friends less frequently, and we socialize with our families less often.

We're even bowling alone, he says. The title of the book came about when Putnam mentioned his research to an acquaintance who happened to own a bowling alley. The friend said that Putnam had touched on the core economic problem in the bowling industry. (You may not be aware of this, but bowling is big business in this country. More Americans bowl than vote.) But over the last few decades, participation in bowling leagues is down by about 60%. More people are bowling than ever before, but they are not bowling in leagues, and that's a problem for the industry because if you bowl in a league, you consume about four times more beer and pretzels than if you're bowling by yourself, or even with a small group of friends. And apparently the money in bowling is in the beer and pretzels, not in the balls and shoe rentals.

That was Putnam's thesis twenty years ago; today it's really being put to the test. Except now we can't even go bowling alone—instead we're watching TV alone, we're eating alone, we're surfing the Internet alone, we're even worshipping alone, in some sense.

And it's no fun at all, even for an off-the-charts introvert like me. We were made in the image of the Triune God, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer in holy relationship. Genesis tells us that God said, "It is not good for the adam to be alone. I will make a partner." Jesus says "whenever two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." We are hard-wired for relationship. It is written into our very souls.

In these challenging days, I find myself remembering the story of Martin Rinkart. Rinkart was born in the walled city of Eilenburg, Saxony, and eventually returned as minister to the village, where he served for thirty-two years. During the Thirty Years' War, a steady stream of refugees poured into the city, which was quickly surrounded. Famine and plague set in, and people began to perish. Pastors were conducting dozens of funerals daily. Finally, the pastors, too, succumbed, and Rinkart was the only one left, performing sometimes as many as 50 funerals a day, including the service for his own wife.

In the depths of the suffering that surrounded him, Rinkart wrote a hymn text with words familiar to many of us:

*Now thank we all our God,
With heart and hands and voices;
Who wondrous things has done,
In whom this world rejoices.*

In another verse, Rinkart speaks of a bounteous God staying near us through our anxiety: "Keep us all in grace, / And guide us when perplexed, / And free us from all harm, / In this world and the next."

May we all be filled with that resilient hope.



Emily Anderson

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Here are a few updates for our NPPC families & kiddos. Regular programming is suspended until further notice, so we're going virtual! Go to <https://newprovidencepres.org/childrens-ministry/> for updates to weekly activities and current Sunday Lessons. You can also join us on Facebook on the NPPC Children's Ministry page. Contact Fairlena (children@newprovidencepres.org) for more info.

DONATE NOW

Use this QR code or go to newprovidencepres.org/donate.



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LECTIONARY READINGS FOR APRIL

- 4/5: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Matthew 21:1-11; Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16; Philippians 2:5-11; Matthew 26:14-27:66
- 4/12 (Easter Day): Acts 10:34-43; Jeremiah 31:1-6; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Colossians 3:1-4; Acts 10:34-43; John 20:1-18; Matthew 28:1-10
- 4/12 (Easter Evening): Isaiah 25:6-9; Psalm 114:1-8; 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8; Luke 24:13-49
- 4/19: Acts 2:14a, 22-32; Psalm 16:1-11; I Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31
- 4/26: Acts 2:14a, 36-41; Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19; I Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35

The Reverend Doctor Emily J. Anderson PASTOR
 The Reverend Loudon A. Young ASSOCIATE PASTOR FOR
 EMERGING GENERATIONS AND MISSION
 The Reverend Gloria Mencer INTERIM ASSOCIATE PASTOR
 The Reverend Doctor Stan Rushing PARISH ASSOCIATE
 Rob Britt DIRECTOR OF MUSIC
 Peggy Rogers ORGANIST & DIRECTOR OF HANDBELLS
 Jordan & Maddie McCullough . . INTERIM FIRSTLIGHT COORDINATORS
 Cindy Sugg DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MUSIC
 Fairlena Googe INTERIM CHILDREN'S COORDINATOR
 Trish Badgett PARISH NURSE
 Amelia Geis-Scott WELCOME TABLE COORDINATOR
 Ray Bryant FACILITIES MANAGER
 Penny Bever BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR
 Gregg Randolph COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR



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WHAT'S INSIDE

A Member's Thoughts on Giving	2
Children's Ministry	3
Donate Now	2
From the Parish Nurse: 5 Minute Stress Relievers	4
Green Team: Earth Day 2020	3
Grocery Pickup/Delivery	2
Lectionary Readings for April	3
Meditative Thoughts	2
NPPC Updates	1
Staff Contact List	3
Stay Connected to NPPC	4
NPPC Updates	1

STAY CONNECTED TO NPPC



90@9 (via Facebook)
 Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays @ 9a

Worship Service (via Facebook)
 Sundays at 9a



Email Updates:
 Visit - newprovidencepres.org/resources
 Click - "Subscribe"
 Select - "All Church Correspondence"

FROM THE PARISH NURSE: 5 MINUTE STRESS RELIEVERS

- Deep breathe
- Pray, eat chocolate, repeat!
- Stretch your arms over your head
- Meditate
- Hug your children
- Wash your face
- Water your indoor plants
- Bend down and touch your toes
- Read Scripture
- Do jumping jacks
- Go outside and get fresh air
- Give yourself a foot massage
- Pet the dog or cat
- Brush your teeth
- Put your phone down
- Snuggle with your spouse
- Listen to music
- Sit alone in a quiet room
- Call a friend
- Give yourself a scalp massage
- Go for a walk
- Draw a picture
- Count to 10 slowly, then keep counting for the fun of it
- Sing (loudly)
- Eat a healthy snack
- Freshen up your make-up
- Sugar-scrub your hands
- Fix your hair or put it up
- Sit under a weighted blanket
- Smell the roses
- Squeeze a stress ball
- Color in a coloring book
- Change your clothes
- Make hot chocolate (with marshmallows)
- Dance
- Lie down and close your eyes
- Write out your thoughts in a journal

