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| May 19, 2020 |

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| **﻿The First Word****The Weekly E-Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church, Carlsbad, NM** |

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| **Please Note**The church office will be closed May 25th in observance of Memorial Day and the *First Word* will not be published on May 26th. The next edition will be published on June 2nd.**A Note from Pastor Jan** I am excited to share with all of you that **we will officially reopen** for Sunday worship services at **10:00 a.m. May 31st, Pentecost Sunday**—the birthday of the Church! We thought that would be an appropriate day to begin again. Don’t forget to wear some form of fire-related colors: orange, red, yellow, white, and blue. I’ve missed seeing you in person and worshiping with you, as have our Session members!         The Session of First Presbyterian Church met last night in Fiesta Hall—social distancing enforced—to discuss a plan for how we can reopen safely and to ensure our members, especially those who are older, will be able to attend worship without undue fear and concerns. I will share our decisions, starting from when people enter through the doors on Halagueno Street.         The first thing I want to share is: if you don’t feel comfortable now, please don’t put pressure upon yourself to return to worship in the sanctuary. Wait until you’re comfortable. If you are not feeling well, please do not attend the worship service so others in the sanctuary will not become sick—and also that you, yourself, will not put yourself at risk to possible weaken your immune system with the possible germs of others. We are working to offer our Sunday worship service online through our FB page and/or YouTube so more people may participate with us when they cannot be present.         Our insurance agent was notified prior to this meeting to find out what recommendations they had for churches. There were four items, two of which we embraced wholeheartedly and two that we decided to “disobey” and made modifications that would not endanger anyone; we felt these two portions— no singing and no communion—were not acceptable to us. I’ll share more about these later on.         The doors facing Halagueno Street will already be open, so no one will need to touch the door handle or push pad. The wearing of masks and/gloves are a personal choice/optional. Upon entering there will be a table in the narthex with a couple bottles of hand sanitizer on it along with our bulletins for visitors/members to pick up themselves. There will be a greeter there to assist in anyway possible. Other bottles of hand sanitizer are found on the window sill next to the doors leading to the Columbarium, Fiesta Hall, and our bathrooms.         We will seat people in the sanctuary spaced several feet apart in the pews and also every other pew bench. We will mark with blue painter’s tape the pews where people may be seated. The greeter will be there to assist people to where they may sit.         Our prayer cards will be placed on the table in the narthex, alongside the hand sanitizers bottles and bulletins. We will not utilize our fellowship pads due to the extra cleaning involved to keep them sterilized.         One concern for churches all across America involves singing. The Session discussed this important issue and decided that with the vast size of our sanctuary plus the balcony area, coupled with our seating arrangement shared above, the congregation could still participate in singing of hymns This group singing, of course, falls under personal choice, so if one doesn’t feel comfortable singing, please do not participate until such a time when one feels safe to rejoin the congregational singing.         Our choir and bell choir will start to practice again and will continue to lead us in our Sunday worship as they are assigned by Susie Coy, our organist.         Due to social distancing, we will NOT be including the Passing of the Peace in our worship service. We will return to including it at a later date.         Beginning June 7th, we will celebrate the Lord’s Supper in this manner: we will have juice poured into our plastic cups in trays and the bread will be cut up and placed in plastic juice cups in another tray. Both trays will be placed on the communion table, much like we did when we participated in Intinction-style communion. I will use hand sanitizer just before I come forward to break the loaf of bread upon the table. I will invite everyone to come to the Lord’s Table like we did with Intinction, so people will come forward as the greeter/usher motions your row to enter the center aisle. When you approach the table, you will pick up a plastic cup of bread and then also a cup of juice. As you move to the right or left, depending upon which side you are seated, you will partake of the elements (bread and juice), and by the front pew along the outer aisle wall, there will be a small garbage can in which you can throw the two plastic cups away before you get back to your pew. IF YOU PREFER, FEEL FREE TO BRING YOUR OWN PIECE OF BREAD FROM HOME TO USE FOR COMMUNION. (The people preparing the communion elements will be wearing a mask and gloves.)         Offering plates will not be passed during the Offertory like we are used to doing in our services. For the time-being, we will place one offering plate on a table in that large open space (where the pew was removed) in the back of the sanctuary as well as another plate on a table up front near the double doors leading to Heritage Hall. During the Offertory you can walk up and place your tithe/offering in either plate OR wait until after the service to place your tithe/offering in either one of those offering plates.         We have decided to NOT have a fellowship hour in the parlor directly following the worship service due to the confined space in that room. Feel free to fellowship immediately following the service in the sanctuary as we are already the appropriate social distance apart from one another.         We will continue with our potluck dinners the third Sunday of every month, beginning with the month of June. See you on FB Live May 24th—Ascension Sunday—and then in person on Pentecost Sunday, May 31st.         Regarding Wednesday Night Bible Study during the Summer: this Wednesday, tomorrow night at 5:30 p.m., we will hold our last lesson on the Tabernacle. The study materials are uploaded to our FB Page. We will take the next two weeks off for Memorial Day celebrations, and we will meet ONLINE through FB Live on June 10, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. This way we can continue to study during the summer regardless of where you find yourselves: vacationing in your summer homes or visiting family members in other parts of New Mexico and/or out-of-state. This also means we wouldn’t need to drive in our summer heat and worry about making meals. We would return to a “normal” schedule and routine most likely in the fall. I will keep you updated.          |

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**Special Celebrations**May 19th Frank Westfall21st Diane Patterson24th Amber Kincheloe27th Becky Raines31st Phil Sharp |

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| **Weekly Scripture**A care too small to be turned into a prayer is too small to be turned into a burden."Seek the Lord and His strength, seek His face continually." I Chronicles 16:11 |

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| **Online Giving Option**We finally got approval for the online giving option through the Presbyterian Foundation. I'm in the process of trying the app out on my phone and then will send you an email with the details. When you download the app you will be able to set up individual or recurring payments to our General Fund or Special Fund. The app is called Giveplus for churches.  |

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| **Amusing Church Signs**“Six Feet Apart Today is Better Than Six Feet UnderTomorrow" |

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| **Upcoming Blood Drive****﻿**Our church is hosting a blood drive on June 5, 2020 from 11:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.You can click on the link below to register to give blood. The blood mobile will be in the church parking lot.[Sign Up for Blood Drive](http://www.bloodhero.com/index.cfm?group=op&step=2&opid=932033&opidh=57BC37100F36710B412887AABD05C7D2&idt=43970.3708565) |

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| **Prayer Walk**You are invited to join Pastor Jan and friends at Noon each Thursday for a time of prayer through our premises. We are still doing this but standing 6 ft. apart. |

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| **Prayer Concerns** Mollie & Rey Acuna, Owen Carleton, Pat Collins, Susie Coy, Muriel Gossage, JuJu Matthews, Scott & Shirley Maxwell, Helen Patterson, Robin Patillo, Bob Raines, Evan Winegarner**Homebound and Care facilities:**Rich Adamson, Dodie Hendley, Janie Patrick, Marianne Patrick, Helen Patterson **Military:** Mollie Navarrette Acuna, Rey Acuna, Cody Ogden-Stell **Members/Friends Serving Overseas:** Carol & Leith Fujii  |

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| First Presbyterian Church | PO Box 39, 309 West Shaw Street, Carlsbad, NM 88221 |

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