

KIRKWOOD KRONICLE

A Christian Community Growing Together, Knowing, Loving, and Serving Christ, August 2020
to make Him known to all.

A Letter From Our Incoming Pastor, Rev. Dr. Chris Shearer



KirkWood family,

Before I launch into our primary subject, first a word of thanks – I’m exceedingly grateful to your Session, PNC (Pastoral Nominating Committee), and other leaders for asking almost nothing of me before July 12th. This gave me the freedom to be fully present and finish well in Culpeper, and make a final investment in their future, like hosting a series of exit and debriefing small groups across the congregation.

My last newsletter article in Culpeper focused on how to integrate a new pastor well, based on a set of resources from The Lewis Center for Church Leadership at Wesley Theological Seminary. I wrote that piece as the outgoing interim pastor wanting to give them some guidance on welcoming a new installed minister for the first time in 30 years. Well, now I am that incoming installed minister, and your PNC thought it might be good for me to share those pointers with you too. I should add that I intend to spend our first few Sundays together, beginning on August 9th, working through a series entitled “A Good Start,” that will cover this same broad topic from a different angle.

Integrating A New Minister Well:

1. Similarity and Dissimilarity – In our first months together, it’s our similarity that will

matter most. Part of why God brought us together as pastor and church is our set of shared commonalities, so pay attention for the times when you sense “Oh, he gets us,” or “He’s like us,” or, “He values the same things we do.” I’m not a square peg; you’re not a round hole. →



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Worship: 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Sunday School: 11:00 a.m. via Zoom (contact church office for link)



But the opposite is also equally important - what makes me different from your previous pastors is also probably why God called me to KirkWood. This follows St. Paul's perspective that each pastoral leader is seasonal in the life of a congregation with a specific, distinct purpose to serve (1st Corinthians 3:5-9). While my similarity to you is vital on the front end of our relationship, it's my dissimilarity to you and your previous pastors that will bear the most fruit long term.

2. Managing Expectations – Hopes are rarely higher than on the front end of a pastoral relationship, and, just to be completely candid, I'm acutely aware that I won't live up to yours, and there's some measure of anxiety in that. Likewise, though you are a remarkable church that I'm blessed to join, you'll still be marked by the normal sprains, strains, and blind spots of congregational life, and I ought to calibrate my own aspirations accordingly. Christian author Donald Miller offers some wise counsel for us to follow: "When you stop expecting people to be perfect, you can like them for who they are."

3. The Benefit of the Doubt - Imagine it this way: as your incoming pastor, I'm the new in-law joining your well-established, deeply connected family. You understand all your quirks, routines, dos, and don'ts, and, alas, I don't; so you are experts on, or are at least largely accustomed to, your church's culture, and I'm not. We can also reverse this – you've not shared in my previous congregational and formative spiritual experiences that are chiefly responsible for shaping my pastoral perspective and priorities.

Thus, in such a situation all parties need to be committed to assuming the best, not the worst, about each other. In fact, in so doing we'll be acting in love, as St. Paul writes in 1st Corinthians 13:7, "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things." That is, love's intent is to look for, center on, and celebrate the best in others, and it knows that most rubs and hiccups are more about misunderstanding and miscommunication than ill will and malignant intent. If we run afoul of one another's unwritten rules or cross a boundary of which we're completely unaware – and inevitably we will - let's ask, not accuse, accommodate, not insist, and listen to the why behind the what. In short, in the first year of a pastor/church partnership, we as Christians, the people who swim every day like whales in the ocean of God's grace, as the Nigerian church so beautifully puts it, need to show that same abundant grace to each other.



4. A Listening Tour – Early on in my time at KWPC, I’ll be doing what’s called “a listening tour” of your church, in whatever form or fashion Covid-19 allows. I intend to invest a lot of time in conversations with the staff, Session, committees, and you, the congregation, asking way more questions than I give answers, so that I can see the church through your eyes. That is to say, I’ll be playing the role of a cultural anthropologist among you. As a specific example, I wasn’t here to experience your interim journey, all that you’ve gleaned from it, and how it energized you as a church. I need to hear those stories from you in order to embrace them as my own and to help you expand upon them going forward. While this approach is wise, it’s also practical. These dialogues are meant to build a familiarity and rapport between us, and in time trust, because until enough trust is built between us, we can’t really take any significant steps toward your future (this is the key insight of the book The Speed of Trust by Stephen Covey.) Last, this “listening tour” will take awhile, it can’t be accomplished fast...so if I don’t get around to meeting with you personally for a few months, that’s normal, not rude...meeting me for coffee in November may work even better than doing it in August.

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PLANNING AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

PLD

Hello KirkWood,

It is August and I hope this Kronicle edition finds you, your family, and loved ones healthy and faring well during these hot and humid summer days.

KirkWood continues to move forward. We now have our first in-person worship service since March under our belts. Whether you worship online and have seen folks at the church in the pews, wearing masks, and social distancing - or you are one of those actually sitting in a pew and experiencing KirkWood's in-person worship service, it is the "new normal" for now. What does that mean for KirkWood? In late-July we held our Vacation Bible School (VBS) for middle schoolers only, re-scoped and adjusted for the new normal. Ashley Wenner has been leading the KirkWood Youth Group (KYG) that has adapted to the new normal, both in-person and online, and outside on the church grounds and now within the KYG room. Small groups and Sunday School continue to meet on-line. Session and church committees press on with the business of the church via ZOOM. In-person, social-distanced efforts continue like food drives, meals for vets, mowing the church grounds, providing worship service music support, mailing notes and keeping in touch with those in need, monitoring the church budget, preparing the on-line services and bulletins, putting together the Kronicle, the list goes on and it is still getting done. God's hand is on us and His church as we adapt, move forward with a positive spirit, and try to anticipate what might be next. Like anything in the church, there have been a lot of behind the scenes efforts and considerations to safely re-open KirkWood for in-person worship services. Similarly, there have been months of effort by the Pastor Nominating Committee that will culminate with Pastor Chris Shearer and his family joining us in early-August. We anticipate Pastor Shearer to preach his first sermon August 9th. We look forward to meeting and sharing our time and faith with Chris and his family as the days turn to weeks, months, and years here at KirkWood. Lastly, remember: Whether participating from home or the in-person service, we are all one congregation and KirkWood church: A Christian community, growing together, knowing, loving, and serving Christ, to make Him known to all.

Nate Nickerson



AN UPDATE ON WORSHIP SERVICES

Worship

Slowly but surely, we have been adding components back into KirkWood’s worship. Back in March, when we paused in-person worship, we only posted the sermon audio. We added video of the sermon, then added links to music videos so everyone could have their own service at home. Finally, we moved to a stripped down service where we went from online taped, to online live, to in-person and online jointly. As we have done this, we have tried to balance the need to provide a meaningful opportunity for the members of KirkWood to worship with the need to provide an environment that is relatively safe. We have come up with new ways to do communion, offering, bulletins, and friendship pads that have practically no risk of spreading illness. We continue to come up with creative ways to further enhance worship and welcome new or different ideas. Soon we expect to hear the results of some specific studies on singing and playing instruments; there remains hope that evidence will emerge that will enable us to relax some restrictions.

If you are comfortable with the level of risk that exists with in-person worship, you are encouraged to come and join us. But if that risk is too great, please continue to worship at home. If you are watching online, please take a moment to subscribe to KirkWood’s Youtube channel so you can be notified whenever we begin a new video.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWZbIrlgwm9fERB3UANFEa/featured>

Lastly, we are grateful for all your prayers and patience as we have tried to follow God’s guidance in our current situation.





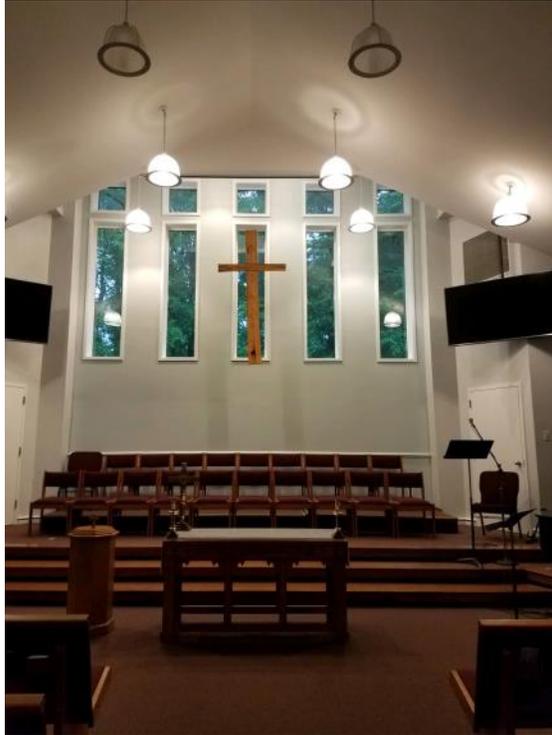
NARTHEX AND SANCTUARY UPDATE

Properties & Facilities

P&F and the Ad Hoc committee would like to thank all of the many, many people who helped update the church over the past few months. A tremendous number of hours went into the remodel, including demolition, building walls, painting, flooring, clean-up, building doors, shopping for materials and furniture, cooking meals, prayers, and moral support! I hope you agree that the church is looking refreshed and more welcoming. We look forward to updating the rest of the church in the future.

P&F would also like to thank the grass mowing teams who have been battling the heat to keep the church grounds looking great.

If you are interested in joining the P&F committee to help keep the church in good working order, please contact Kirk Reno or Scott Shoun. Hopefully the team will start meeting again this fall and when we do, we usually meet the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm in the kitchen. We can use all levels of talent.



← Sanctuary and Overflow Area



Narthex, Sitting Area, and Barn Door





HYMNSPIRATION

Worship

Do You See A Face or a Vase?

It seems that we can't help ourselves; no matter what the subject, we often find ourselves divided. Whether it is over sports teams, Coke vs. Pepsi, or the "Laurel vs. Yanni" controversy in 2018 (a short audio clip of a computer-generated voice which became very divisive), we take sides!

These days, with Covid-19 in our midst, it is easy to be caught up in controversy (how many people have actually gotten the virus, whether or not a mask protects you, the use of soap and water vs. hand sanitizer, or whether or not it is safe for our children to return to in-person school in the fall.)

The well-known hymn "The Church's One Foundation" arose out of a theological controversy in the 19th century. One bishop of South Africa challenged the historicity and authority of many of the Old Testament books. In reaction, another bishop wrote a stirring response of defense which inspired Samuel Stone (the author of our hymn) to write a series of 12 hymns based on the Apostle's Creed.

The hymn begins:

The church's one foundation
is Jesus Christ, her Lord;
she is his new creation
by water and the Word:
from heaven he came and sought her
to be his holy bride;
with his own blood he bought her,
and for her life he died.





Verse 2 illustrates our connection to one another through our faith in Christ.

Elect from ev'ry nation,
yet one o'er all the earth,
her charter of salvation,
one Lord, one faith, one birth;
one holy Name she blesses,
partakes one holy food,
and to one hope she presses,
with ev'ry grace endued.

Verse 3 could as easily be describing the year 2020! How many times we have wondered when (if ever) things will get back to “normal!”

Tho' with a scornful wonder,
men see her sore oppressed,
by schisms rent asunder,
by heresies distressed,
yet saints their watch are keeping,
their cry goes up, "How long?"
And soon the night of weeping
shall be the morn of song.

Don't you love the 2nd half of the verse, where our “night of weeping” is transformed into the “morn of song?”

As we are challenged to adapt to new restrictions in order to meet in-person for worship, we are reminded that the church is not just a building but rather a living and breathing community in which Christ is the center for each and every person. No divisions there!



MISSION

Mission

The KirkWood Mission Committee will not be holding a drive-thru food collection event in the month of August. Since we are opening up for worship services, we are asking that you drop your non-perishable food items in one of the bins in the narthex. If you are led to make a monetary donation for St. Luke's, please make your check payable to the York County Food Closet, and drop in the offering plate or send to the church. If by chance you have non-perishable food to donate, but you will not be visiting the church in person, please contact Jen Carter or Elisabeth Kelly, and we will make arrangements to pick it up from you. Thank you for your continued support.

Thank You, KirkWood! At our 4th Food Collection Event on Saturday July 11th we collected 94 bags of non-perishable food. A total of \$2,580.37 was donated, which came to \$530 for Virginia Peninsula Foodbank and \$2,050.37 for St. Luke's Food Pantry. Thanks again to our volunteers which included five scouts from Troop #54.

AUGUST BLOOD DRIVE

Congregational Care

The next KirkWood Blood Drive is scheduled for **Thursday, August 20th**, from 2:00-7:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall. We have gotten permission from session to hold the drive on the church grounds with proper distancing requirements. We are unable to provide a meal at this drive, but are hoping to resume this effort by the November drive. The Red Cross requires temperature checks prior to entering the drive area. Donors can schedule their appointments by going online to www.redcrossblood.org; sponsor code "KirkwoodPC". If you would like to save yourself some time on drive day, you can access the RAPIDPASS. RAPIDPASS lets you do the prescreen process from your mobile device or computer and can save you as much as 15-20 minutes when you get to the drive. The Red Cross will send a link to your email the day of the drive. If you have questions, please contact Cathy Hudgins at (757) 869-2645 or hudgepudge@aol.com. There is an urgent need for all types of blood now and always. Please prayerfully consider donating this lifesaving need. The final drive of 2020 is scheduled for November 19th. Please mark your calendars.