



November 1, 2020

Pastor Kerra is planning to have our All Saints' Sunday as an in-person worship in the Memorial Garden. Watch for further announcements about this service as it is dependent on the safety of being able to do so, and the anticipated weather closer to the date.

Also, Daylight Saving Time Ends

Remember to turn your clocks back 1 hour before going to bed Saturday, October 31!

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ASHLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

401 Virginia Street
Ashland, VA 23005

Pastor Rev. Kerra English	Admin. Assistant Susan Vitale	Director of Music Karla Bloom	Organist Austin Wachsmuth
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APC Connections

Upcoming Events

- Oct. 4—World Communion Sunday/Peace and Global Witness Offering, 9 AM Zoom; Session, 1:30 PM Zoom.
- Oct. 13—PW Circle, 11 AM in-person in Lancaster Hall and on Zoom



Remember to check out our website at: ashlandpresbyterian.org where you can find Kerra's sermons, current (and old) newsletters, and upcoming events.

You can also find us on Facebook!

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Pastor's Page

"Sunday September 13 marked six months since the U.S. declared the COVID-19 outbreak a national emergency. The reality that this pandemic is a marathon, not a spring, has started to take a toll on people's emotional and spiritual well-being, with more than half of adults reporting a decline in mental health due to worry and stress this year.

In other words, you're not alone, and your feelings aren't even restricted to fellow sufferers of this pandemic: Emotional and spiritual struggles are a common feature of major disasters, several of our studies have found. So much so that emergency managers have a name for the phenomenon: the disillusionment phase."

www.religionnews.com, September 14, 2020

Friends and fellow Presbyterians,

Did you know that Presbyterians aren't usually the first to show up when there is a disaster? According to a USA Today report - Seventh Day Adventists are good at warehousing and distributing initial relief efforts, United Methodists are experts in early case management, the non-denominational Convoy of Hope specializes in feeding, and Samaritan's Purse has trucks of tools for cleaning up debris. Not listed in the article were Presbyterians. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) is typically late to the game when it comes to natural disasters – but with reason.

The reason is that we have specialized in the marathon – rather

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than the sprint. We often arrive months later, after everyone else has long forgotten the initial crisis. However, this time we aren't just dealing with an isolated incident, like a hurricane or a wildfire – we are suffering through a pandemic – and it's affecting the entire globe. PDA started their preparations early on – setting aside \$2.7 million for ongoing response in the U.S. and nationally. In addition to making grants available for relief efforts, they have ramped up the emotional and spiritual care programs of the organization, including Compassion Fatigue and Resiliency workshops. We have been preparing ourselves for the inevitable need of Mental health resources that Religion News is now reporting on as we hit the 6-month mark from March's initial shut-down.

We continue to respond through national offerings of the PCUSA – the One Great Hour of Sharing offering we received at Easter gives 1/3 of it's income to support PDA directly, and through the October Global Witness and Peacemaking offering – we will do even more to support spiritual resources for peace, half locally, and half throughout the world. But you may be asking – what can we do HERE and NOW in the spirit of Presbyterian crisis response that respects the long-haul part of the journey?

In the Religion News article, disillusionment is that time when we hit the brick wall of our emotions. It's not over like we thought it would be. The creative juices have run dry. The ones we called heroes are just doing their jobs. And nothing seems to be going back to normal. All correct. So now is when the waves of depression, anxiety, and even substance abuse will come to their peak. Mentally and spiritually we are extremely vulnerable. And in this particular crisis, we can't even "do church" the way that we are accustomed to doing church.

But what we can do is foster three VERY important things to managing the long haul of a crisis.

1. Tell the truth – even when it's frightening. We have no choice but to go through this major shift that the world as we knew it has changed. Only after we have done that completely can we imagine what actual reconstruction will look like. Some days may seem grim, but our faith reminds us that the one crucial thing that lasts forever is God's love for us!
2. Develop your spiritual muscle. Be grounded in your faith and nurture the spiritual practices that feed you. Spiritual fortitude is key to managing a crisis for the long haul. Take care of your spirit. Put your hope and trust in God. Resiliency will rise up, and it must come from the depth of our being.

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AND In Person – Friends are encouraged to attend together! Have someone you can meet for dinner on Friday and Zoom with in a living room? A sister you want to call to talk with between sessions? Want to have a small group presence at Ashland Presbyterian Church on Saturday? If none of these work for you, *don't worry*, we can create break-out rooms online too! Pastor Kerra will lead the discussions from her home on Friday evening and from the church on Saturday.

DONATIONS WELCOME: Though we will miss our usual overnight at Richmond Hill... This year, sleep on your favorite pillow. Eat your favorite foods. And make a donation relevant to experiencing this retreat together. A suggested donation to the church and/or to Hanover Safe Place (a domestic abuse shelter) of \$20.20, would show support for the spirituality and safety of women in a year that has been hard on both. (Online donation to the church [here](#), or Hanover Safe Place, 629A N Washington Hwy, Ashland, VA 23005)

BACKGROUND: Four years ago, the Ash Grove Women's retreat fell on the weekend after the 2016 election. Of course, plans had been made well in advance about subject material and what we could do to celebrate the spirituality and friendship of women like we had before and have done since. But at that retreat, the mood shifted, conversations went deep, and the desire to be present with each other felt the good kind of weighty. It met a need.

THIS YEAR: There may be many of us who will have that need again, for a time of women's space post-election, no matter the outcome, a time to laugh and cry, to create and reflect, to pray, and to come into deep conversation with our sisters. So, this year we come together as a community, and we will gather around a theme that comes from a line in Pastor Kerra's favorite benediction:

May God bless you with *discomfort* at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, So you will live deeply, and from the heart.

FROM PASTOR KERRA: I can't believe I've been praying FOR discomfort for years, and now the level of discomfort upon us is dreadful – but not necessarily despairing. The discomfort that God blesses us with is the kind that leads to hope, and transformation, and a whole-hearted existence. This is our time to live into our afflictions with gusto! To allow the discomfort to really change us for the better.

AN OLD FRIEND will help us lean into the challenges of discomfort as we recall the life of Julian of Norwich with the Rev. Dr. Sandi Goehring. Julian was an anchoress who lived alone (with her cat), through a significant outbreak of the black plague. Perhaps observing the challenges of her life might help us reflect on our own.

Christian Education: Adult Book Study

Generous Justice: How God's Grace Makes Us Just

Sunday mornings at 10:30 a.m.

Pastor Kerra and our incoming intern Sam Zeigler are co-leading a Zoom discussion on this book. The series of Lessons is as follows:

- Oct 4- Chapter 3 - What Did Jesus Say About Justice?
- Oct 11 - Chapter 4 - Justice and Your Neighbor
- Oct 18 - Chapter 5 - Why Should We Do Justice?
- Oct 25 - Chapter 6 - How Should We Do Justice?
- Nov 8 - Chapter 7 - Doing Justice in the Public Square
- Nov 15 - Chapter 8 - Peace, Beauty and Justice



The Zoom link/phone number will be sent out in weekly emails when we begin, or you can use this Meeting ID and Passcode to log in with your Zoom account.

Meeting ID: 849 7594 9766 Passcode: 362643

To call on a landline – (301) 715-8592 and enter the Meeting ID and Password



PW Circle

The Circle will meet on Tuesday, **October 13 at 11 a.m. in Lancaster Hall.** (This will allow for social distancing.) Ginger Young will lead us in Lesson 1 of the new Horizons Bible study: *Into the Light: Finding Hope Through Prayers of Lament*. This is for Bible study only--there will be no food due to the Covid-19. Please join us. Study books will be available from the Church office the week of October 5.

*Though we are meeting in person, we will connect to Zoom from the church for anyone who would prefer to participate in that way. Let Pastor Kerra know if you would like a link to that class.



Ash Grove Women's Retreat

MAY GOD BLESS YOU WITH DISCOMFORT

November 6-7, 2020

On Zoom – Registration is required to keep the space safe. The Zoom link will be sent to those who register by emailing Kerra (kerra.english@gmail.com) with your interest and participant numbers will be limited to keep the scale of the event relational. Full group presentations and discussions will be held as Zoom meetings. (Friday at 7 p.m., Saturday at 9 a.m., 11 a.m., and a worship gathering at 2 p.m.)

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3. Prioritize connecting to spiritual community. By this, I don't just mean do stuff for the church. This means staying connected to the people who help you to see God at work in your own life. We need God AND we need each other. As this pandemic has worn on – my suspicion is that most of us have realized that we need people more than stuff, and a lot of what we thought was important then, might not be so important now. Connect – however you can. Literally, right now, it could mean saving lives as we struggle through this together.

Oddly, this is when Presbyterians who have steeped themselves in the love of God, fully aware of the deepest pitfalls of humankind get their time to shine. This is the crisis moment we were made for. That passage where Paul talks about suffering building endurance, and endurance building character – he was one of us in that moment. We may not be the most optimistic or cheerful Christians but we have been known to be dutiful, practical, and humbly present whenever the world seems to be falling apart.

I know I'm making broad generalizations here, but with reason. This has so long been a part of my identity that I feel it deeply. Our disaster response has always been geared toward the understanding that dealing with grief and loss is along term process. I appreciate that about our mission tradition.

In the here and now – you are doing what you do best – loving God, loving each other, and serving the community with grace. Keep on doing that – beloved servants of the Kingdom.

Peace, Pastor Kerra



Mark Your Calendars

All Services will be on FaceBook Live and/or Zoom unless otherwise indicated

CONNECTING ONLINE – If you need help connecting to our online options – Zoom and Facebook live, Pastor Kerra is happy to help. That she is able to do these things is proof that anyone can! Set up a time for a tutorial!



PEACE & GLOBAL WITNESS
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
PEACEMAKING AND RECONCILIATION

World Communion Sunday
October 4, 2020

The **Peace and Global Witness Offering** which is usually received the first Sunday in October, will be one of the choices on our website for giving or you can send a check to the office!