

THE HANOVER HERALD

A newsletter for the people
of Hanover Presbyterian Church,
Wilmington, Delaware
June 2020

June 2, 2020

God The Promised Land, Paradise, Zion, Heaven

Dear God,

Greetings from down below where, as you know, things are a little rough. We are the Hanover Saints, and we write as the body of Christ rooted in Wilmington, Delaware (USA). Recognizing how busy you are right now, and with all due honor and glory, we nonetheless write with this heartfelt, albeit unorthodox, request. Call it a deal.

As Gabriel has likely reported to you, we have been in a state of emergency since March 22. This Sunday will be the 12th one that we have not been able to worship together. In response, our Worship Committee crafted a motion to send this overture to you, and our Session approved it unanimously. Here is what we propose:

There are two seasons each year when you ask us to be patient and deliberate in preparing ourselves spiritually for a gift that is to come. In Advent we spend four weeks focusing on peace, hope, joy, and love to build anticipation for welcoming the Christ child. (And most years we're fairly good at not singing Christmas hymns during Advent!). Then, in Lent, you challenge us to spend 40 days studying, praying, fasting, and giving up our favorite treats to try to better understand the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness. We do this so that the joy we receive at the mouth of the empty tomb is deep and real.

By our rough count, Advent and Lent add up to just about 11 weeks. If you think about it, life while being sheltered in place is a lot like it is during the two holy seasons. In a sense, we have already done what you ask of us: waiting patiently while studying, praying, and giving



up many of the things that bring us comfort and joy. And all in the anticipation of receiving the gift of being together again to worship you as a body.

So, to our request: Given our contention that we have already paid our spiritual dues, we humbly request that we could skip Advent in 2020 and Lent in 2021. Since we have already spent 11 weeks in isolation and solitude, we seek your permission to proceed straight to Christmas and Easter; to be relieved of the rigorous preparation normally associated with your two greatest gifts.

Through the prophets we are acutely aware that attempting to bargain with you has a highly predictable outcome and an extremely low success rate. If you do not see fit to pass our overture at the next Celestial Assembly, we understand.

Finally, should that happen, we do have one follow up request. We ask that on the day that we are able to worship together in spirit and in person that you would send your Holy Spirit to fill us with the same joy of Christmas and Easter – combined!

Thank and praise you for receiv-

ing our overture, and may you bless your discernment.

In the Name of Your Son and in what he came to deliver . . .

Peace,

The Hanover Saints

Dear Hanover Saints,

As soon as Gabriel returns with God's response, I will let you know. But I do bring you news from a Session gathering that took place last evening. The Elders gathered with the Worship Committee to discuss the details and plans for when we would open our doors for worship.

After an exhaustive discussion about all the aspects of reopening, it was decided that we will continue with recorded worship services through July 19. This means that, barring any developments that would make it unsafe, we are planning to worship in person together again on July 26.

There were many considerations that led to this decision. First and foremost we will carefully watch the trends of the virus between now and July 26 because at this time the numbers do not instill the sense of stability we are wanting to see. Our

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FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY



It was all the rage in the 1990s. Any self-respecting youth group member was wearing one – not to mention any even remotely hip youth group leader. They came in every imaginable shape, size, color, and material. You could even design your own and order in mass quantities.

The point of the wristbands is to remind people who are trying to be faithful to Jesus to ask themselves: What Would Jesus Do? It is designed to be a visible and ever-present aid in sorting through the day-to-day challenges of life and faith.

It is by no means a recent creation. In the 1890s Charles Sheldon wrote a book entitled, *In His Steps: What Would Jesus Do?* that was widely read. Nor is there universal appeal. Many find it too simplistic and trite. Others are concerned that it irresponsibly reduces faith into cute acronyms. And the cynics will say it's all about making a few bucks.

Having broken into ministry in the 1990s I've worn my share of WWJD bracelets. I still have several gently used ones in the back of my dresser drawer. Personally, what I found helpful was the way it would remind me multiple times a day that I was on a journey with the goal of being faithful to Jesus. No, it never offered me an immediate, perfect, answer to a difficult question. It did, however, remind me where I needed to start in making such decisions.

I recently realized how many times I've returned to this question while sheltering in place. And if I'm honest (sort of a vocational expectation) I will tell you that more than once I've found it helpful in these challenging days. So, if you'll indulge me, here are a few thoughts about what Jesus might be doing in the age of Covid-19.

Jesus would definitely be wearing a mask. He would never risk making someone else sick. The only question is what he would have printed on his mask?!

For the same reason he would be wearing a mask, Jesus would not call people into gatherings – not even to worship God – for fear of harming one of God's own. He would wait until it was safe and then take every precaution and measure to protect the people.

Jesus would be walking in the streets in communities where people are suffering disproportionately and have few resources to address the disease.

Jesus would be morphing through the walls of ICU units so no one would die alone. He would be doing the same thing in nursing homes and prisons.

Jesus would be in lines that extend for blocks with people who do not have enough to eat.

Jesus would be standing with all who (safely) gather in response to violence, racism, and injustice. He would be telling them that God loves them, and to honor God by acting peacefully while speaking truth to power.

Jesus would use every means available to preach about being faithful and courageous; about being united in conquering the virus; about caring for those who are sick, naked, hungry, thirsty, lonely, or in prison; and about the love and grace of God, from which we cannot be separated.

May God bless us each and every time we do what Jesus would do.

Peace,
Andy

WWJD, Part II

Did you know that "A new study determined that in the two months since March 18, roughly the start of the economic crisis, America's billionaires saw their wealth collectively grow by 15 percent. And another 16 Americans became billionaires in that period."

The urgency to address income inequality has never been greater. Poverty continues to expand, even

as those who are wealthy continue to thrive. The top 1 percent of the wealthiest Americans now control more than 50 percent of the equity in U.S. public and private companies.

It is no coincidence that 16 new people entered the billionaire club during the pandemic. Under cover of night just before the stimulus package was signed, the Administration added a tax exclusion that provided \$135 billion (yes, with a "b") called the "Modification of Limitation on Losses for Taxpayers Other Than Corporations." *Eighty-two percent of those funds were given to individuals who earn more than \$1 million per year, and their average benefit was \$1.6 million even though it has nothing to do with the coronavirus and offers retroactive tax breaks for periods long before Covid-19 arrived.*

*While this was happening the Administration was pressuring Congress to tighten access to SNAP, the federal food assistance program for people living in poverty – 44 percent of whom are children.**

In a national pandemic and economic crisis rivaling the Great Depression, the portfolios of the wealthiest Americans are growing even faster, largely due to government policies. At the same time, those with the least—and who are losing what they do have—sink deeper into debt and despair.

In 1968, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and many others called for a "revolution of values" in America. They sought to build a broad, fusion movement that could unite poor and impacted communities across the country. Their name was a direct cry from the underside of history: The Poor People's Campaign.

On June 20 it is clear what Jesus would do. Jesus would log in to stand with tens of thousands of people from across that land who will take part in a massive action organized by the Poor People's Campaign. Because of the Covid-19 restrictions, it will be a virtual gathering, with leaders gathering in Washington, If you would like to be counted and take part, go to

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Covid-19: The Next Steps

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primary concern is now, and always, the safety and security of the Saints.

During this time, the leadership in the church will be plowing through the painstaking task of preparing for our reopening. Given all the needed precautions, worship will be quite different. Everything from how we come and go, sing, pray, preach, give, and sit will be new for all of us. There will be new protocols for which worship leaders will be trained. And we are committed to creating a way to live stream our services so that any who cannot, or choose not, to attend can still partake in the Spirit.

In the time leading up to the day of our reunion, we will be constantly communicating so that we will all have a sense of what we can expect.

Time and again the Psalmist urged the people to “wait patiently for the Lord.” As difficult as it is, may you continue to receive God’s presence in each of your days and places, and may you be blessed with deep and abiding faith and hope . . . and patience. Let us wait in . . .

Peace,
Andy

WWJD?

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www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/june2020 to register. And go to www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/about/our-demands to read the central tenets of the campaign. And if you are interested in helping to spread the news about the event, please call me.

May God bless all that we do; that we would be following in the footsteps of our Christ.

Peace,
Andy

* Quotes and information from: “Crumbs for the Hungry but Windfalls for the Rich: Billions are going to zillionaires under the guise of pandemic relief” by Nicholas Kristoff, *The New York Times*, May 23.

MUSIC MATTERS

I would like to lift up one of our choir members – Chris Garrett. She has retired from her job and is moving north in a couple of weeks to be closer to her daughter, Miranda, as she is in medical school. Chris has been a loyal member of the choir from her first day at Hanover. We will miss her spirit, her voice, and her genuine sense of hospitality, justice, and diversity – a true Hanoverian! I thank you for your dedication to the choir and for always being willing to serve. All the best, Chris – see you at Christmas!

• • •

It is truly so hard to imagine that as we talk about reopening the church, that choral and congregational singing will not yet be a part of the equation. Here is a partial excerpt from the official statement sent out from the Presbyterian Association of Musicians talking about public singing during Covid-19:

We weep with the psalmists.

Like those who made their lamentation by the waters of Babylon, our harps are hanging on the willows. Our tongues have been silenced. How can we sing the Lord’s song . . . in a time of exile, illness, and isolation? . . . when singing has become a dangerous activity? . . . when choir rehearsals are “super-spreader events”? . . . when the breath of life disperses disease and death?

As people who have devoted our lives to leading the people of God as they lift their voices in song, we are heartbroken. At the same time, we respect the wisdom of experts who have warned of the high risks associated with public singing during the Covid-19 pandemic. We believe that current measures to restrict singing—as much as we might lament them—are in the best interest of the church and world at this time.

We weep with the psalmists. But we also pray with the prophets.

Remembering Jeremiah’s counsel, we will build houses and plant gardens, even now. We will continue to learn new music, educate young musicians, train our hands and minds and voices, select hymns and anthems for worship, imagine special programs, conceive of choir

tours, and listen for the Spirit leading us into songs as yet unknown. We will trust that the Lord has good plans in store for us, plans for our well-being, to give us a future with hope. Remembering Isaiah’s promise, we will listen with longing for the distant music that will herald the homecoming of God’s people, when flowers begin to bloom in the desert and the ransomed will return with joyous song.

We weep with the psalmists. We pray with the prophets. And we sing with the whole creation.

We know that the praise of God can never be silenced. The ancient and eternal song of God’s saving love will never end. The rivers and oceans sing “hallelujah!” The stones along the road shout “hosanna!” The trees of the fields clap their hands. The mountains and hills skip with joy. We will keep tuning our hearts to that cosmic symphony, joining our voices with a great cloud of witnesses, the people of God in every time and place, forever singing: Holy, holy, holy! Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!”

Virtual Jeremiah’s Coffee House

Come one and all! Share your talents of singing, playing an instrument, drama, showing crafts, reading, poetry – just make a short recording of yourself and send it to me at: churchadmin@hanoverchurch.org. When we get enough submissions, we will have Tom Davis craft them into a “virtual” Coffee-house that everyone can enjoy!

As we continue to make our musical offerings in the safest way possible, we do so with joy in our hearts and . . .

Soli deo Gloria (only for the glory of God),

Twyla





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Category	Percentage
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Children at risk	10%
Ministries with Youth	25%
Young Adult Volunteers	25%

This Sunday is Pentecost Sunday when we would ordinarily collect the Pentecost special offering. In these extraordinary times, please remember the purpose of this offering, to support our youth and their spiritual development. This year, the Faith in Action Committee designates the local portion for youth violence prevention programs at Pacem in Terris. You may send your donation directly to Hanover or donate online at PresbyterianMission.org and select Hanover as your congregation. Thanks again for your generosity!

HANOVER NEWS & NOTES

Food Pantry Update

The Food Pantry has managed to remain open during the past two months with modifications. Masks and social distancing have been the order of the day. We serve between 30 -40 families each week.

Starting in June we will be purchasing produce once again and setting up a "Farmer's Market" on the sidewalk on Jefferson Street. Also, as of June 1, the Food Pantry will be moved upstairs to the Pullman Kitchen area while the Gathering Place undergoes a "transformation." We will still be serving people outside so there should be no foot traffic in the church. It's so nice when a plan comes together, and we are looking forward to being in our new space when the project is completed.

Thanks to all of you who have made this possible by your donations to the This Is Our Time campaign. —Becky

Summer Activities

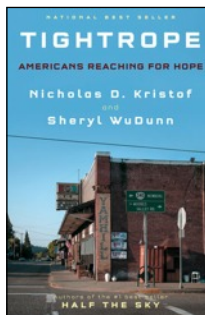
As we head into the summer months, we're hopeful that the Hot

Dog Cart will be soon up and running.

We are also looking to see how we can safely gather for our summer Vacation Bible School week. Becky and Tim Arnold have graciously offered the use of their home/pool for any discipleship event that we are able to hold. So stay tuned, and as guidelines come our way, we'll get the word out to you!

Book Discussion

Sunday morning, June 7 11 a.m. We'll be talking about the book: *Tightrope: Americans Reaching for Hope* (Pulitzer Prize-winning authors Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn). If you'd



like to join the discussion, please email Karin Wilson at: kfmadison583@msn.com and she will send you the Zoom Link.

Continuing to Give

The work of Christ is going strong at Hanover, and we are relying on your pledges to keep us running smoothly.

Here are the ways that you can continue to give:

Mail: Send your check to: Hanover Presbyterian Church, 1801 N. Jefferson Street, Wilmington, DE 19802.

Drop-off: You can go to the Jefferson Street Open Arms Academy/Church Office entrance and put your envelope inside the gray mailbox on the left door. It is safe and secure there, and Herman and Twyla picks up the mail.

Drop-off in person: If you want to hand your check to the office in person, just call the office at 658-5114, and we'll arrange a time to be there to greet you.

And perhaps easiest of all...

On line: Go to our website: www.hanoverchurch.org—scroll down to the bottom of the screen and you will see Online Giving. Click on the yellow highlighted word Donate. The next screen asks you if you are using a credit card or PayPal. Then follow the prompts—make sure you write in the Note section where your money is to go. Thank you for sustaining our ministries.

June Birthdays

- 1 Karen Palermo
- 3 Natalie Jobs
Susan Woodbury
- 6 Sue Balascio
- 7 Stephen Willis
- 8 Cindy Kirylik
- 14 Tricia Harvey
- 17 Holly Alexander
Cindy Tomevi
- 19 Amy Harris
- 20 Cheryl Heiks
- 22 Brian Gray
- 23 Ellie Young
- 27 David Harris
Walter Scott



A.C. Done? Cool! And on to the Rest of Our Projects

The air conditioning installation is done! Yes, Hanover has air conditioning that will bring comfort to all of our spaces – for worshipping, working, meeting, learning, recreation and socializing. What a journey it has been. Thank you to all who have been involved in making this project a success, whether by contributing funds, giving us spiritual support and encouragement, or through the physical labor it took to get the job done.

Soon the kitchen will be scheduled for inspection by the State Department of Public Health. Another amazing accomplishment. A new freezer and refrigerator arrived on June 1 and the necessary electrical work was completed. The space [photo above] looks amazing.

On Friday, May 29, Jefferson Street Center, Inc. signed a contract with Insite Constructors to begin the work on the ADA bathrooms and food pantry renovation project in the Gathering Place. We have the required testing completed for the presence of asbestos in the tile floor and Joe Gallo, the owner of Insite Constructors, will be seeking permits from the city to begin work. Volunteers are clearing out the clothing closet space and the food pantry operations will be moving upstairs to the Church School Hall during construction.

Jefferson Street Center and Hanover continue in negotiation with the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services to complete a contract related to JSC's request for funding from the Healthy Communities grant provided through the Delaware Community Foundation. We hope to be able to begin the installation

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of the sprinkler system in the gym and install a new fire safety panel and warning system starting in June. All the preparation work has been done for Cochran Excavation to begin digging the ground up on the Baynard side of the church. A new water line will bring the necessary water pressure into the building.

Related to the sprinkler system is upgrading the outdated fire alarm panel and warning system. With this in place, the gym can be used by the children in Open Arms Academy and to serve the surrounding community, especially the low- and moderate-income children, youth and families in our neighborhood. The cost of completing the sprinkler system is approximately \$185,000. We received a huge boost in our efforts to raise enough money when Christiana Care (from a community health and safety perspective) granted JSC \$100,000 for the project in September 2019. Since then JSC received an additional \$5,000 from a University of Delaware MiniGrant under the Blueprint Communities program, and we are anticipating \$65,000 from the Healthy Communities grant.

JSC and Hanover are also the grateful recipients of a grant of \$14,780 from Ignite funds, provided through New Castle Presbytery. Ignite funds are focused on mission, particularly projects that invite partnerships between church and community. The gym project brings together church and community in the type of collaboration that honors what God is doing inside and outside of the church. — *The Gathering Place Group*

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Missing that Time for Discipleship

It's hard to believe that just 2 months ago, Hanover youth finished up their lessons on the Ten Commandments and were embarking on a new curriculum which was cut short by the physical distancing restrictions needed to battle the coronavirus. There wasn't an opportunity to wrap up and celebrate the end of another Sunday School year. As one of the teachers, I confess that I miss my time with our youngest disciples. I haven't necessarily missed the prep time and the early morning inspirations that had me scrambling to assemble supplies, but the children, oh how I miss them!

Teaching the children is a privilege. Being entrusted to share faith and Bible stories with our youth is a joy. It's so neat to hear them share their stories and how they see God at work in their lives, their families, and schools. I feel we've done our jobs as teachers if the children know they are loved by God and their church family, that they know that we are here for them, and that Hanover embraces their hopes and dreams. Oh, learning Bible stories and scripture—that happens, too!

Thank you to Pastor Andy and Leandra Roselle and Jeff Long for their dedication to our young people. Thanks, also, to Jerri Harmon-Matthews for her care of the youngest in our midst. Hanover is also blessed with dedicated teachers leading Adult Discipleship classes—George Turner and Beatrice Wilson. I also am grateful for the creativity and support of Nona Holy in Discipleship endeavors. These words come to mind when I think of our teachers: Teach, Mentor, Praise, Guide, Encourage, Inspire . . . —Nancy Long

CALENDAR

Weekly

Prayer Circle, 8:30 a.m., Mondays
High Noon at Hanover, 12 p.m.,
Wednesdays
Living with Covid-19, 5:30 p.m.,
Wednesdays
Food Pantry, 8 a.m., Thursdays
Yoga, 6:15 p.m., Fridays

Zoom Meetings and Events

Deacons' meeting, 5:45 p.m.,
Tuesday, June 2
JSC Board meeting, 7 p.m., Tues-
day, June 2
From Striving to Thriving, 7 p.m.,
Thursday, June 4
Invitational Team, 4 p.m., Monday,
June 8
Worship Committee, 1:15 p.m.,
Tuesday, June 9
Faith in Action, 5:30 p.m., Thurs-
day, June 11
Session, 7 p.m., Tuesday, June 16
**July/August Herald article dead-
line**, Thursday, June 25

'The Herald' Is Going Digital (But You CAN Still Get It in the Mail)

This issue of *The Hanover Herald* is the last that is being sent to all members of Hanover (as well as to a fair number of former members and friends). *The Herald* has been available on-line for several years, both on the hanoverchurch.org website as well as by email, and a large number of members get it that way each month.

To use our bulk mail postal service, however, requires that we have to send out at least 200 copies in each mailing, so many people who would prefer to get

just the on-line version are receiving the mailed edition as well.

But those who still want to find *The Herald* in their mailbox have that choice. We will continue to print enough copies to mail them to readers who want them, as well as copies that will be available at the church.

If you want to remain on the mailing list and haven't already told us that, let us know. Just call, write, or email church administrator Twyla Evitts.