



Stockbridge Presbyterian Church
 4740 N. Henry Blvd., Stockbridge, GA 30281
 770-474-7777

Rev. Betsy Turner, Interim Pastor

The Church At The Bridge

Friends,

In these days with Covid-19, we are surrounded by so many numbers. As of this writing, there have been over 3,000,000 confirmed Covid-19 cases worldwide, and over 208,000 deaths. In Georgia, we are up to 22,695 confirmed cases and nearly 1000 deaths... and in Henry County, 436 cases and 10 deaths. The numbers are staggering and sobering.

And these numbers do matter. They show us the impact and spread of what my kids call "this horrid virus," and how to respond to it. It is truly irresponsible to ignore the numbers and what the best scientific research tells us about this pandemic. That's why your Session is taking the numbers so seriously as they continue to discern when we can safely gather again.

But for us as Christians, it's not ultimately about numbers – it's about people. Look at those statistics again. Really. Take a moment and read them once more. Those overwhelming numbers represent individual lives affected. Every single patient is a human being with a face, a name, a story, a family, and a set of caregivers. Every single one death from Covid-19 is a person who will be sorely missed by the ones who love them. Every single person affected is a human being, made in God's image, and precious in God's sight. Which means they should be precious in our sight too. We Christ followers can't ignore the numbers, because we cannot ignore people. Christ calls us to deep and active compassion for all people.

Before all of this began, the Session and I were already talking about numbers and the fresh new ways we might calculate and celebrate church life, beyond the old traditional numerical things like average worship attendance and the financial bottom line. We talked about measuring our church life in the number of muffins baked for our G&G kids, the pounds of food that pass through Joseph's Pantry, the cups of coffee poured in our fellowship hall at church events and AA, or the slices of pizza eaten at Kids' Camp each fall.

Those aren't necessarily the things that show up on statistical reports or add up to "success" in the worldly sense, but they get to the heart of what the church is about. We aren't really after the numbers – we are about people! We're about being a bridge between people and God, serving our neighbors with kindness and generosity, sharing the good news of grace with all people, and living together as a loving family of faith – things we can't measure out or tally up, because it's not about numbers, it's about people!

So as we continue our physical distancing, I invite you to remember that this isn't just about the numbers. Yes, we're trying to flatten the curve and keep those frightening numbers from ballooning any further. But at the heart, this too is about people.

I know it's no fun to stay home – you're either bored and lonely if you are sheltering alone, or overwhelmed if you are sheltering with small children like I am. We're all a little stir-crazy after so many weeks of confinement. We long for things to feel normal again. We don't know when we will be able to gather again, or what that "new normal" might look like.

But remember that we are doing all of this out of faithful concern for each other and the people who are our neighbors. Whether or not Covid-19 has hit close to home for you and me, it is still very personal for all of us, because it is affecting people – beloved children of God! – in our community and our world. Knowing this, be encouraged that, as strange as it may sound, you are serving people right now, simply by staying home, washing your hands, and reaching out in the safe ways you can. One statistic I wish we could count is how many phone calls and emails and cards we are all sharing and sending out during this time, because that's a real testament to who we are as a church! Continue in that good work of being the church for each other and for your neighbors!

I pray for each and all of you, and hope that you are hanging in and doing well. Please let me know if there are particular ways I can be supporting or praying for you. I love hearing from you, and I continue to long for the day when we can be together again.

Peace,
 Betsy



Your Pastor Nominating Committee continues its search, even with most everything shut down and most people stuck in their houses. We have moved our meetings to Zoom, so we can at least see each other's faces. We would much rather meet in person, but COVID-19 won't allow that right now. The pandemic has slowed our progress, but we continue to work many hours each month to find SPC's next pastor. Thankfully, potential candidates continue to send us their resumes. We are also thankful that Betsy has signed a contract extension through November 2020, so don't worry – SPC is in good shape!

We watched a presentation last week specifically about finding a new pastor while dealing with COVID-19. SPC is not the only church in this situation, but we are handling it better than most. Our PNC is optimistic and cheerful, your Session is stable and hopeful for the future, and we are blessed to have Betsy as our Interim Pastor. We will continue to work hard and you must continue to pray for us and the church. Stay safe and we'll see each other in person very soon!

CORONAVIRUS
(COVID-19) AND THE CHURCH

Due to Covid-19, SPC will not gather in person through the month of May. Weekly worship is available on our church website spcusa.org, our church Facebook page (facebook.com/StockbridgePres), or by calling in to 1-857-385-7514. There is also a weekly virtual fellowship opportunity on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 via Zoom - check your email for more details. Please stay in, stay in touch, and stay generous during this time apart!

Session Report

Special Meeting - March 1, 2020

Rev. Turner stated the reason for the meeting was to discuss readings in "Our Daily Bread" and "Are churches counting what counts?" and "RIP, average attendance"

Arlene selected a reading "Our Daily Bread" and discussed the impact of it on her. Further discussion by members of the Session followed.

Betsy led a discussion on "Are churches counting what counts?" and "RIP, average attendance" with Session members describing passages they felt important.

The reason for the meeting having been accomplished, Rev. Betsy Turner closed the meeting with prayer.

Special Meeting - March 13, 2020

Rev. Turner stated the reason for the meeting was to address issues that affect Stockbridge Presbyterian Church caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Gathering for worship – The Session approved cancelling all activities in the church facilities on Sunday, 3/15/2020.

Communication of the decision is #1 – Betsy will create and distribute an email announcing closing of the church facilities on Sunday 3/15/2020. Elders will also contact their Undershepherd list as a back up communication and to notify members that do not have access to email. An announcement will also be placed on the church's Facebook page.

Staff & Mission – Linda Hodges, the church administrator, is willing to work in the office on her schedule hours. She will continue servicing people out of Joseph's Pantry. Betsy will talk with Ward concerning his desires on holding choir practice in the upcoming week. The Session decided to let Ward make this call. Goodness and Groceries has been cancelled at least until 4/1/2020 due to Henry County Schools being closed.

Other groups – AA – Betsy will talk with the church's liaison members to discuss if the AA groups will continue to meet during the coronavirus crisis. The Session decided to leave that decision up to AA. Gene will prepare cleaning and disinfectant materials for AA to use after their meeting and talk with the cleaning crew to also clean and disinfect the Fellowship Hall. Troop 65 Boy Scouts have cancelled meetings until at least 3/27/2020.

Session business – The Session decided to meet via conference call on Wednesday 3/18/2020 to discuss additional actions as dictated by this situation concerning coronavirus. Betsy will schedule the time of the teleconference.

The reason for the meeting having been accomplished, Rev. Betsy Turner closed the meeting with prayer.

Special Meeting - March 29, 2020

Rev. Turner stated the reason for the meeting was to address issues that affect Stockbridge Presbyterian Church caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Gathering for worship – The Session approved cancelling all activities in the church facilities from 3/30/2020 until 4/30/2020 including Holy Week activities.

Holy Week – The Session discussed alternative ways to connect select Holy Week activities with the congregation. It was decided for Betsy to explore delivering a Palm Sunday message using the Zoom video conferencing app. Based upon this experience an Easter

message may be delivered in the same manner.

The Session decided to serve communion when gathering is again permitted rather than using an alternate method that would not reach all members.

The Session ratified the following decisions made via email vote and conference call:

Cancellation of worship services on 3/22/2020 & 3/29/2020.

Cancellation of March 2020 Stated Session meeting.

Session business – The Session decided to have a called meeting via video conference on Sunday 4/12/2020 at 3:00 pm to discuss additional actions as dictated by the situation concerning coronavirus.

The reason for the meeting having been accomplished, Rev. Betsy Turner closed the meeting with prayer.

	May 1 Kirubanithy Mani	May 26 Peggy Beisner
	May 10 Susanna Sierra	May 26 Stephanie Ayoola
	May 11 Brad Pass	May 26 Laura Richardson
	May 14 Lynne Bailey	May 30 Annetta Harper
	May 17 Erika Moxley	May 30 Marida Lin
	May 17 Justin Stanley	May 31 Kingsley Mani
	May 22 Terry Holmes	May 31 Melissa Schroer
	May 23 Ken Ridgeway	May 31 Mabel White

We continue to be so thankful for your tithes and offerings during this time. There are several ways to continue your giving, even when we are not meeting in the church building.

- ◆ On-line giving. Click the Give Now link below and then follow the steps.



- ◆ If you have bill pay set up through your bank, you can add Stockbridge Presbyterian as a vendor/organization. Usually, there are options to send a one time payment, or even to set up recurring automatic payments.
- ◆ Mail your check directly to the church.

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Our Women's Bible Study continues every Thursday morning using conference calling. If you would like to join in, please contact Betsy Turner or the church office for the dial in information.

THE SPC SESSION

Jim Beisner, Clerk of Session

Discipleship

Aaron Roberts (20)
 Paul Szeto (21)
 Terry Holmes (21)

Witness

Stephanie Phillips Ayoola (20)
 Arlene Lathrop (22)
 Lee Hart (22)

Resources

Gene Ingram (21)
 Kim Seal (20)