

Peaks  
Postings  
May 12, 2020



What strategies is your church using to open back up that may be helpful to other congregations? We want to know.....

How are you serving Communion? How will you handle funerals? What is your plan for sanitizing the sanctuary?

Send your tips to [julie.dyke@peakspresbytery.org](mailto:julie.dyke@peakspresbytery.org)



Presbytery Meeting  
June 13, 2020  
9:30 a.m.

Meeting will be conducted by Zoom. Registration will be required for **ALL** participants, including pastors, and will open in two weeks. Stay tuned for more information.

\*This is a called meeting.

### Session Records Review and Covid-19

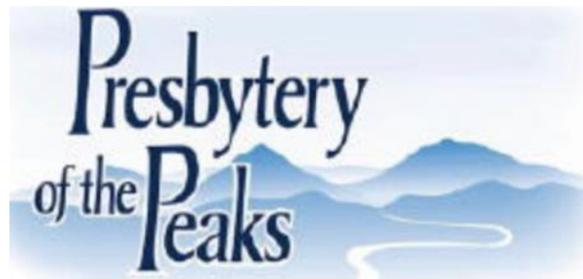
The current remaining schedule for reviewing 2019 Session Records is as follows:

Churches with names beginning P – W are scheduled June 13, 2020 (Zoom)

Churches with names beginning A – C are scheduled August 15, 2020

Churches with names beginning D – H are scheduled November 19, 2020

With the June 13 meeting being a Zoom meeting, P – W churches can either bring their minutes to a future in-person presbytery meeting or mail copies of minutes (please don't mail the only existing original) along with filled-out Session Records Review Forms (no binders or covers please) to Dave Hayes, Session Records Review, Blacksburg Presbyterian Church, 701 Church St. SE, Blacksburg VA 24060. We will mail your review forms and copies of minutes (let me know if you don't need the copies returned to you, saving mailing expense) back to the Clerk of Session. Churches whose minutes are so massive the expense would be prohibitive to mail can bring their minutes to the next in-person meeting whenever that takes place.



**Covid-19 Guidelines Update  
Monday, May 11, 2020**

*“All things are lawful, but not all things are beneficial. All things are lawful, but not all things build up.” 1 Cor. 10:23*

As of Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, by the order of our governor, congregations are permitted, but not required, to hold inside services with 50 percent of the building’s capacity. Though I’m sure some would make a different case, I think it is more prudent to wait until May 31<sup>st</sup> or longer, giving everyone time to assess the effectiveness of Phase 1 of the governor’s plans. Other denominational bodies, including the Episcopal and Lutheran bishops of Virginia, are advising “not yet.” Out of an abundance of caution, I hope sessions will consider waiting until Phase 2 has been approved, and even then, safety and compassion should govern our decisions more than what is legal. I am confident that those who decide to worship inside will take the precautions that are essential for their context.

One additional consideration: Church members will voluntarily attend or refrain from worship, depending on their self-assessed risk of contracting Covid-19 or contaminating others. For paid staff, such as pastors, church musicians and custodians, a session’s decision will compel their participation. If your paid staff are at risk, or if members of their family are at risk, consider postponing face-to-face worship until such time everyone can be safe.

By Carl Utley, Transitional General Presbyter

**When reopening church - a Guide from the Presbytery of the Peaks**

By Chad McCain, Jill Allen MD, Mark Hinchcliff, Morgan Whitfield, Carl Utley

The following guidelines are modifications of guidelines circulating nationally.

- Arrange your worship, meeting, or gathering space so that no more than 50 percent of its capacity is filled. Remove chairs from your sanctuary, block off pews, whatever it takes to ensure that family groups can maintain a cautious distance of 6 feet. No one should sit directly behind another.
- Require masks and have hand sanitizer ready. Worship leaders who do not use masks while leading worship should maintain an extra safe distance of at least 15 feet. Each person should clean hands upon entry.
- Prior to any gathering, ask each member to self-screen, using the following questions. If self-screening is unlikely to take place, consider Sunday morning screening by an usher or greeter. A positive answer to even one should compel an individual to stay home:
  - If I attend, can I resist normal contact with people, and can I comfortably follow safe practices while with others?

**Continued on next page...**



- Am I or anyone in my household vulnerable to Covid-19 because of age or a compromising medical condition?
  - In the last 14 days have I experienced any of the following: fever, cough, shortness of breath, runny nose, difficulty breathing, experienced a sudden loss of taste or smell?
  - Have I traveled by train, plane or ship in the last 14 days?
  - Have I been in contact with anyone diagnosed with Covid-19? Or worked in a facility with a diagnosed case of Covid-19?
  - If I attend, can I resist normal contact with people, and can I comfortably follow safe practices while with others?
4. Before and after each use of the building, conduct a thorough sanitizing cleaning.
  5. We recommend that churches suspend hosting outside groups and committee meetings unless people agree to the very stringent protocol that mirrors the safe practices of the worshipping congregation. Check with your insurer to know what your liability is in case of an outbreak from your church.
  6. Where possible, consider adding digital worship and meetings through YouTube, Facebook Live, or similar services, to include those who choose to stay at home for health reasons or those who are homebound.
  7. Fellowship gatherings should be postponed until conditions have returned to normal.
  8. No physical contact should be included in the morning worship. Instead of handshakes or hugs, people should greet one another with a nod of the head, or bowing, or waving.
  9. Modify the method for collecting offering – using a stationary collection box, the mail, or electronic methods – instead of passing an offering tray.
  10. Communion should be modified or suspended, conducted without passing a tray around the sanctuary.
  11. The National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS), the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), Chorus America, the Barbershop Harmony Society, and the Performing Arts Medical Association (PAMA) strongly recommend that group singing be curtailed until such time that there is a vaccine or cure for Covid-19. Research and anecdotal reports have shown singing to spread the virus more quickly than talking or coughing.
  12. Baptism, weddings, and funerals should be conducted according to the same guidelines as general worship.
  13. Cancel Summer VBS unless Phase 3 of the state’s recovery has been approved by the governor, if Phase 3 permits such gatherings.
  14. Postpone children’s church until Phase 3 of the state’s recovery has been approved by the governor, if Phase 3 permits such gatherings.
  15. Insurance- Call your insurer. Is there a liability if people attend a gathering at your church and subsequently fall ill, or if there’s damage while the building is unoccupied, or the possibility that you have a business interruption provision that might help with finances? Policies vary, so you should contact your church’s insurance broker to review your coverages and exclusions. Some insurance companies have posted information on their websites concerning issues during the pandemic event.
  16. Precautions and Procedures in case those “in the know” fall ill or choose to stay home – does more than one person/household know (and where do you find) the:
    - Session records, Emergency contact numbers and protocols
    - Lock down steps to ensure safety, Passwords and login information
    - Email list and program, Financial and computer security systems, Alternate IT support
    - Banking connections, Essential insurance and payroll documents
    - Offsite emergency strategy – where will you shift your operations, Emergency utility shut-offs
    - Transfer of authority if leadership is at risk of quarantine restrictions
    - Updated rosters of congregations and presbytery staff

**Resources:**

Beginning Conversations for Re-entry

[https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/covid-19/beginning-conversations-for-re-entry.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/covid-19/beginning-conversations-for-re-entry.pdf)

Returning to Public Worship Theological and Practical Considerations

[https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/covid-19/returning\\_to\\_public\\_worship\\_may\\_2020.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/covid-19/returning_to_public_worship_may_2020.pdf)

Wisconsin Council of Churches recommendations (great reference)

[https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/covid-19/returning-to-church.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/covid-19/returning-to-church.pdf)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/guidance-community-faith-organizations.html>

<https://www.pcusa.org/covid19/>

[https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorviriniagov/executive-actions/EO-61-and-Order-of-Public-Health-Emergency-Three---Phase-One-Easing-Of-Certain-Temporary-Restrictions-Due-To-Novel-Coronavirus-\(COVID-19\).pdf](https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorviriniagov/executive-actions/EO-61-and-Order-of-Public-Health-Emergency-Three---Phase-One-Easing-Of-Certain-Temporary-Restrictions-Due-To-Novel-Coronavirus-(COVID-19).pdf)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility-H.pdf>



## **PDA Funding Awarded for Local Agencies Impacted by COVID-19**

First Presbyterian Church (FPC), Covington, VA is so incredibly pleased that a total of \$7,500 has been received from the COVID-19 Emergency Assistance Initial Grant Fund of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) to support the increased demand for food at both the COPE Food Pantry and the South Covington Care Pantry, and for increased demand for services at Safehomes Systems. FPC submitted the grant applications to the Presbytery of the Peaks on behalf of these three organizations. We are delighted to provide help for these financially strapped organizations, critical in our local social services network.

The funding for the food banks is to cover the surge in food requests since the start of the pandemic, brought on by job loss. Unfortunately, another impact from job loss, exacerbated by home confinement, is increased domestic and/or sexual abuse and hence the need for increased services from Safehome Systems which serves a three-county region in the western part of Virginia. With the COVID-19 distancing guidelines recommended by the CDC, their on-site sheltering capacity has been dramatically decreased. The funding will be used to support a new Text Line (since abusers are within earshot of phone calls), hotel accommodations for clients and travel reimbursement to support clients.

Blessings to these organizations for being available to support the needy in our community. Many thanks to Presbytery of the Peaks for supporting this grant application. Thank you all who contribute to PDA directly or via our One Great Hour collection. We are again reminded of the power of the connectional nature of our church.

## **Paycheck Protection Program Good Faith Certification**

The Small Business Administration (SBA) has issued more guidance on documentation required for the good faith certification for a Paycheck Protection Program loan/grant. Any Peaks Presbytery churches receiving or applying for a PPP loan should document the need for the loan now (if it was not done at the time of application). The SBA has indicated all PPP loans of \$2 million or more will be audited, but any borrower can be audited (the audit would include the good faith certification and the use of the loan funds).

The good faith certification factors could include the church financial state, uncertainty regarding future contributions (especially in light of the March 15<sup>th</sup> government closure for all nonessential businesses, including churches) and efforts to keep employees compensated during the closure.

The good faith certification should be kept with the documentation regarding use of the loan proceeds.

If there are questions regarding this information, contact Robin Padgett at the Presbytery office.



# SUMMER ADVENTURE CAMP

**June 28-July 3, 2020**

Calling all middle and high school youth! Come join your friends at Camp Bethel for a special Presbytery of the Peaks week!

## **High School**

Tubing, canoeing, and rafting

\$495

## **Middle School**

Tubing, canoeing, and horseback riding

\$445

Scholarships are available for both camps.

For more information, contact JoAnn Scott at 434-525-8885 or [imscottypiper@yahoo.com](mailto:imscottypiper@yahoo.com).



## PRESBYTERY CALENDAR

Date	Time	Event	Location
5/14/20	9:30 a.m.	Committee on Ministry	Zoom
5/14/20	10:00 a.m.	Religion, Body, Health	Zoom

**Next Presbytery Meeting:  
CALLED MEETING  
June 13, 2020  
Zoom**

[On-Line Calendar](#)

**Peaks Postings** is published each week on Tuesday. Please submit news, events, or prayer requests **by noon on Mondays** to Julie Dyke at [julie.dyke@peakspresbytery.org](mailto:julie.dyke@peakspresbytery.org) for inclusion in the following issue.

**Guidelines for announcements or news items to be featured in Peaks Postings:**

- Keep the information to one page or less.
- Use links to web sites rather than including lots of details.
- Please obtain permission from the people pictured in your photos before submitting them to *Peaks Postings*.

**Peaks Postings Editors reserve the right to**

- feature or not feature an article. Our first priority is to feature activities within POP churches and the Presbytery.
- edit submitted articles/announcements.
- limit the number of weeks an article/announcement is featured.

**Past issues of Peaks Postings are archived for about six months on our website, [Presbytery of the Peaks](#).**

Presbytery of the Peaks  
108 Melinda Dr.  
Lynchburg, VA 24502  
Phone: 434-845-1754  
Toll Free: 1-888-557-3257  
Fax: 434-845-7829  
e-mail: [office@peakspresbytery.org](mailto:office@peakspresbytery.org)  
Web Site: [peakspresbytery.org](http://peakspresbytery.org)

*Julie Dyke, Administrative Support*  
*Robin Padgett, Office Manager*  
*Denise Pillow, Hunger Action Advocate*  
*John Wiederholt, Stated Clerk*  
*Carl Utley, Transitional General Presbyter*  
*Rachel Shepherd, Transitional Associate Presbyter for*  
*Discipleship*

**“Building partnerships in Christ, to empower communities of faith to be the  
Body of Christ for the world.”**