

May 7, 2020

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor

Rev. Kenneth E. Kovacs, Ph.D.

Associate Pastor

Rev. Dorothy L. Boulton, M.Div.

Director of Music

Greg Knauf, D.M.A.

Organist

Douglas Heist, D.M.A.

Communications Consultant and Messenger Editor

Lisa Roca

Membership Secretary

Peggy Carr

Administrative Assistant

Shirley Winters

Bookkeeper

Virginia Daiger

Sexton

Bernard Lawson

Sunday Sextons

Cecilie Nilsen

Paige Peercy

Sunday Child Care Providers

Roberta Harris

Child Care Center Director

Michelle Hepner

Child Care Center Assistant Director

Heather Hollandsworth

Child Care Center Office Manager

Ashley Graham



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From Lament to Hope

By Ken Kovacs

The Office of the General Assembly announced at the end of April that the 224th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), scheduled to convene in Baltimore in June, will now become the first virtual General Assembly in the history of our denomination. We will elect the moderator on June 19, and then there will be a two-day Assembly on June 26 and 27. For almost two years now, Elizabeth McLean (pastor at Prince of Peace Presbyterian Church) and I have been co-chairs of the Worship Team involved in planning the five worship services at GA, all of which were to have Communion. Now we've been asked to plan for one, one-hour service with "virtual" Communion. The previous GA theme, Beyond Institution to Movement, chosen by J. Herbert Nelson, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, has been set aside. The new theme is now: From Lament to Hope. This says much as where we are as a nation and as a denomination.

Hope we can handle. Christians are people of hope. We like to be hopeful. Lament, on the other hand—not so much. One of the reasons J. Herbert Nelson chose this theme is because American Christians,

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From Lament to Hope

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specifically Presbyterians, don't know what to do with lament. And the truth is, we don't lament enough. There's much for us to lament as a nation and as a denomination these days (there are churches that won't survive this pandemic). Lament makes us uncomfortable. We don't like facing depressing or negative feelings. We prefer to move out of lament as fast as possible and focus on the positive. We have difficulty viewing it as a faithful, even hopeful, response during times of pain and suffering. Public, corporate, collective lament makes us uneasy. Yet, songs of grief are at the center of the Bible's witness. Consider the Book of Psalms. Out of 150 psalms, 42 are psalms of lament. Thirty are individual laments and the rest are communal. And, of course, there's an entire book of Lamentations. These writings show us that it's possible to hold lament and hope together in a creation tension, even find hope in lament.

In an [interview with Krista Tippett](#) several years ago, Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann made this point. "Laments in the books of Psalms and Lamentations are all an expression of grief,

but they are also an expression of hope. They are an insistence that things cannot remain this way and they must be changed. Such prayers are partly an address to God, but they are also a communal resolve to hang in and take transformative action. Unless that kind of grief and rage and anger is put to speech, it can never become energy. So I believe the transformative function of such prayers is that it transforms energy and rage into positive energy."

Grief-rage-anger...put into speech. That's the power of lament. It wouldn't take much to find words of grief and rage and anger swirling around in us and within these days. Our honest words, when combined with passion and love, can become the source of energy: energizing our prayers, transforming grief into action, enabling us to respond with hope. It's not merely wishful thinking or being optimistic that all will work out, this is a hope that emerges from within grief and despair, not apart from it. Resurrection is "born" in the tomb. Hope emerges from death and loss. This is the way of Christ and the way of Christ's people.

Our Financial Resources

We rely on everyone—especially now—to support what God is doing through this congregation. The vitality of this ministry is secured by God's grace and funded by the faithfulness and commitment of God's people.

Actual income as of May 2, 2020: \$ 234,262

Actual expense as of May 2, 2020: \$-243,146

Total: \$-8,884

General Assembly Prayer Cards

By Debby Shumaker, C.E. Committee Chair

As you have heard, the General Assembly convention will be held this year on June 26 and 27, 2020. Originally being held in Baltimore, it will now be a digital event because of the unfortunate circumstances of COVID-19 and the caution to socially distance. However, the Christian Education Committee would very much like to show our appreciation and gratitude to the Commissioners who have and are continuing to make this auspicious occasion very special. We have committed to General Assembly representatives our help with sending 50 notecards to individuals who deserve our recognition. That can be in the form of uplifting sentiments, artwork, prose, etc., whatever moves you. Wouldn't it be lovely if this was an intergenerational, congregation-wide effort? Please email me at debbys shumaker@gmail.com if you are interested, and we'll be sure to get you however many notecards, mailing labels and stamps you would like.

Creation Care in Spring

By Ron Gunderson

Even with the restrictions in place the Creation Care Team has had a busy spring! We continue to plant native shade ground covers, which makes the woodlands visually beautiful and provides ground habitat. In addition, the spreading golden groundsel, a flowering plant in the daisy family, is looking particularly lovely this season. This year we started a new project with the Childcare Center to make the play area safer as well as provide easier transit to and from Hillcrest Elementary School. The work included removal of the overgrown, non-native hedges, followed by a new sidewalk of permeable pavement. The play area was aerated and reseeded. Moving forward we plan to plant a linear garden and new oak trees as soon as the garden nursery is delivering again.

The Woodlands, Labyrinth Garden, and New Bench

- The woodlands restorations project, entering the fourth year, is doing well. Still lots of weeding out this season of spring invasive but the flowers and trees are coming back and will eventually rule this wonderful space.
- The plants in the new labyrinth garden are coming back wonderfully. We have added a new sign, as well as informational brochures on meditation. Wonderful place for quiet time.
- We have placed a fourth bench along the chipped wood pathways into and through the woodlands and meadow. The pathways now extend all the way to Summit from the Child Care play area. Come and take a stroll along the new path!

If you are interested in helping with planning, gardening, or just enjoying the church's beautiful outdoor spaces with us, contact Ron Gunderson at cinron.md@gmail.com.



Congregational Meeting

May 17, 2020, at 11:30 a.m.

Session has called for an online meeting of the congregation via Zoom on Sunday, May 17, at 11:30 a.m. The purpose of the meeting will be to hear a report from the Nominating Committee and to elect church officers. Instructions for using Zoom will be provided to all church members for this important meeting in the life of the church.

Poetry

and the Christian Life

Join us for an online poetry discussion on Tuesday, May 12, at 3 p.m. for the chosen poem *A Ritual to Read to Each Other* by William E. Stafford. Read it slowly, ponder it, reflect on it, and let it speak to you. Then join Ann Quinn for an online Zoom discussion.

A Ritual to Read to Each Other By William E. Stafford

If you don't know the kind of person I am
and I don't know the kind of person you are
a pattern that others made may prevail in the world
and following the wrong god home we may miss our
star.

For there is many a small betrayal in the mind,
a shrug that lets the fragile sequence break
sending with shouts the horrible errors of childhood
storming out to play through the broken dike.

And as elephants parade holding each elephant's tail,
but if one wanders the circus won't find the park,
I call it cruel and maybe the root of all cruelty
to know what occurs but not recognize the fact.

And so I appeal to a voice, to something shadowy,
a remote important region in all who talk:
though we could fool each other, we should consider—
lest the parade of our mutual life get lost in the dark.

For it is important that awake people be awake,
or a breaking line may discourage them back to sleep;
the signals we give — yes or no, or maybe —
should be clear: the darkness around us is deep.

Life in Community

It is with deep sadness that we share that Marcia Hough died in April 2020.

Grace AME

Food Pantry

Grace AME in Catonsville has reorganized their food pantry to provide drive-thru food distribution for families on Tuesdays and Thursdays each week. Grace AME is actively coordinating with other food pantries in the area and purchases low cost food. And yet there is a need for more canned goods. Please consider adding some of these items to your shopping list and delivering them to the bins in back of the CPC Church House.

Food List for Grace AME

- Box of cold cereal
- Pasta or noodles
- Tomato sauce
- Tuna fish or chicken
- Canned beans
- Canned food with pull tops for homeless

In addition to food donations, please consider making a financial contribution to help support local hunger relief. [Give online now to Fund Local Hunger Response.](#)

THE Messenger

Our Mission

We seek to find and share God's calling for this community of faith through worship, fellowship and service.

Catonsville Presbyterian Church

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[Facebook.com/catonsvillepres](https://www.facebook.com/catonsvillepres)

[Twitter.com/catonsvillepres](https://twitter.com/catonsvillepres)

Church Office Hours:

Tuesday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.

office@catonsvillepres.org

