

Pastor Letter 5/12/21

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As many have already heard, and/or have been ever waiting to hear, Governor Wolfe announced the state will lift all covid mitigation orders, except the mask mandate, on May 31. Some of us are still concerned, while many of us are also breathing a sigh of relief that the end of this pandemic is in sight. I have heard of the many horror stories related to the pandemic, but God is greater and was doing work behind the scenes, which is evident by what happened with religion over the course of the pandemic. There is good news, despite organized religion being on the decline in the United States. Researchers found that online searches for the world prayer soared to the highest level ever in over 90 countries. A 2020 Pew Research study showed that 24% of U.S. adults stated their faith had become stronger during the pandemic. Even in a tumultuous time, God continued draw people near. This is just evidence that God is near in our times of suffering. I rejoice knowing and believing in God's promise to be near to us.

To glorify God for God's promise to be with us in all times, but especially in times of suffering, we gather together again for worship. This Sunday we return to our regular hybrid worship. As of the writing of this week's letter, we continue to remain in the second phase of reopening. This means we still have an increased capacity in the sanctuary, retain social distancing and wearing masks. However, your session will be discussing the way forward shortly. Feel free to reach out to your leadership and offer support as they make difficult decisions that cannot please all. Pray for them as they gather this week. Pray they feel God's promise of presence as they seek to make a decision that is God's will, not necessarily ours. Let us come together this Sunday in worship to praise God for the promised presence.

In His Peace,

Pastor Nicki

*If you are worshipping from home, I would encourage you to use the YouTube platform for optimal streaming quality. Additionally, feel free to sign on early no need to wait right until 10am anymore. *

YouTube: live stream and recording can be found at <https://www.espresbyterian.com/worship/> or <https://www.youtube.com/user/ESPresbyterian>

Facebook: click on the link below near the time the service begins at 10:00am to watch the live stream <https://www.facebook.com/espresbyterian/>

Additionally, bulletins and an online hymnal have been put on the website and can be found at <https://www.espresbyterian.com/worship/sunday-bulletin/>

Ways to give- mail or drop of check/cash through no contact mail slot in office window. Drop off envelope in offering plates before or after worship services. Donate on our website by going to the home page at <https://www.espresbyterian.com/> and clicking on the Donate button in the upper right corner. Designate where you would like the money to go by using the note section.