

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

In recent weeks I've been reading several articles about the future of the church, a topic that is not new, but because of pandemic and the current civil unrest, is being put at the forefront of minds. Our own church, as well as the presbytery, was just beginning to talk about what our future might look like shortly before the pandemic started. At ESPC, a small group was meeting to discuss how God might be leading us to live into our mission. Then suddenly, pandemic, and many of the ideas being tossed around came into reality out of necessity. It's a struggle for some, myself included, who miss the way it was. However, I am reminded of a verse that was inscribed on a necklace given to me years ago for graduation. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11 NRSV) I rejoice in knowing that the Lord has plans for a great future for this church, but it means embracing changes we may not always want to embrace.

We again embrace this new way of church by gathering this week for in-person hybrid worship using our Phase 1 plan. For our in-person option, 25 people, which includes those leading and running technology, are allowed in the sanctuary, but overflow rooms are available to view the live stream. We continue to also stream live on Facebook and YouTube for those who can and desire to remain worshiping remotely. We are continuing our series on forgiveness this week, focusing on why we are called to forgive which, as I said in weeks past, is very fitting for this current time. I would also remind you that, as part of Phase 1 reopening guidelines and following governor's orders, masks should be worn when entering and exiting, but also as much as you can tolerate when seated. I would also ask that masks be worn while singing. Again, as I said before, when we wear masks, it is out of love for our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ who may think differently than ourselves.

Let's together embrace these new plans God is placing before us each and every day and rejoice knowing we have hope in our future whatever that may look like for ESPC.

In His Peace,

Pastor Nicki

Some helpful links...

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

YouTube live and video recordings <https://www.espresbyterian.com/worship/> or
<https://www.youtube.com/user/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/>