



Words from Woodforest April 2020

Words from Cassandra:

When I told you all in January that I would be retiring at the end of May, I thought I had a pretty good idea of what our last few months together would be like. With the exception of a few weeks I had planned to be in DC, I assumed we would continue to worship together in the same manner and place that we always have. I was looking forward to a few more Dine-Out Dinners, Pot Lucks, Dutch Treat Lunches, and Lunch Bunches – when we would enjoy wonderful fellowship and great food together. I thought I would be able to finish this year's Bible study with the women, and I looked forward to visiting with each of you as our time together came to a close. And then this little thing called a pandemic came to town, and none of that has taken place as I thought it would.

When I go by our church building, it looks like time has stood still. There are sign-up sheets for the Fish Fry and Silent Auction, and the front of the chancel is draped in purple for Lent. There is no sign of Easter there. The church, however, continues being the church. I am meeting with the Session via Zoom, and mission work is being done. Behind the scenes the property is being maintained, the bills are being paid, and prayers are being said.

Worshipping with you on Sunday morning has been a blessing, and I am so grateful for every person who is able to be with us in that way. But I have missed being together, as I know many of you have.

Soon I will be clearing out my office, and after May 31st I will no longer be your pastor. I have spoken with Presbytery however, and they are in agreement that whenever the church begins to gather for worship again, I should return for one final service together. We will all need that closure.

Until then, let give thanks for the kindness of the Spirit, who continues to bind us together across time and space.

Take care, be safe, and stay well!

God's peace,
Cassandra

Prayer Concerns

For all of the people on the front line of the pandemic crisis, both in this country and around the world.....

For people and places in conflict, that they might know peace.....

For the hungry that they may be fed.....

For the homeless that they may find shelter.....

For the sick that they may have healing.....

For the grieving that they may be comforted.....

For those in chronic pain.....

For all those who have lost their jobs in the midst of the pandemic.....

For those suffering abuse, oppression, or fear.....

For our church in the midst of transition.....

For those whom we lift up in our hearts.....

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayers.....

The Church Together

The Covid 19 pandemic, while keeping us apart, is creating new ways for us to come together. In particular...



- On Sunday March 15, 2020, the Spirit was present... but the virus was not! A small group of Woodforest Presbyterian Members met for outdoor worship. Fresh air and sunshine are healthy for us - but bad for viruses! Our hands were washed, the chairs were disinfected, and a 6' social distance was maintained at all times. Together, we shared prayers, scripture, songs, a message - and the spring weather. As the service progressed, more and more chairs were added as passing members of the community joined in. This was a lovely experience, and one we plan to repeat (perhaps quarterly in the future.)



Beginning Sunday, March 29, Cassandra, Tomas and Ryan began broadcasting worship services from the Dahnke backyard. Although there is no choir, you can hear the birds singing along in the background! Videos of these services (including Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday) can be found on the church Facebook page (www.facebook.com/woodforestpc) as well as on our own website (www.woodforestpc.org/corona-update). For those who "came late to church" (LOL... you know who you are!), you can re-play these videos at any time. The unexpected result of these worship videos is to reconnect us with distant friends and former members. Again, we will probably continue our weekly recordings in the long term.

- The Session of Woodforest Presbyterian Church is working together to monitor the ongoing health crisis. April's board meeting was held remotely, via Zoom. Our ongoing plan is to notify our members and friends *each Friday* of any changing plans. Depending on your contact information, watch for an email update and/or a text message with current updates Woodforest Presbyterian Church.

And in the meantime, stay safe, stay healthy... and stay in prayer!
The Session of Woodforest Presbyterian Church

From the Treasurer...

Many thanks to all of you who have been sending your checks by mail. By now, we typically would have been totaling up the results from our annual Fish Fry, but of course that has been cancelled because of the pandemic. However, I am pleased to report that our March general fund donations have been surprisingly strong. In addition, our utilities and other operating expenses have been down. The net result is that we broke even for the month of March. Go, Woodforest!

The One Great Hour of Sharing special collection, dedicated to disaster relief, is being collected through the end of April. If you would like to donate, please write OGHS in the memo line of your check and send it to the church.

FYI, I initially told some folks to mail their checks to my home address, but we now have a better system in place. Johnny Gaskill has been checking the church and its mailbox daily. He then drops any deposits in a drive-thru bank on his way home. Thanks a million, Johnny... you're the best!

And great news! Churches are definitely covered under the recent CARES Act, which is designed to help businesses keep the lights on and the employees paid for the estimated 2.5 months it will take us to shelter at home. In addition, the Board of Pensions is also offering relief to its members, and the Presbytery is providing grants to offset Zoom expenses. I will keep you updated as these applications move forward.

Missing you all... but stay safe and healthy!

Ann Martin

713-661-2300



During these uncertain times, we depend on our faith family to see us through. The church, OUR church exists for “such a time as this”.

For over 70 years, One Great Hour of Sharing has been serving the most vulnerable among us- feeding the hungry, sheltering those who have no place to stay, and offering compassion to those in pain — be it physical, emotional, or spiritual. In fact, when a storm destroyed the roof of Woodforest Presbyterian Church, disaster assistance from One Great Hour of Sharing helped us rebuild.

Please give generously to this special offering of the Presbyterian Church USA... because we are the Church Together.

Coming Soon

A gift to the Pentecost Offering helps the church encourage, develop, and support its young people, and also address the needs of at-risk children. 40% of the Pentecost offering can be retained by individual congregations wanting to make an impact in the lives of young people within their own community.

The remaining 60% is used to support children-at-risk, youth, and young adults through ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.



A Last Word

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13