

A Letter from the Moderator



April, 2020

Dear Friends,

Remember when you could go to the airport just to watch the planes land and take off? My family used to go to Mitchell Field in Milwaukee. My dad drove our big Desoto with the round bubble fenders. The four older kids sat one forward, one back to fit in the backseat, hanging on to either a velvet rope or a strap hanging by the window. Being the smallest, I sat between my parents in the front. After parking, we held hands and followed mom and dad like ducklings. We lined up by the window overlooking the runways and imagined all of the 'exotic' places they were flying to—Chicago, New York, Florida, California...

9/11 changed all that. No more open entry beyond the lobby area; only ticket-holders allowed. No more meeting loved ones at the gate. No more watching the planes take off or land. Now we have to stand in line and show IDs, take off our shoes, coats, and belts and walk through a metal detector while our luggage is x-rayed. At first, the loud speaker would alert us that "we are now on orange alert!" but no follow-up instructions as to what one was supposed to do during an orange alert. Eventually people ignored the warning and the airport staff quit making it.

We have adjusted and accepted the change, knowing it is for our safety; a necessary precaution. In years to come, will we be saying things like "remember when we sat and ate together in restaurants?" "Remember when we used to shake hands and it was considered rude not to?" "Remember when we could leisurely shop in stores without wearing a mask?" or "Remember when church was packed and we thought it was a good thing?"

COVID-19 has changed those customs, at least until we have a vaccine---maybe forever. How is "doing church" or "doing Presbytery meetings" going to change? Will we line up in the hall with cones to mark six feet and enter as if we were dropped off an assembly-line belt? Will we sit in chairs six feet apart in staggered rows? Or will we meet in small groups in homes? How will we do communion? Maybe the bread will be served in a disposable cup like the juice. The pastor or deacon will have to wear a mask and gloves when setting up the elements. Potlucks? Coffee fellowship? Bible Study? Sunday school? Will we just hold on for a year and half until the vaccine is available? Or will we become a 'virtual' church/presbytery? Will ZOOM become the norm? How will we stay connected to members who do not have a computer or iphone? Some valley residents still have unreliable internet connection. How can we include them?

When ordained, elders are charged with leading the congregation with "energy, intelligence, imagination and love." (W-4.0404h.) Keeping that in mind, please think and pray about how our presbytery can move forward during the next year or two. We cannot expect to "return to normal". We need to figure out what the new normal will be. I look forward to receiving your ideas/suggestions via email: foxridge@mwt.net.

Blessings to each of you during this Eastertide.

Working together in Christ,

Pastor Cathy Van Landuyt, Moderator