

# Connect, Grow & Go

*To Glorify God as a Disciple-Making Outpost of Kingdom Life*



*Summer, 2020*



## **Venice Presbyterian Church Covid-19 Re-open Plan**

*Philippians 4:4-7<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!<sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be evident to all. The*

*Lord is near.<sup>6</sup> Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.<sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

We have heard this scripture after every Wednesday update, during worship, and ending many prayers. God's goodness is near. As we begin to reopen our doors to our community we are reminded of how important corporate worship is to our souls. God chose this type of weekly celebration not by accident, but to be a community of believers celebrating together kingdom life.

### ***The State of Florida plans to reopen in three phases.***

**Phase One:** Strict social distancing guidelines will remain in place. People are encouraged to wear masks in public. Vulnerable individuals\* should continue to shelter in place. Group of 10 or less may gather if social distancing is respected.

**Phase Two:** Moderate social distancing guidelines will be in effect. Vulnerable individuals\* should remain sheltered in place. Groups of 50 or less may gather if social distancing is respected.

**Phase Three:** Vulnerable individuals\* may resume activity with precautions. Low-risk individuals should consider minimizing time spent in crowded environments.

### ***Phased reopening is based upon:***

**Symptoms:** Downward trajectory of influenza-like illnesses or covid-19 like syndromic cases reported

**Cases:** Downward trajectory of documented cases for 14 days or downward trajectory of positive tests as a total tests for 14 days

**Hospitals:** Treat all patient without crisis cases AND robust testing program in place for at-risk healthcare workers, including emerging anti body testing.

**\*Vulnerable individuals** – elderly individuals, individuals with underlying health conditions, including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune system is compromised such as a by chemotherapy for cancer and other conditions requiring such therapy (Information from whitehouse.gov)

## Venice Presbyterian Church Covid-19 Re-open Plan

<b>Nationwide Features</b>	<b>Phase One</b>	<b>Phase Two</b>	<b>Phase Three</b>	<b>Normal Operation</b>
<i>Social Distancing</i>	Strict	Moderate – more freedom to gather with caution	Limited – Freedom to gather with caution	Normal
<i>Vulnerable Populations*</i>	Stay Home	Stay Home	Moderate Distancing Required	Discretionary
<i>Max Groups/Crowds</i>	10	50	No Size Limits/Use Discretion	No Size Limits

<b>VPC Response</b>	<b>Phase One</b>	<b>Phase Two</b>	<b>Phase Three</b>	<b>Normal Operation</b>
<i>Sunday Worship Services</i>	Online Only	Online Only	Gather with caution	Regular Schedule/Online
<i>Wednesday Communion</i>	Cancel	Cancel	Cancel	Regular Schedule
<i>Life Groups</i>	Online Only	Online Only	Regular Schedule/Online	Regular Schedule
<i>Children's Programs</i>	Cancel	Cancel	Reinstate – with caution	Regular
<i>Youth Programs</i>	Cancel	Cancel	Reinstate – with caution	Regular
<i>Office Volunteers</i>	Limited Operation	Limited Operation	Normal Operation	Normal Operation
<i>Choir</i>	Cancel	Cancel	Reinstate with caution	Regular Schedule
<i>Ministry Events</i>	Cancel	Cancel due to vulnerable congregation	Some events may return to normal	Normal Operation
<i>Special Services (Memorials, Weddings)</i>	Cancel	Cancel due to vulnerable congregation	Resume memorial services without receptions	As Scheduled
<i>Glass House Coffee Café</i>	Closed	Closed	Closed	Reinstate with Caution
<i>Outside Groups (Non-IPC)</i>	Cancel	Cancel	Small groups with sufficient time between scheduled rooms – no food	TBD

***Dates of each phase opening will be determined by Florida/National guidelines, prayer, and God's leading***

# 2020 Venice Presbyterian Church Re-Open Survey Results



*Thank you for participating in our survey. Here is what you said regarding the re-opening of the church.*

When the State of Florida moves into Phase 3 and VPC returns to in person worship, how will you feel about returning to church?

Answer Choice	%	#
I will return the first opportunity we have	21.69%	64
<b>I will return at the first opportunity but with some concerns and precautions</b>	<b>30.85%</b>	<b>91</b>
I will wait several additional weeks before I attend	28.81%	85
It may be quite a while before I return	17.29%	51



In addition to the State of Florida moving into Phase 3 opening, what other signals will you look for before you return to church?



Answer Choice	%	#
Local businesses are fully open	22.81%	65
Local restaurants seating areas are fully open again	18.60%	53
Schools plan to open in the fall	21.40%	61
<b>The number of COVID-19 cases near me are very small/limited</b>	<b>58.25%</b>	<b>166</b>
Most social distancing recommendations have been lifted	34.39%	98
Not sure	23.51%	67

What precautions, if any, do you plan to take when you return to church/worship?

Answer Choice	%	#
I will wear a facemask	63.95%	188
I will sit/stand in places where I can be 6 feet from others	64.97%	191
<b>I will avoid physical contact (hand shaking, hugging etc.)</b>	<b>87.41%</b>	<b>257</b>
I will avoid crowded hallways	66.67%	196
I will bring hand sanitizer	55.78%	164
None of these	6.80%	20



## What precautions, if any, do you expect our church to take?



Answer Choice	%	#
Limit handouts	58.80%	167
Remove hymnals, Bibles, from back of the pews	42.61%	121
Use a new method to collect tithes and offering	72.18%	205
Encourage social distancing in sanctuary seating	79.23%	225
Prop doors open so people do not have to touch the handles	73.24%	208
Provide hand sanitizer	63.38%	180
<b>Discourage shaking of hands</b>	<b>86.27%</b>	<b>245</b>
Limit congregational singing	45.42%	129

Would you be willing to attend Bible Studies and Small Groups as they typically meet?

Answer Choice	%	#
Yes	31.71%	91
No	3.83%	11
Not right away	29.97%	86
I do not participate in a small group or Bible study	34.49%	99



Which of the following describes the attendance level at which you would be comfortable attending a worship service?



Answer Choice	%	#
Filled to capacity – every seat filled	4.53%	13
3/4 filled – some empty seats but no empty rows	15.68%	45
<b>1/2 filled – most people have empty seats near them</b>	<b>41.46%</b>	<b>119</b>
1/4 filled – most people have empty seats beside & in front of them	20.56%	59
None of these – at least right away	13.94%	40

Would you be willing to attend a worship service at a different time than you typically attend to allow people to be more spread out in the sanctuary?

Answer Choice	%	#
<b>Yes</b>	<b>87.85%</b>	<b>253</b>
No	12.15%	35

Would you be willing to register for the worship service you plan to attend to help plan for social distancing in worship?

Answer Choice	%	#
<b>Yes</b>	<b>93.77%</b>	<b>271</b>
No	6.23%	18

Would you be willing to attend a worship service in an overflow room to ensure people are spread out? For example in the sanctuary and the chapel?

Answer Choice	%	#
Yes	74.38%	209
No	3.83%	11

# Monthly Mission Partners *you May have Missed!*

## March Mission Partner, Day 4 Hope

More than 130 children in the Venice area are homeless. They don't have a nice home, can't visit a fine restaurant, or have travel possibilities. They live in a car, motel or homeless camp. They dine on scraps or fast food. They travel by bike or walk since they don't have any other means of travel. Their clothes are not clean or new but hand-me-downs or from Goodwill. They're not able to wash in a nice bathroom. And more than 1,000 people continue to move to Florida every day, some of whom are in these same circumstances.

For the last four years, VPC with Day 4 Hope, has sponsored approximately 120 homeless children per year to prepare them to return to school with new clothes, new shoes, haircut, medical exam, eye exam, dental exam, new backpack filled with school supplies, books, hygiene products and groceries for them and their family – all at no cost to the child or family.



Hope 4 Communities and Day 4 Hope started in 2010, serving 250 children in Sarasota. Last year VPC served 116 children from four schools: Venice Elementary, Garden Elementary, Laurel Nokomis Elementary, and Taylor Ranch Elementary. Countywide, 2,865 children were served. This year we hope to serve 130 children here at VPC and over 3,000 county-wide. VPC will serve homeless children from eight schools, the same four from last year plus Englewood Elementary, Sky Academy Venice, Sky Academy Englewood and the Montessori school on Pinebrook.

Contact Fred Gossman  
[fredandcindy89@gmail.com](mailto:fredandcindy89@gmail.com)





## ***Day 4 Hope, July 25, 9 AM - 2 PM***

How do you accomplish a Day 4 Hope to serve 125 children and their families and maintain healthy distancing and not touch the kids? You cannot! COVID-19 has totally changed the way we will accomplish Day 4 Hope this year: a drive-through only with no touching and healthy distancing. Plus, in communicating with the school counselors the need has radically grown from last year where we served about 125 kids, this year we will serve 215 kids.

Because of COVID-19, we have had to reduce the process to the basics, which means we will provide only the backpack full of school supplies, care bag with hygiene products and hopefully groceries from All Faiths Foodbank and fruit and vegetables from Detwiler's, plus three gift cards (for clothes and shoes) per child. We have created a safety protocol to protect the team members from the vehicle occupants picking up the supplies and between team members. Since the event will happen on July 25th, a hot humid day, between 9:00 AM and 2:00 PM, we are asking for help from the teenagers to carry the goods to the cars. We will continue to show God's love and care for those less fortunate and your generosity has created the funds to accomplish this event.

Also, our friends at Grace United Methodist Church have stepped up to sponsor children again this year. Please pray for the Day 4 Hope team as we make final preparations.

*Thank you for your love for the kids,  
Fred Gossman*

### ***WE NEED YOUR HELP!***

***A Special Gift of Love will be offered on Day 4 Hope to the children as they prepare to return to school this fall.***

***We would love to offer 200 student masks as they receive their backpacks and supplies at VPC.***

***You can help by sewing, donating fabric, or purchasing masks.***

***Please contact Sheryl Morford 412-612-0515 for details.***

## April Mission Partner, Laurel Civic Association



**Laurel Civic** began 50 years ago to represent the needs of the Nokomis-Laurel community by providing innovative and vital programming and resources for residents in Sarasota county, primarily to low income and at-risk children and their families.

Our programs make an impact to reduce food insecurity, prevent homelessness with rental and utility assistance, promote equal educational opportunities for children and provide safe supervised care after school and in the summer. We help the children and families we serve through programs that educate, provide positive social interactions, and lead to self-sufficiency.

Each year, Laurel Civic programs provide services to more than 1,000 adults and 500 children.

### **EMPOWERING YOUTH PROGRAM includes:**

- After-School Homework Assistance
- Earning by Learning Summer Reading Program
- Teen Empowerment
- Kid's Cafe

We provide services to prevent hunger and homelessness and work to empower and support families to enhance skills that lead to self-sufficiency.

### **ADULT PROGRAM includes:**

- USDA Food Distribution (3rd Wednesday of each month)
- LIHEAP Intake, Assistance for low income families with heat and energy bills
- SEASON OF SHARING, Application intake for assistance with rent and mortgages as well as youth and summer camp scholarships

- ACCESS Partner, Computer access to the Department of Children & Families to apply or update applications for food stamps, Temporary Cash Assistance, and Medicaid

### **Laurel Civic also responds to community-wide needs when they develop:**

- COVID-19 Response
- Hurricane Assistance
- Community Development – Neighbors helping neighbors through community clean-ups, volunteer opportunities, and social interactions promotes good citizenship and encourages making positive changes in the community.

By addressing short- and- long term needs, we help people meet the challenges that arise from living on the margins.

Contact Tom Hoffman for more information, [hoffmant1994@gmail.com](mailto:hoffmant1994@gmail.com)



## May Mission Partner, Agape Flights



**Agape Flights** mission is to provide excellent aviation service delivering cargo, mail and humanitarian aid to missionary partners serving Christ, carrying hope to the nations of the Caribbean.

Nearly 20 million people live in the areas regularly reached by Agape's flights to Haiti, the Dominican Republic and the Bahamas. More than 350 missionary families rely on Agape Flights to transport the mail and supplies they need while living and working on the mission field in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and the Bahamas. Agape Flights is an important state side connection for missionaries — by serving as their “home” address, by providing dependable mail

service and the personalized cargo service the missionaries need.

Agape Flights also delivers humanitarian aid and religious supplies into Cuba via the Cuban Council of Churches and expedites relief supplies during disasters and emergencies.

Agape's affiliated missionary partners meet the plane and serve as the distribution network on the ground to ensure provisions reach their intended destination — orphanages, medical clinics, hospitals, schools and churches. In the hands of missionaries, building supplies become homes, churches and schools. A water pump provides clean water for an entire community. Bibles and

teaching materials become resources for discipleship. And medical supplies save lives.

Agape Flights receives and distributes supplies through the missionaries and their ministries: medicine, medical supplies, nutritional supplements, Bibles, school and office supplies, building materials and other needed items. Agape Flights also speeds relief supplies during disasters and emergencies.

Weekly mission flights are fueled through the generosity of our donors.

When you support Agape Flights, you're investing in the Kingdom ministry of more than 350 missionary families.

[www.agapeflights.com](http://www.agapeflights.com)

## June Mission Partner, Habitat for Humanity

**Habitat South Sarasota** is part of a global, nonprofit housing organization operating on Christian principles that seeks to put God's love into action by bringing people together to build homes, communities, and hope.

Habitat for Humanity offers the dream of home ownership to those who would otherwise not be able to afford a home of their own. The new homeowners actually help build the house alongside many dedicated volunteers in the community. Habitat sells the house to the homeowner at cost and finances the mortgage at a zero interest rate.

Habitat for Humanity South Sarasota County, Inc. is part of a global, nonprofit housing organization operating on Christian principles that seeks to put God's love into action by bringing people together to build homes, communities and hope. Habitat for Humanity builds affordable homes for low-income partners in South Sarasota County. Since 1992 they have



rehabilitated and/or built over 100 homes, housing over 325 local residents with over 200 of them being children.

Habitat South Sarasota partner families work side by side with community volunteers for a required 300 "sweat equity" hours to build safe, decent affordable houses. They must attend 8 two-and-a-half hour homeowner classes and 1 eight-hour HUD certified "First Time Homebuyer Workshop". Individuals become homeowners through our program reducing their dependence on community, social and financial services. These are substantial benefits for those individuals and particularly positive for the next generation. Every year, Habitat for

Humanity Sarasota relies on more than 800 volunteers to support our mission. Volunteers help keep the homes affordable for qualified homebuyers. It is our goal to help you find the volunteer assignment that best suits your skills, interests, and schedule.

Volunteer on the construction of a new home or help with a home renovation. A half-day commitment (7:30 am – 12:00 pm) is required and we build on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday each week. Weekday volunteers are our greatest need. Must



be at least 16 years old to volunteer on a build site.

Volunteering is a great way to have fun, meet and make new friends, and get involved in your community and Habitat has many opportunities to help find the right volunteering fit for you.

### **Construction**

Volunteers needed, skilled or unskilled in various phases of home building.

### **Office Work**

If you would like to assist in the office, we are frequently in need of volunteers for handling phones, mail, data entry and other clerical duties

### **Restore**

We are in need of volunteers as cashiers, sales help, prep help and stock help.

### **Committee member**

We are always looking for help on our various committees that support the Habitat mission.

### **Mission Contacts**

Christina McCauley  
[cmccauley@HabitatSouthSara-sota.org](mailto:cmccauley@HabitatSouthSara-sota.org)

### **National**

[www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org)

### **Local**

[www.habitatsouthsarasota.org](http://www.habitatsouthsarasota.org)

## **July Mission Partner, C.A.M.**

The mission of the Community Assistance Ministry (C.A.M.) is to meet the urgent needs of the residents of Venice and Nokomis, FL and the homeless, with dignity and respect. Many of those served find themselves in the situation of having to decide between paying rent or putting food on the table for their family. Through food donations from the community, church members, and various "food partners" from whom we purchase food at a discount, we do what we can to make their choice a little easier.

C.A.M. also believes that the spiritual and emotional needs of their guests must be met, as well as the physical. To help meet these needs they have Stephen Ministers on site to offer prayer, support, and counseling.

C.A.M. provides the indigent in our area with a place they can come to that is safe and offers fellowship and a sense of community. They are treated with dignity and respect, are given a hot lunch, food to take home and an opportunity to interact in a meaningful way with Stephen Ministers.

C.A.M. provides a hot lunch Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, as well as food to take home (enough to prepare 3 meals a day for 9 days). As well as limited financial assistance when available.

C.A.M. is manned by numerous dedicated and compassionate individuals who give freely of their time each week. With only one part time paid staff member it is essential to have committed volunteers. There are volunteer positions for everyone who wants to serve.

Volunteer-need: summer volunteers and ongoing help in Stephen Ministry and Veggie Spouts truck.

Annual, Bi-Annual or regular events, trips or fundraisers for this mission

- Distribute 1600 Turkeys for Thanksgiving
- Distributes Christmas Toys to 134 families
- Postal Carriers' food drive
- Brush with Kindness
- Day4Hope

[www.trinitypc.org](http://www.trinitypc.org)

## August Mission Partner, Center of Hope

The Center of Hope assists those in need – the homeless, veterans, single-parent families, the elderly, the working poor – by providing a variety of services to help improve the health and economic conditions in our community. Center of Hope is one of 6 entry points throughout Sarasota and Manatee counties to provide clothing, housing, and fellowship for the homeless community.

- Backpacks
- Bicycles
- Birth Certificates
- Blankets
- Daily Bus Passes
- Clothing
- Counseling Referrals
- Mom's Morning Out (Day Care)
- Dental Referral
- Dress for Success
- FPL Financial Assistance
- Food Stamps/ Medicaid
- Perishable and Non-Perishable
- Eye Referrals
- Health Clinics
- Hygiene Products
- Information/References
- Legal IDs
- Non-Prescription Items
- Resume Services



- School Supplies
- Season of Share
- Applications:
- 99 Help with Water, FPL, and Rent
- Assistance

For more information, contact Christine Hart,  
[hart34223@gmail.com](mailto:hart34223@gmail.com)

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### 3 Cents-a-Meal



We are guessing your change is over-flowing in your 3 Cents-a-Meal containers...no worries! **You can use any container** to save your change. Simply drop your coins in any old bag or container! Save up and when we gather together we anticipate a wide variety of containers busting at the seams with God's bounty. Thank you for keeping 3 Cents-a-Meal in the forefront of your hearts!

Contact Christine Hart,  
[hart34223@gmail.com](mailto:hart34223@gmail.com)



## *A/V Update*

### *Greetings, church family!*

While many aspects of church life are in a lull during quarantine, the A/V booth has been a busy place! Our live-stream is top notch and we have worked hard to get it there! However, I'm sure you noticed some of the technical difficulties we have had through the end of May. I can assure you that the staff is working together as a team to bring Sunday worship, devotions, and musical selections to you regularly.

We have made improvements in the software that we are using. I am excited about the many new features that are included with this new technology. I know it seems commonplace now, but the lyrics and titles that are layered over the service videos were added as we began

the COVID shutdown. When you arrive back on campus, you'll notice that we are able to control our displays as well as having text on the live video feed online.

Another struggle that we have been working to overcome is our internet connection in the sanctuary. We made improvements over much of the campus this past year, but didn't bring our fastest speeds to the sanctuary. With our new software and increased streaming, we desperately needed the best internet on our computers that are bringing you each week's service. This is something that was fixed right away and was further rectified by adding physical cabling; so there is more reliable internet speed powering our most important machines.

As Pastor Chris mentioned recently, we have been recording our services during the week and playing them for you on Sundays. This is to ensure that you have the most reliable service possible. We will continue to do this until we are confident in the internet and technology in the sanctuary.

The A/V team and I have been learning so much as we troubleshoot to make sure you can see and hear our Pastoral team each week! Please join us in praying for smooth services and technology that works just as it's supposed to. Also, pray that the Lord protects the church grounds from lightning during this season in which it can wreak so much havoc. Thank you for your patience as we have adapted to a very different focus for our worship services and continued prayer as we, Lord willing, transition back to running services back on campus soon.

*In His Service,  
Genna Sarikoki*

# Spiritual Zoom!

*Join us Sunday Morning at 10am for our Online Worship Service until we can meet again in person.*

*You can find us at [www.venicepres.org](http://www.venicepres.org) or our Youtube Channel: Venice Presbyterian Church*

## *Join us for our Sunday Morning Virtual Coffee Hour*

*Sunday at 9:15am*



- *Look at the week ahead*
- *Get acquainted.*
- *Prepare our hearts for worship*
- *Go to [www.venicepres.org](http://www.venicepres.org) to join*



## *Thursday Prayer Session with Pastor Chris*

*Join in this Zoom prayer session during the quarantine. This is a live, interactive session where you can talk with Pastor Chris. Go to [www.venicepres.org](http://www.venicepres.org) to join.*

## Music and the Word

Join Jamal, Fridays at 1:00pm for Music and the Word. In spirit, we will join Jamal around the piano to sing some of our favorite hymns and worship choruses. We will also hear Jamal read words of encouragement from the inspired Word of God. This extended time of worship is sure to refresh your spirit. Go to [www.venicepres.org](http://www.venicepres.org) to join.

*He who sings prays twice. - St. Augustine*



## 4 Ways to Give

*Thank you for your continued support during the quarantine.*



Text Giving  
73256  
venicepres +  
amount



Online Giving  
[venicepres.org](http://venicepres.org)



Electronic  
Funds Transfer  
(EFT)



Cash/Check  
825 the Rialto  
Venice, FL 34285

## ***How have you been blessed during this time?*** ***Your responses.***

We know this has been a scary time but we also know that God does not abandon us. We asked in our recent emails to have you share how God has blessed you during COVID 19 pandemic and subsequent quarantine. Here are some of your responses, names have been omitted for privacy. Thank you for your contributions.



During this changing time, God has directed my steps to reach out to others in my neighborhood, the church, and CAM. God lead me to find a source of hand made face masks for the volunteers at CAM to use as they provide boxes of food to 150 families each week. Flowers in my yard have proved to be a blessing to shut in neighbors. The sound of

birds on our lanai has filled me with a sense of God's peace in my life. Books not read are now being read in a time of leisure. I have found that a slower pace of live has brought me closer to Christ and others who serve Him. I know VPC will reopen in God's time with the spiritual guidance of the church's leaders.

*God's blessing on each of you.*

I had to think about this statement for a while. As I reflect on this time vs. other times in my life; there are no differences. Like you, I've had disappointment, sadness, and blessings in my life. I've always been an optimistic, yet realistic person. This pandemic and political climate is very challenging. I have a church family, a loving family, and a friendship family. Together we pray, cry, sigh, and rejoice. My son went to Detroit, Michigan to the convention center Hospital to work with COVID 19 patients, I was worried, stressed, and scared! The "families" were very supporting and compassionate! This is absolutely the best example of love and kindness to me. If everyone would reach out to one; this would be great.

Hopefully soon, phase 4 will see us together, in the meantime, the Pastors', the prayers, and compassion coming from The Venice Presbyterian Church, will be with you.

*We have been Blessed to be deemed an essential business here in a difficult state, Illinois. . . Our business has been doing surprisingly well during these difficult times. Praise be to God!*



*There are so many ways we have been blessed.* First the people: those who called on me in re-hab, my husband's devotion daily and the jobs he performs for me now that I'm home, even though he was furloughed (but was that part of a Plan-to be there for me?)

Grateful that we have a home.

Our ability to shop for and share our extra stuff with others, paper goods, soap and all. Caring for neighbors' plants while they work their way uneasily back north. Getting an Alexa Echo for Mother's Day from my son in North Carolina so I can meet with and talk with my step-great grand-children. Being grateful that my granddaughter in Massachusetts can work in a doctor's office until she will be able to teach. That her dad is being allowed to work from home next week after his furlough of two months. That my sister's family is managing all right and her husband is still fighting his cancer valiantly with new treatments. That some of her grandchildren are able to get jobs.

Neighbors who can't stop cooking and bring extras to us.

Receiving old snapshots of childhood from relatives that they found while cleaning things out.

Having our garden share wonderful things for us in the kinds of birds that we don't always have, an osprey nest in a neighbor's tree, hummingbirds and many others besides, the butterfly population that grows, the many plants and flowers that show us God's beauty.

But one thing that stands out for me is that the internet is alive with Email. People all over the country I don't write to often, though they are good friends and relatives, are in touch, sending funny jokes and pictures so we can all have a laugh. Comparing our inabilities to see our doctors or go out to eat or whatever. No one is in really bad humor about it all. It is a wait it out, this too shall pass kind of thing.

Happy to have churches on-line.

We are grateful for having our Faith, being American, being in the World of Humanity, willing to help or pray for whoever, whatever, and wherever we can.

*That is a Gift. Thanks.*

*Lighting up our tree for everyone.*

During this time, we would also like to remind you of our 2020 Bible verse that was selected by Pastor Chris at the beginning of the year.

***Philippians 4:4-7***

***4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!<sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup> Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.***

# Ten Days of Prayer

## Day 1, BEGINNING TEN DAYS OF PRAYER

### **SCRIPTURE**

Acts 1:12-14

### **OBSERVE**

Forty after the Resurrection, Jesus ascended into heaven. Prior to his ascension, Jesus told the disciples not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Holy Spirit: "In a few days, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5).

For the next ten days, the disciples "joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and Jesus' brothers" (Acts 1:14). The women probably included those who went to the tomb on Easter and other women who had followed Jesus. The Bible indicates that Jesus had brothers (Matthew 12:46, Mark 3:31, Luke 8:19). All these followers of Jesus waited, as their Master had told them, for something more wonderful than they could imagine. And as they waited, they devoted themselves to prayer.

### **APPLY**

Jesus promised the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Bible teaches that all who are in Christ have the Holy Spirit, and that we are to be filled again and again with the Holy Spirit in our daily lives (Ephesians 5:18). The Holy Spirit was poured out on the Day of Pentecost. And at times throughout history, God has graciously given fresh outpourings of the Spirit – often known as times of revival or "great awakenings." A common theme of

these great revivals is that they are often born in prayer – as God's people devote themselves to praying, seeking God, and asking the Lord to send a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Could this be another time when God is preparing to send revival and spiritual awakening to His people? What do you imagine a time of awakening to look like? What might it look like in our church – and in the world?

### **PRAY**

#### *For Yourself*

- Pray for your own need of more of the Holy Spirit in your life.

#### *For VPC*

- **AUDIO-VISUAL TECHNOLOGY:** Give thanks for the technology that has allowed us to remain connected during this pandemic. Pray for the continued use of technology – that nothing would keep people from hearing the Gospel and being able to worship with others in the Body of Christ during this time of separation. Pray for the AV system and the whole team of staff and volunteers who offer their talents so that our ministry can continue and expand over the internet – that we might proclaim the Good News beyond our congregation to people all over the world!

#### *For the Global Church*

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to fall afresh on the Church in Africa

## Day 2, THIRST

### **SCRIPTURE**

John 7:37-39

### **OBSERVE**

Jesus is teaching at the Feast of Tabernacles – the final feast in the Jewish calendar year. The Feast of Tabernacles recalls the time when God dwelt among the Israelites during the Exodus: God’s holy presence filling the wilderness Tabernacle. The Feast also looked forward to the day when God’s presence would again “tabernacle” with His people.

Jesus proclaims that the day is coming – when the Holy Spirit of God will not only dwell with God’s people, but will dwell within God’s people.

And our Lord indicates that a pre-condition for being filled with the Holy Spirit is to be thirsty: “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.” (Luke 7:37)

### **APPLY**

What’s my level of spiritual thirst these days? Beyond wanting to be able to go to church again, and to resume some semblance of “normal” life, how much am I thirsting for the “streams of living water flowing within” that Jesus promises?

What might it look like when a church is really thirsting for these streams of living water? What might it look like when people are really filled with these streams of living water? What might it look like for me to be filled these streams of living water?

### **PRAY**

#### *For Yourself*

- Pray for God to fill you with more thirst for the Holy Spirit – with a longing to be filled the streams of living water.

#### *For VPC*

- THE PROCLAMATION OF GOD’S WORD: Pray for the preaching ministry of VPC, that all who prepare and speak messages will be filled with the Holy Spirit as they earnestly study God’s Word and rely on God’s strength. Pray that every message glorifies God, exalts Jesus, and carries the power of the Spirit. Pray that listeners would have their hearts tuned to what God would have them hear, and that the preaching of VPC would always be faithful to the Scriptures and draw people closer to Christ.

#### *For the Global Church*

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to fall afresh on the church in Asia.





## Day 3, EXPECTANCY

### **SCRIPTURE**

Ephesians 3:14-21

### **OBSERVE**

Paul prays for the church at Ephesus. What details do you notice about Paul's prayer? Notice especially the final note of incredible expectation (verse 20): "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is work within us ..."

Wow! What a powerful expression of expectation! What an affirmation of God's power!

### **APPLY**

How might God be calling me to have a greater sense of expectancy in my life? How can I be praying for our church with greater expectancy – instead of just feeling like "things never change"?

### **PRAY**

#### *For Yourself*

- Pray for that we would grow in our expectancy for the Lord to move in our lives.
- Give thanks for what we have seen God do in the past

#### *For VPC*

- **FAMILY MINISTRIES:** Pray for the Kingdom impact that VPC can have with children, youth, and their families. Pray that God would continue to awaken spiritual hunger and thirst in the families in our community. Pray that God would continue strengthening and encouraging all who serve in our ministries with the next generations.

#### *For the Global Church*

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to fall afresh on churches in Australia and the South Pacific.

## Day 4, REPENTANCE

### **SCRIPTURE**

Acts 2:36-41

### **OBSERVE**

This passage is the conclusion of Peter's epic sermon on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-41). Sometimes we flinch about the whole subject of "repentance," because we don't like to remind ourselves or others that we disregard God's Word, disobey God's will, and need a change of direction in our lives. Repentance means changing our direction – turning away from the paths that only lead to emptiness, and turning towards life in the Spirit.

A common characteristic of the great spiritual awakenings and revivals in history is the widespread awareness by people of their need for repentance. This longing for repentance began in churches – as Christians acknowledged the many ways they were not living fully for Christ.

### **APPLY**

Where are the areas of my life where I need to recognize my own personal need for repentance? In what ways am I continuing to go in directions that lead to emptiness?



### **PRAY**

#### *For Yourself*

- Pray for personal areas of your life which need to be brought to the Lord in confession
- Pray that God would reveal areas which need to be confessed
- Pray that you will rejoice in God's mercy and forgiveness, and open yourself to new directions and dimensions of life in the Holy Spirit.

#### *For VPC*

- **WORSHIP AND MUSIC MINISTRIES:** Pray that people's hearts would be refreshed and inspired to deeper praise of God through the Sunday worship livestream and Jamal's new "Music and the Word" broadcasts. As we wait for the return to in-person worship, pray that God would make a way for worshippers to express their heart-felt praise to God; and that every person and every generation would come to worship God in Spirit and in truth.

#### *For the Global Church*

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to fall afresh on churches in Australia and the South Pacific.

## Day 5, SURRENDER

### **SCRIPTURE**

Matthew 16:24-25

### **OBSERVE**

These words of Jesus are probably words we've heard many times before ... maybe so often, that the force of what Jesus saying has become blunted. Jesus invites his followers to take up a cross. Jesus is, of course, pointing to his own cross. But he's also employing the idea of crucifixion to emphasize the painfulness of surrendering things for a greater glory.

### **APPLY**

What are things, habits, and attitudes in my life that get in the way of my transformation in Christ?

It's OK to acknowledge the painfulness of letting go of these barriers to abundant life. Many of these things have helped us cope with pain and disappointment. Sometimes the hardest part of the Christian life is not letting go of bad things for the sake of better things; it's letting go of good things in order to receive God's BEST.

### **PRAY**

#### *For Yourself*

- Pray that God will show you what things are getting in the way of abundant life in Christ and the Holy Spirit.
- Pray for the courage, strength, and resolve to surrender the things that hinder fullness of life in God.

#### *For VPC*

- **FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP.** Pray with thanksgiving to God for His faithfulness in providing ample financial resources for VPC's operating needs and our mission partners during this season of COVID-19. Pray that every person in VPC would live with wonder and gratitude for Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, and that the awareness of God's mercy would inspire us to live with open hands that give instead of clenched fists that horde. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill every member of our congregation with the spiritual fruit of generosity – that God will be glorified in ways yet to be imagined!

#### *For the Global Church*

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to fall afresh on churches in Latin America and the Caribbean.



## Day 6, ASK

### **SCRIPTURE**

Luke 11:9-13

### **OBSERVE**

Jesus offers this teaching about asking and seeking in the context of a larger lesson about prayer (Luke 11:1-13). Jesus stresses that our Heavenly Father is eager to give us good gifts when we ask in faith – specifically, God will give us more of the Holy Spirit when we ask him (Luke 11:12). Building on Jesus' teaching, the New Testament epistle of James instructs: "You have not, because you ask not" (James 4:2).

### **APPLY**

What is my experience of asking for things (from parents, relatives, friends, teachers, employers)? How might my personal experiences of asking and receiving (or not receiving) be impacting my approach to prayer?

How much do I ask God for more of the Holy Spirit in my life? Do I really believe that if I ask, God will give me the Holy Spirit? Am I willing and eager to ask, to seek, to knock?

### **PRAY**

#### *For Yourself*

- Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you, and to move in your life.
- Ask for more of the specific fruit that the Spirit produces (Galatians 5:22-23): more love, more joy, more peace, more patience, more kindness, more generosity (goodness), more faithfulness, more gentleness, more self-control.

#### *For VPC*

- PRAYER: Pray for God to fill the people of VPC with a greater hunger for prayer and a more passionate desire to pray.

#### *For the Global Church*

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to fall afresh on the church in the Middle East. As we pray for this region of the world, pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6).



## Day 7, HOPE

### **SCRIPTURE**

Romans 15:13

### **OBSERVE**

What a blessing for us and for our world in this time of the coronavirus: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”



Paul offers this benediction as he’s concluding his letter to the Romans. It’s an epistle filled with Gospel hope. In the verse immediately preceding, Paul quotes Isaiah 11:10 to announce how the Good News is expanding beyond Judaism to include all the peoples on earth: Jesus (from the Root of Jesse) “will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him.”

### **APPLY**

How might God be working in this pandemic to bring Gospel hope to people all over the world? Specifically, how might we (the church) best demonstrate our hope in the midst of this worldwide crisis – and in our everyday interactions in our homes and among people with whom we’re in contact?

### **PRAY**

#### *For Yourself*

- Pray this verse (Romans 15:13), making it personal for you: “God of hope, fill me with all joy and peace as I trust in you! Make me overflow with hope by the power of your Holy Spirit!”

#### For VPC

- **CARING MINISTRIES:** Pray for all those giving care to those who are hurting – pastors, Stephen Ministers, Shepherds, small group leaders, and members who are reaching out in compassion to one another. Pray that God will fill them with inextinguishable hope as they trust in the God of hope. Pray that VPC will overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

#### *For the Global Church*

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to fall afresh on the church in North America.



## Day 8, OBEDIENCE

### **SCRIPTURE**

John 14:15-27

### **OBSERVE**

Jesus offers this teaching about obedience in the context of his “Farewell Discourse” that John remembered from the Last Supper (Luke 13-17). This particular section (14:15-27) begins with the straightforward statement: “If you love me, you will obey what I command.” Jesus reinforces the importance of obedience throughout this passage, reminding the disciples (and us) that his words are not merely human teaching, but divine instruction from heaven. Jesus indicates that the Holy Spirit will enable us to live in obedience to Christ by reminding us of what Jesus said (John 14:26) and by guiding us into all truth (John 16:13). We need the Holy Spirit to lead us in the way of obedience that brings life.

### **APPLY**

Evan Roberts, a prominent preacher during the Welsh Revival (1904-05), said that one sign of spiritual awakening is people recognizing their need to obey the Holy Spirit. When we are earnestly seeking to walk in step with the Holy Spirit, we cherish the Word of God – because the Holy Spirit guides us into all truth.

Much of modern and post-modern culture suggests that morality can vary from person to person, and that many principles of Scripture no longer apply in today’s world. What might be some ways that I wrestle with obedience to Christ and the Scriptures – preferring instead to be guided by popular opinion or my own sense of right/wrong?

### **PRAY**

#### *For Yourself*

- Pray that your will would be in tune with the Holy Spirit’s, so that you will walk easily in obedience to God’s Word day-by-day.

#### *For VPC*

- **LEADERSHIP.** Pray for the leadership of VPC – the Session, the Board of Trustees, the Staff, all leaders of ministries and committees. If you don’t know all their names, simply pray for as many leaders as you can remember. As today we are praying for more obedience, pray specifically that the leadership of VPC will always remain obedient to Christ and to the truth of Scripture.

#### *For the Global Church*

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to fall afresh on the church in South America.



## Day 9, WITNESS

### SCRIPTURE

Acts 1:8

### OBSERVE

These are the last words of Jesus' earthly ministry that are recorded by Luke. Jesus proclaims that the disciples will receive the power of the Holy Spirit, and that they will be His witnesses. Jesus also lays out the far-reaching power of the Gospel, which will begin in Jerusalem, the go into all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

The word translated as "witnesses" comes from the Greek word *marturas* – from which we derive the word "martyr." We might feel OK about becoming a witness for Jesus – but a martyr?

Witnessing is high-stakes service for the Kingdom of God. Witnessing means not only speaking about Christ – but demonstrating with our whole life that we belong to Christ. Witnesses for our Lord Jesus Christ are empowered by the Holy Spirit, and filled with boldness and courage to share the life-changing Good News of the Gospel. With such power at work within us, why should we be hesitant or afraid?

### APPLY

All of us who follow Jesus are His witnesses. Yes, some people have a particular gifting for evangelism. But every Christ-follower is called to be a witness – to share the Gospel hope that is within us (1 Peter 3:15). With whom have I shared my hope in Jesus? Whose life has been blessed to know Jesus in a more genuine, personal way through me? Consider these questions – not for the sake of boasting ... nor to feel guilty if it's hard for you to answer these questions.

As you reflect on Acts 1:8, don't lose sight of the fact that we are called to witness in the power of the Holy Spirit, and that

– in the Spirit's power, and trusting that the Spirit is already at work ahead of us – Jesus promises that we will be his witnesses. We won't be embarrassed, or intimidated, or fearful. God will bless the ways we witness through the power of the Holy Spirit!

### PRAY

#### *For Yourself*

- Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal specific people for whom you can be a witness.
- Pray for the continuing empowerment of the Holy Spirit to guide you as you share the hope of Jesus.

#### *For VPC*

- **MISSIONS:** Pray for the mission partners of VPC who are witnesses of Jesus Christ in our community and around the world. If you do not remember all of VPC's specific mission partners, pray for as many as you can recall. (Our mission partners are listed on the VPC website, if you feel called to seek out this information so you can continue praying for them.) Pray that missionaries and mission partners would receive fresh power and encouragement from God, and their Kingdom impact would grow for God's glory.

#### *For the Global Church*

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to sustain and fall afresh on Christians who are persecuted across the globe.



## Day 10, COME, HOLY SPIRIT!

### SCRIPTURE

Acts 2:1-41

### OBSERVE

Jews from many nations were gathered in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost – an annual celebration marking the spring harvest, thanking God for providing the food that is needed for life. The city of Jerusalem was packed with pilgrims attending the Feast. The disciples had been praying for the past ten days, waiting in the city as Jesus had instructed (Acts 1:4).

When the Holy Spirit came as Jesus had promised, people began miraculously speaking (and being understood) in different languages. When the Spirit falls afresh, amazing things can happen!

Peter teaches from the Scriptures that what is happening had been prophesied by Joel. And the point of this dramatic manifestation of the Holy Spirit – indicates Peter – is to draw people's attention to Jesus as the Savior of the world.

### APPLY

You may want to re-read this passage of Scripture – reading it slowly ... vividly imagining the awe of Pentecost ... imagining the sound of different languages, and the wonder and delight of people hearing their own native tongues being spoken ... imagining the preaching of Peter, now transformed from an impetuous fisherman into a mighty witness ... imagining 3000 people baptized in one day! As you conclude these ten days of praying, consider beginning a new commitment to pray. Continue praying for more of the Holy Spirit in your life, in our church, and in the church around the world. Consider how you might continue praying with enthusiasm for revival – never forgetting that revival begins with God's work in each of us.

### PRAY

#### For Yourself

- Pray for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit into your life. You may want to sing: "Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me. Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me!"

#### For VPC

- CONNECTION GROUPS – Pray that every member of VPC would find connection with other believers in the church family – and that, particularly during this time of social isolation, individuals would remain as connected as possible. Pray that a sense of connection would even deepen among our church family – even while we are physically apart. Pray that all connection groups would experience the "streams of living water" of the Holy Spirit as they gather together. Pray that our life together would more and more reflect the Spirit-filled fellowship of the early church (Acts 2:42-47).

#### For the Global Church

- Pray for the church across the globe – beginning with God's churches in the Venice community. We've experienced a pandemic that's affected nations all around the world. Pray that God will revive the church all over the world, sending a pan-awakening that will draw people of every nation, tribe, people and language to our Lord Jesus Christ!



## Church Leadership

Board member contact information is available through the Realm app through your phone or signing in to [www.onrealm.org](http://www.onrealm.org).

### Session

#### TEACHING ELDERS

Christopher Romig  
Carolyn Wilson

#### CLERK OF SESSION

Laurie Wright  
Dick Edmunds  
Tom Hoffman  
Bob Painter  
Bob Allen  
Nick Clemmer  
Sheryl Morford  
Jamal Sarikoki  
Jennie Chaplin  
Carolyn Stephens  
Jim Weeks  
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Anna Marie Brummett  
Bob Jelenchick  
Sydna Zeliff  
Nick Clemmer  
Diane Sharp  
Carol Dickinson

# Our Vision in Action

*To Glorify God As A Disciple-Making Outpost Of Kingdom Life*

#### TEMPORARY OFFICE HOURS

*Closed during quarantine*

#### OFFICE PHONE

941-488-2258  
*Messages will be returned*

#### WORSHIP SERVICE HOURS

Online only, Sunday, 10am  
[www.venicepres.org](http://www.venicepres.org)

#### LIBRARY HOURS

*Closed during quarantine*  
[jchaplin@gmail.com](mailto:jchaplin@gmail.com)

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