



# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BROOKLYN

April \_\_, 2020

Easter Blessings First Church Brooklyn,

In my role as Chair of Stewardship and Spiritual Life, I have the privilege of celebrating our community and all that we have experienced together in the first quarter of this new year. Typically, my letters extoll the vibrancy and warmth of our community – our powerful worship, intentional inclusivity and diverse ministries.

What to do in this season of COVID-19?

The answer to me is clear and the same – celebrate our community and all the ways we continue to offer a centering refuge and beacon of hope to a turbulent world. We are needed now more than ever before. We moved quickly from in-person worship to a virtual space in mid-March without missing a Sunday. Our food pantry transformed from a once a week gathering and offering to a now round the clock social solidarity food pantry that protects the health and safety of volunteers and guests. Bins on the church steps allow hungry neighbors to take what they need and neighbors with extra to leave what they can spare.

It seems so long ago but before we settled in at home, we enjoyed some of the most rousing worship we have created together in several years. Do you recall the jazz big band that came to help us celebrate the life of Martin Luther King? Did you step into Lent with us and our stunning Ashes and Blues worship? We marked Lunar New Year, African American History Month and welcomed home longtime FPC friend Reverend Fred Davie of Union Theological Seminary.

COVID-19 has changed how we worship but it has not stopped our spirit. It has changed how we minister to our community and to one another, but it has not stopped our service. We are learning that we are stronger and more creative than we knew, and we believe that our close connection to Christ and one another will see us through. Our incredible staff, under the leadership of Rev. Adriene, made preparations to transition worship in a way that was not just a stopgap, but a moving and beautiful experience that uplifts our entire community and that has attracted participants from as far away as Indonesia!

In this challenging time, leaders are emerging from among the people who sit in our pews. One church member came to the office in early March to call the more than 25 people she imagined did not have easy e-mail access. She wanted to make sure they knew how to be in touch when in-person worship was suspended. Three other members, one a community organizer and the others committed to hospitality at home, rallied to coordinate practical support for every member of our community – organizing care pods based on neighborhoods. If you haven't signed up to be in a neighborhood-based support "pod," please do! Just email [info@firstchurchbrooklyn.org](mailto:info@firstchurchbrooklyn.org). We want to stay actively in touch and do our best to meet the spiritual and practical needs of everyone in our community.

These are newly uncertain financial times for all of us. For some of us, these days have already turned difficult, and we want you to know that you are not alone. Financial gifts to the church are appreciated and so is your very presence in our community. All that you do to make our beloved Church a vibrant, all-welcoming, nourishing, Christ-centered place is also a gift. There's no place like FPC and you help make that true. We are grateful to you for your time, your talents, your presence among us, and your financial support.

It is too soon to know the financial impact of COVID-19 on our church. But we do know the landscape is shifting for many in our community. We more than understand if your ability to financially support the Church has diminished. At the same time, if you are among those whose income or job permits, please consider increasing your planned support of the Church, and at a minimum please keep that support up. We depend on it. If you submitted an estimate of giving for 2020, we thank you and ask you to check the enclosed record of your progress toward meeting your estimated giving goal.

Finally, because our church staff is off site, and bank visits present challenges in this season, online giving through our website, accessible at either [firstchurchbrooklyn.org](http://firstchurchbrooklyn.org) or [fpc.church](http://fpc.church), is appreciated. Of course, we will still welcome your check if that is your preferred method of giving. Finally, automatic, recurring gifts direct from the bank, can be convenient for donors and they give the church steady, predictable income. Your faithful support allows us to meet operational costs, continue mission projects, and be ready to care as needed for all in our community.

Serving as Stewardship chair is a blessing beyond measure. I get to serve the church I love, and I get to know so many of you amazing people. I send my love and warmest wishes to each of you and your families – for health, and for peace, and for us all to be together again on the other side of this health crisis. In the meantime, join me online for worship and let's continue supporting one another.

Faithfully and gratefully,

David Jones, Stewardship and Spiritual Growth Committee chair