

Frequently Asked Questions

about the upcoming months at Lexington Presbyterian Church

After giving Deb and Bill Klein a rousing sendoff, many of us are understandably wondering “What’s next?” Fortunately, the Presbyterian Church has a time-honored system for handling pastoral transitions and members of the Session are following that playbook faithfully. Our situation is a bit more complicated because it takes place during the Covid19 pandemic, which makes it difficult to communicate with everyone when we can’t meet in person.

To keep everyone up-to-date, Session members have compiled frequently asked questions about the transition -- and some answers! If you have other questions that aren’t addressed here, please email Kimberly Kennedy at admin@lexpres.org and we will answer them in upcoming communications.

It’s important to remember at a time like this that Lexington Presbyterian Church is more than a building and more than one pastor. Our roots date to the eighteenth century and we have weathered wars, fires and The Great Depression. Today, we are a body of 500 dedicated members who can and will continue to put our faith into action.

1) Who’s in charge now?

The Rev. Kelly-Ann Rayle has been hired, under a renewable contract as full-time Stated Supply Pastor through Nov. 30, 2020 and provides an essential bridge between what’s been and what’s to come. She serves as head-of-staff and works with Session and staff to assure that the church’s spiritual life, ministries, and daily business continue “as usual.”

Kelly-Ann’s regular contact/office hours:

Tues –Thursday	9:30 - 5:00
Friday (at the church)	9:30 – 5:00 ish
Sunday (at the church)	12:00 – 2:00

Monday and Saturday are days off.

2) Can I continue to be friends with Deb and Bill?

ABSOLUTELY! Please remember, however, that Bill and the Session, as representatives of the congregation, signed a covenant agreement that states, among other directives, that we will “no longer approach the departing pastor or the pastor’s family regarding issues of pastoral care, congregational life, or future pastoral leadership.”

3) When will we have a new permanent pastor?

Not for a while yet. We have some breathing space to occupy first, giving us time to acclimate to our new circumstances and to explore our calling for a new season.

4) What happens next?

First, we will hire an interim pastor.

The Interim Search Committee has already begun the process to find that person; LPC's Church Ministry Information Form (MIF – our "resume" and job description) has been approved by Shenandoah Presbytery's Committee on Pastoral Transition (CPT) and is now posted on the PC USA search/match site, from which suitable candidates derive. The interim search can take several months and once hired, an interim pastor typically serves about 18 months – some more, some less – until the new pastor is called.

Members of the Interim Search Committee are: Rob Fure (chair), Larry Wiese, Robin Telsch, Susan LeMert, Doug Caldwell, Ron Orendorf and Megan Hobbs.

The interim pastor will fill regular pastoral duties and keep us on track as we take stock of our ministries and life together. In the midst of our regular church life, we'll all have a chance to participate in the Church Assessment Tool (CAT). (Much more on this later!)

Among other things, the interim time lets us stretch our spiritual and organizational muscles, try some new approaches, refresh some traditions, explore our past and present – and dream about the future as God's people in this place. It's worth taking our time and practicing patience, while we wait in expectancy. No matter how eager we are for a new pastor, haste is not helpful!

Once the CAT is completed and evaluated, the Session's Nominating Committee will present a slate of names to the congregation to elect as our Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC). The PNC will begin a similar search process for the installed pastor. (More on this later!)

5) Who runs the Session meetings now that Bill is gone?

The Rev. John Peterson, pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Staunton and good friend of LPC, has been appointed our Moderator of Session by the Shenandoah Presbytery. He moderated the June 2 Session meeting with great spirit, collegiality and expertise; the Session is in good hands!

6) What's happening to our fabulous church staff? Are they being paid? Have their hours been cut?

All of the church staff have been retained and paid, even if they haven't been needed for their normal duties. This includes our custodian, kitchen helper and nursery workers. We plan to continue that as long as necessary.

7) How are the church's finances?

The church's finances are doing surprisingly well, thanks to so many of you maintaining your offerings either online or by mail. The Financial Management Committee will be monitoring expenses closely in coming months.

8) Whom do I call if a family member is sick? Will someone visit them in the hospital?

For urgent needs and emergencies:

Call or text Pastor Kelly-Ann at (434) 327 7330. When hospital or home visitation is possible, she will be there.

For less urgent requests:

Contact Skip Hess. With the help of the Congregational Life Committee, Skip has stepped in to receive prayer requests, organize food distribution and provide for other non-emergency needs.

Home - 540 463-9882,

Cell - 540 784 5472;

Email - william_hessiii@comcast.net

Please go directly to Kelly-Ann or Skip, as needed. While the building is closed, all calls to the church office go to voicemail and cannot always be answered immediately.

9) Who will officiate at funerals?

Pastor Kelly-Ann will officiate at graveside or in the sanctuary, following building use guidelines (very immediate family only for now). Once in place, the interim pastor will assume this duty.

10) What if I want to get married in the church before we have a new pastor? Can I ask Bill to officiate? Can I have a small ceremony in the church?

Following current safety guidelines, weddings may take place, but as always, only with approval of session and in consultation with the pastor (Kelly-Ann for now, interim to follow, but neither Bill nor Deb, per our covenant noted in Q # 2). This means, for the moment, that only the couple and celebrant (and those living in the same household) may be present in the sanctuary for a wedding.

11) When will worship resume in the church building?

At its meeting June 2, Session approved creation of a task force to determine what needs to happen before we can resume worship in the sanctuary. The task force will be mindful of guidelines from the state as well as best-practice advice from health professionals. The task force will make a recommendation to Session, which will make the decision.

Even after in-person worship resumes, it is likely that Zoom or other online services will remain an option for those who are not yet comfortable being in a public space. One plus - during this time, we have learned that we can manage more, enhanced technology, and that it can be a ministry to those who are for any reason, unable to attend worship in person. We hope to continue with an online/audio worship presence, even without a pandemic.

12) Are other activities going to be allowed in the church building before then?

The task force is also considering whether smaller activities – such as committee meetings – could take place in the building, even before sanctuary worship resumes.

13) Who is preaching until we have a permanent pastor?

The Worship Committee is lining up supply ministers until an interim is hired. Pastor Kelly-Ann will be among those preaching, as her time allows. Check the monthly newsletter to see who will be filling the pulpit each week.

14) What about our young people? Will there be Vacation Bible School? Are there any activities for teens?

Yes, VBS is scheduled for July 13-17 in collaboration with Grace Episcopal, Manly Baptist, and Trinity Methodist. It will be an online program, but one with lots of activity, movement and spirit: “Compassion Camp,” brought to us by Illustrated Ministry, whose wonderful graphics and lessons we use for children’s worship bags and pandemic home lessons.

Andy Coffey, a member of LPC, has been hired as part-time youth director and has the youth (rising grades 6 – 12) well in hand. Contact him for more info and watch for news in our weekly/monthly newsletters

PLEASE NOTE: Andy’s new church email: acoffey@lexpres.org

15) Are there still Christian Education classes for adults and our children?

Yes, although they are all currently held online via ZOOM and are adapted for the summer.

Children - Weekly Wednesday morning ZOOM story time with Pastor Kelly-Ann and others serves the younger children (pre-school onward). Worship activities and often, an enrichment video, also go out weekly in time for each Sunday’s worship service.

Adults –
Koinonia – monthly, led by Pastor Kelly-Ann
Lectio Divina – weekly, led by Mary Elena Ward
Book study – forthcoming!

Please check the newsletter calendar for schedules.

16) Are we continuing to do the work of the church, serving those less fortunate and supporting missionaries?

Yes! Although our large gatherings and festive meals have been discontinued for now, many of the church's activities continue through committee work and small groups. LexPres Caring Friends have continued to deliver 12, 40-pound boxes of food each month to Skyline Manor, and Mountainview Terrace in Lexington. The Outreach Committee has allocated money to our five international missions and to several local organizations working on the front line of Covid19 relief close to home. LexPres seamstresses have sewn scores of facemasks for our community helpers and neighbors. The Brittigan Committee continues to respond to support children in crisis. The Campus Life Committee recently made grants to 15 of our college students. And the freezer is full with prepared food that is ready to be shared with those in need. Just alert Kimberly.

17) How do I get into Zoom for Sunday worship?

Watch for the weekly "Lex Pres Worship" email from Kelly-Ann Rayle, sent on Friday or Saturday via Realm (it comes to your personal email) and follow instructions.

If you are stumped:

- 1) Call a friend who has mastered ZOOM
- 2) During the week, email Kelly-Ann for help karayle@lexpres.org
- 3) For Sunday morning trouble shooting, **text or phone** K-A for immediate help, but please do so well before 9:30! (434) 327-7330
- 4) Without a computer, you can also phone in to listen to the live service, using meeting ID # and password # provided in the email. ZOOM access phone numbers are provided at the end of the email.

If you know how to use Zoom for worship and know of someone who doesn't, please reach out to help!