

We're feeling better now.

The week of 7/19, Melody, Jeanne, and I were the only ones in the office (Thank God) and all of us fell ill. (I have their permission to share this) I don't mean some summer cold. We were sick. RSV? Delta--we had the symptoms. We were down for a full week, and now slowly coming back to the land of the living. I cannot even remember a time when I was that sick for this long. This is why Sallie made the decision to shut the presbytery office down (Thank God). We are beyond grateful for her forbearance, care, and flexibility.

If you are waiting on something from us, please be patient and forgive us. I think we all tried to do something each day, but I know for me I couldn't work a full day last week, or for more than an hour or so. This week is better, so we're playing catch up.

Melody reminded me that this started with what felt like common allergies. Pay attention to that.

Mask up. Get the vaccine. Wash your hands. Drink lots of water.

What we know right now is that the new Covid variant is more contagious. The markers are headache (check), congestion (check), sore throat (check), loss of taste/smell (check/check). It's as if the virus said, "You gotta vaccine? OK. I can deal with this." This pandemic season is not over.

I have anxiety around kids going back to school in a few days.

I'm concerned about being in public places unmasked again, especially inside restaurants and grocery stores. And church. Not because of what I'll get (which I got), but because of what I can give even though I'm vaccinated. So I mask everywhere. Finally, I just don't know what to say about all of this. I really don't. I don't know how fighting this virus became a fight against each other, the saddest reality of all.

Matthew 22:36 "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" **37** He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' **38** This is the greatest and first commandment. **39** And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' **40** On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

How are we loving our neighbor as ourselves? What does that look like? What does it sound like? Can we?

We'd better. Caring for your neighbor is indeed caring for yourself. It's a Godly, loving thing to do. It's a "following Jesus" thing to do. Humility is our friend here.

Jeremiah 29:7 “And work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare.”

End of sermon.

Thank you to those of you who have volunteered to come in on September 13 to do the minutes review. Stay tuned. We'll see where things stand in another couple of weeks.

Please see the GA Commissioner application in this week's newsletter. Pray about your own participation, or talk to someone who you think would be of service in that particular way.

Finally, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jmg86CRBBtw>

Holy God,

You heal all of our diseases, so true; AND You redeem our life from the Pit.

We pray to be healed of the fight against each other because of this virus. We repent of this sin and ask Your forgiveness. Let us be molded in the image of Jesus Christ.

We pray to love our neighbor as ourselves.

We lift up our brothers and sisters in this presbytery who have Covid.

We lift up anyone in need of healing of anything that besets them.

We lift up Mission Presbytery to You for Your care and guidance. Lead us.

For Your grace, mercy, and love we are ever-grateful.

This prayer is made in the name of Jesus the Christ. Amen.