

Wow! The last couple of months has really been eye-opening. Since I joined the Grace Session two and half years ago one thing that has been mentioned during Session retreats and during long term planning discussions has been the future of the church and specifically the future of Grace. We have grappled with the question, What makes us 'Grace'? Is it the building, the worship service, the mission and outreach, the relationships with one another? Well, I think it is a little bit of all of those, but honestly, of all of those things listed... the thing that is lowest on the priority list of what makes us 'Grace' is the building itself. Don't get me wrong; I love our building and truly look forward to the time when we can get back to worshipping in our usual space, but it is not the heart of who we are as a congregation.

This pandemic has altered how we look at 'church' and forced us to get creative with how we do all of the rest: worship, Christian education, fellowship and hospitality, mission, etc. Like it, or not, we have the task of reinventing ourselves as a church. Some of the changes are hopefully only temporary, but some may last a little longer as it is necessary to protect the health and safety of the people that we love and consider 'family'. Some of these changes we may find so brilliant in fact, that we continue with them into the future.

Since I am the liaison between Session and the Hospitality Team much of my focus has been in that particular area of ministry. Grace has a great hospitality group that is very caring and always on the lookout for ways to make folks feel included which has been a challenge during this time when we are asked to be more socially isolated. I know not everyone has been able to join in for the Zoom Fellowship meetings, but please know that you are all in our thoughts and prayers, especially during this time.

For now, while we are not able to meet in person, we hope that everyone continues to feel connected and loved through phone calls, cards, email, Zoom meetings or even an occasional drive by/drop off of a special treat. Anything hospitality members, or any member of the congregation can do to lift someone's spirits (as long as it is done safely) is awesome.

When we are given the green light to begin reopening our building for worship and other activities, we will need to work according to guidelines from the city as well as suggestions from the Presbytery so that we can make the best possible decisions for how to reopen.

For now, I pose these questions: Why is hospitality important? What does hospitality look like? Who is responsible for showing hospitality? Instead of thinking about a plate of cookies or a pot-luck luncheon, let's think outside of the box. This is a time for us to rise to the challenge of considering other ways to be hospitable... words of welcome, a smile, a gift of flowers if we can't have a cake, a phone call, the creation of a video ...there are so many possibilities. Feel free to give me a call or send me an email with your thoughts and suggestions about hospitality.

Blessings,  
Beth Jones