

Session Notes

October 2020

Richmond Presbyterian Church

Deep with God, Wide with the World

Session has not met on our once sacred 'fourth Tuesday of the month' since May: the shifting sands of the pandemic have meant more frequent and earlier meetings in order to make timely plans and decisions. Even with that, we sometimes have email consultations between meetings. This pattern will continue, as our next planned meetings are Nov 16 and Dec 8.

We have not set any particular date or timetable for a return to limited gathered worship. We have given up trying to predict the course of the virus! However, we are ready to resume very quickly after a decision is made, since all the planning has been done. We join with you in watching and praying for an end to the pandemic.

In preparation for what we had thought might be a return to limited gathered worship, Sunday services are now live streamed in real time, rather than pre-recorded in segments. This has raised some new technical challenges for video and audio. One technology that we pursued turned out not to be viable, so we are back to the limitations of the iPhone until we can acquire a better solution. Even after we return, we want to continue live streaming/archiving services for those who cannot attend in person.

To supplement weekly online worship and Munch & Mingle, Session is encouraging all teams and committees to consider virtual and outdoor activities such as the semi-monthly walking/hiking outings. We need to do all we can to preserve cohesiveness and fellowship in our church family. Each time that I drive to RPC, I appreciate again the wise advice of the electronic sign at the north end of No 2 Road Bridge: stay apart, stay connected.

We rejoice in the Baptism of Avery Clark Evans, daughter of Caroline & Brian, granddaughter to Isabel, and sister to Angus. This will of necessity be a small, family gathering on Sat, Oct 17, with Isabel representing the congregation. Look for pictures on our website following the date.

Nov 16 will be a busy night. The Board will meet at 6:00, followed by a joint Board-Session meeting at 7:00 to consider our financial situation and outlook. Givings are well down since we stopped meeting for Sunday worship, and we have to take a realistic and faithful look at what this means for our ministry now and going forward. Following the joint portion of the meeting, elders will stay to consider Session's own business.

RPC has registered a group to attend the Certificate in Missional Leadership program at St Andrew's Hall, VST. This program, led by the Rev Dr. Tim Dickau, formerly minister of Grandview Baptist in Vancouver, and under the auspices of the Rev. Dr. Ross Lockhart, aims to equip congregations for ministry directly to the local community outside the immediate church family and usually outside the church walls. During Tim's tenure, Grandview established several successful community programs in Vancouver's east side. The first meeting, an introduction and orientation, was Sep 26, and the next will be Oct 24. There will be more to report at that time.

Session is realising that RPC must come to grips with the reality that we will never return to pre-pandemic normal. While this does have elements of loss, we need to focus on the elements of renewal and opportunity. Though so much has been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, we know that God is still with us, with his people, and we need to continue trusting God's guidance and care both now and into our future.

Peace.

*Faithfully,
Graeme Stager
Clerk of Session*