

# RICHMOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

*Deep with God, Wide with the World*

## Session Notes - April 2021

Session, like groups everywhere, has been meeting via Zoom for just over a year now, since March 2020. Twice we have discussed details of how to return to live worship, but of course the second and third COVID waves happened instead. One thing that has evolved over the pandemic 'exile': it's now clear that the restrictions are not just a frustrating but temporary gap interrupting normal existence. Under Victor's leadership and supported by Presbytery, St Andrew's Hall, and other resources, we are using this time not just to imagine a longed-for return to personal connection but also to critically examine our ministry as a part of God's church and mission and prepare for a new reality. When the exile is over, we must continue to use technology to reach an expanded congregation, even as we move in new directions on the ground to reach a changed community.



Two key events in this examination and preparation are our Leadership Retreat (Jun 5) and our June 27 Annual Congregational Meeting (part 2). Current provincial restrictions and protocols will be updated by the May long weekend, May 22-24, and Session is meeting May 25, so at that meeting we will be heavily into plans for the Retreat and ACM2. In particular, much of ACM2 will be shaped by the Retreat, and we will make sure you are prepared for an engaging and productive discussion at that event.



While we do want to be aware of new outward ministry possibilities, loss of fellowship is real and hard, and is very much a pastoral concern for us all. Engagement and connection inevitably erode when we no longer worship, talk, and munch together. Session and the various Teams are looking at ways to gather such as we may be allowed, and the return of outdoor weather increases our options. Please check emails, the web, and the weekly bulletin for information on in-person, protocol-observing events.



In the realm of the slightly more concrete, we have received approval from the federal government for 3 summer student positions. Great news, Jacqueline Cleland and James Lolong will be returning. We have made an offer to a third candidate, Chloe Niderost, a UBC grad, and are happy to say she has just accepted it. We will introduce Chloe and re-introduce Jacqueline & James soon. There are also plans, to be confirmed, for Jacqueline to do her VST Theological Field Education (aka student internship) here at RPC in the fall.



The Outreach team is in the late stages of planning a community meal served from RPC on Monday evenings. It would run as a pilot for 13 weeks starting mid-September in a takeout format. A cook has been found, entrees can be sourced from the food bank, and the budget was approved at our Feb ACM.

After the pilot, we will assess whether and how to carry on, with the ultimate goal being a year-round program.



RPC has officially joined the Richmond Poverty Reduction Coalition. They have recently become a BC Society and must now be a little more formal about membership. Several RPCers have been active in this organization for many years. As well, we continue to be involved with sister congregations in Safe

Arms Richmond, a refugee-sponsorship/support group. Look for specific news from them in the near future and be sure to watch an interview with Susan Johnsen of Safe Arms on this past week's Midweek Meditation (May 28).

Please continue to be engaged with our church family as you are able. Continue to support our ministry where you feel led. Continue to pray for our leadership, for those struggling with direct COVID impacts such as illness and job insecurity, and for those simply, but profoundly, made isolated or uneasy by the pandemic.

*Faithfully,  
Graeme Stager  
Clerk of Session*

