

RICHMOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Deep with God, Wide with the World

Session Notes - May2021

A very full agenda took us past 10:00 on Tuesday night. Lots extra happening with the upcoming leadership retreat (Jun 5), Annual General Meeting part 2 (Jun 27), and loosening pandemic restrictions. Compelling and exciting, but all needing planning and organising.



On everyone's mind is the question of returning to in-person events. The province has just rolled out a plan which will allow gatherings in defined stages, and we will eagerly but carefully and work within the loosening restraints towards restarting gathered worship, fellowship, pastoral care and study. When we start meeting again, expected sometime over the summer, there will still be some protocols to observe (e.g. limits on attendance) for a while longer. As you plan to come out for any event, please follow the advice from the office first; simply showing up will not be possible for some months yet.

We have been saying that even after returning to the building we will continue with some form of virtual community which will have a format and identity of its own and not be simply plunking a camera down in the sanctuary. This will take time to organise. In addition, summer preaching plans are already set around recorded conversational sermons or guest preachers. So at least initially we *will* have to simply live-stream/record the in-person worship. But come fall, expect changes to both our on-ground and virtual presence as we move towards a true Hybrid church model.

General Assembly



General Assembly will again be virtual this year. Due to a commissioner from our Presbytery having to back out, there was an opening for RPC to "send" a commissioner. "Send" meaning join virtual meetings at home. Nevertheless, this is an important and interesting part of being Presbyterian, and Isabel Evans, our long-time Presbytery representative elder (and soon moderator) will be our commissioner to the 2021 General Assembly. There is much reading and preparation ahead of time to become acquainted with not just the topics on the agenda but the workings of Assembly.

A characteristic of many healthy, Kingdom-serving congregations is a network of small groups which are active between Sundays. We do have elders' districts, but they are somewhat arbitrarily assigned and members may not have much commonality beyond sharing the same elder. Small groups in the sense we envision here are groups of 4-8 people who have intentionally joined together for mutual support (both practical and personal), for Christian

fellowship and formation, and for opportunities to engage their friends and neighbours. Look for more information soon on how you can join a small group.



By the time you are reading this, we will be into our 61st anniversary weekend celebrations. I hope you enjoy times of fellowship and happy memories, but also reflect on what God has already done through us and is planning to do through us as partners in His mission. RPC was instrumental in establishing the Richmond Food Bank. RPC is a partner in Safe Arms Richmond, a refugee sponsorship group. RPC has worked to establish modular housing for the homeless. RPC has stepped in to run the Tuesday community meal, and in September will be initiating our own Monday community meal, as a pilot. Being missional is not about looking out for own needs, it means we are primarily here to be God’s vital and transforming presence in our city.

*Faithfully,
Graeme Stager
Clerk of Session*

