Dear Church Family,

What does it mean to be “the Beloved Community?” Only a month ago, the Session had approved exploring an initiative within the PCUSA, focusing on Matthew 25. From the PCUSA web site: “We recognize Christ’s urgent call to be a church of action, where God’s love, justice and mercy shine forth and are contagious. And we rejoice how our re-energized faith can unite all Presbyterians for a common and holy purpose: our common identity to do mission.” In fact, one of the Lenten devotionals that we made available this year is titled, “Becoming a Beloved Community: A Matthew 25 Journey to the Cross.”

There are many ways in which we are being this beloved community. First, our decision to not gather in groups, to sacrifice our time together, is an act of love. Our concern for the health and well-being of others continues to be paramount. I practice social distancing NOT to prevent myself from contracting the virus, but SO I do not risk possibly sharing the virus with someone else. To approach our distancing from the standpoint that I may have the virus and not yet know it, causes me to be cautious in my contacts with others. Second, we are finding creative ways to be connected. How has your Sunday School class sought to encourage each other? What is your Life Group doing to remain connected? How are you giving, or receiving, support from others as you work to keep social distancing from becoming social isolation? More people are exploring video chat, video phone calls, and video conferencing. Is that something you would like to try? There are those who would be glad to help you explore the possibilities…please reach out to them. Another, simple way we help is by supporting our local economy. Ordering take out from your favorite local restaurant helps someone else be able to pay their rent. Don’t forget to tip. Contributions to local charities are also needed these days and may become more critical as the situation continues.

Here are two suggestions for you to consider. First, if you are comfortable with social media, share with others what you can. Post music, a picture, a poem, or other writing. Video yourself reading a poem out loud, singing a song, playing music. Add something beautiful or comforting to the world. Second, make a phone call. Each day, call at least one person you know who may be limited in their contact with others. Do you know someone who doesn’t use email or other electronic communication? If so, call them and read this letter to them. Keep them informed of what’s going on. Read them a joke from your Facebook feed. Help someone else be connected.

Finally, share your stories. If you are reading this on Facebook, add a comment, or use other forms of social media communications. Tell us how you are being connected and helping others feel valued. Most of all, Be Kind.

Grace and peace,

Jess McCrosky