

Friday, March 13, 2020

Dear Flint River Saints and Friends,

One of my favorite prayer books is called Blessing the Space Between Us and the purpose of this letter is precisely that:

to bless the space between us — *and among us* —  
with calm and clarity, courage, and conviction.

**First, some clarity:** as a presbytery, our role is "to support the witness of congregations within our bounds so that all may become communities of faith, hope and love" (G-3.0301).

**In other words, our role is to empower and encourage each of you and your Sessions in your unique context.** This is not difficult to do! I know our Sessions to be filled individuals who trust God, love Jesus, and want to do the Spirit's bidding. *So trust yourselves!* Lift up your heads. Straighten your backs. And remember that you are children — *and heirs* — of God. You stand in a long line of witnesses who have borne similar challenges, **and you have their strength and their stories living within you.** Remember this Good News! Act accordingly. Even boldly. You will know what is best for your community. **You will also discover that God has given you everything you need to lead and guide your people.**

**Secondly, some conviction!** Although uncertainty, anxiety and fear are becoming increasingly obvious at every turn, we have a unique opportunity in this particular season of our lives to speak about more than hygiene and hyper-vigilance. **We have the opportunity to model several vital characteristics which set us apart as disciples of Jesus Christ:**

\*deep trust in the providence of God, regardless our circumstances, disappointments, and fear,

\*exquisite calm, which is centered in the Way of Jesus, the life of prayer, and communal collaboration,

\*courageous compassion, which keeps us focused on the needs of our neighborhoods and communities, regardless the cost to ourselves.

In the midst of increasing information, it is an honor to walk, pray, grow, and learn beside each and every one of you.

**May our witness be visible, bright and bold  
for the sake of the glory of God.**

**And may our prayers re-orient us, re-make us and re-member us  
as the arms and legs of Jesus.**

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Holy One,

whose beloved Son stood on the edge of a boat and spoke calm into  
a storm,

calm us

center us, and

pull us away from the edges,

which are swamped by fear or despair.

Give us Your Word which heals,

Your touch which transforms,

Your power which energizes and equips.

Steer us through the storm.

Steer us through the storm.

Steer us through the storm.

AMEN