



Presbytery of Yukon

May 12, 2020

In This Newsletter

[From Rev. Karns](#)
[Online Worship Options](#)
[Funerals in the Presbytery](#)
[More Resources](#)

Prayer Requests



Please keep the entire world in your prayers as we all work together to get through the Covid-19 pandemic.

Stay Connected

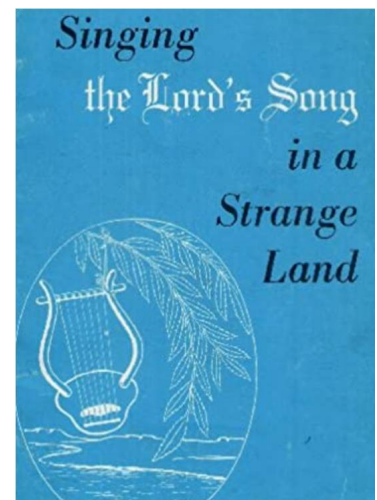


Visit Our Website:
www.PBYukon.org

Singing the Lord's Song in the Age of COVID

This week, the state mandates have loosened and more churches will be able to congregate again. It is great news. More businesses will be able to open, and we will all begin pouring our energy into restarting the whole economy. This is all important. However, I want to challenge all of us to also recognize that this is a unique moment, and not one to waste. This is a moment of building for the Lord.

Scripture is constantly challenging us to pay attention to the new thing that God is doing. In Psalms (also Isaiah and Revelation) the imagery is about *singing a new song to the Lord*, instead of the same old songs, because God is doing a new thing right now. I believe this unique season of sheltering-in-place is an especially important seasons for people of faith to be telling of the new things God is doing. In this time, we haven't been able to gather in worship, or do almost anything else in ways we have been accustomed to doing them. New things are happening among us. We really must formulate a new song that bears witness to the Lord, and that song should be evident not only in our worship, but also in the witness of our actions.



Like us, the rest of the world is seeking terms to describe these times of adaptive change. First, we were told this was a time of crisis. Then, when that phrase got overused, we began hearing how these are challenging times. I wonder, what phrase the world will use when that one gets old?

Christians speaking from their faith call this God's *Kairos*: the time when God acts.

When this kind of moment arrives--a moment when the scientists, and the economists, and the political leaders don't really know what to do to make things right-we know that this is the Lord's time. A Kairos time for real and adaptive change has arrived. No wonder the world struggles with what vocabulary to use to describe it!

For people of faith, however, it is precisely at such moments that we know we can count on the Lord. This is the moment when we can count on God to be creating something new among us. Change is upon us, and from now on things will need to be different. But scripture tells us God is the same yesterday, today and forever, and we know that in difficult times that we can especially count on God to lead us in the needed new thing.

Indeed, in the past weeks I have been attending your online worship services; I have been perusing the home curriculums you have been publishing; I have also been visiting with you electronically, and working with you to solve various logistical problems. In all these activities, I have been a witness to who you have been. You have been amazing in past weeks.

- You have not allowed this virus to keep the faithful apart, and so you learned virtual means to fellowship, worship, and study together.
- Those who could (which is most of us, thank God) also worked at upholding your loved ones through video-call technology and social media.
- You also handled the transformations of your homes. Your homes had to become places for work, for children's schooling, for social connection, and home life, all at the same time.

Things have been changing for us, and things are changing for the world.

One thing is for sure, the economy and the status quo systems have fallen hard enough that following God will not just be about finding the moment to go back to normal. Just as we are in a season where we had to live with everything changed, we will need a long season to build things back up. The question for us is what it is that we should begin building now.

Scripture tells us God is love, and that we need to seize moments like these to help build a world more characterized by righteousness, justice and love.

- We need to rebuild churches that notice our hunger for relationships that connect us, and reach out to connect with new people, who have noticed that hunger, too.
- We need to build a medical system that make sure comprehensive health care is available for everyone who wants it.
- We need to build an economy that finally realizes what our faith teaches us, that everyone is an essential worker, even if the world might only realize it when the conditions are just right.

As I share these thoughts with you, I have also heard you speak about how tired these recent efforts have made you. I feel that in myself, too. Even so, as we begin going back to gathering together, now is a time for all of us to remain just as creative and faithful as in the past months. Really, we have no other good choice. We will have to build up our schools, and our churches, and our economies, and our way of relating to this world that God loves. We always knew our world needed work. Now, when we have to rebuild, we are at a time when we can choose what it is we want to rebuild like it was, and what it is we believe God wants to be new. I have loved seeing your creative work in recent weeks. I look forward to seeing how God leads you from here.

In Christ's service,
Curt Karns

Alternative Worship Options

**FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF ONLINE WORSHIP
OPTIONS AND RESOURCES, PLEASE
CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE AT
WWW.PBYUKON.ORG/ALT_WORSHIP**

Funerals in the Presbytery of Yukon

Weddings and funerals have been particularly difficult in this new Shelter-in-Place season. Many weddings have been postponed. We have heard of a few done online or over the phone, though the presbytery office has not heard of any within the congregations of our presbytery. Funerals of some sort are not as optional. We still have to bury the dead with as much dignity as we can muster. The Presbyterians have been as creatively active in this effort as any.



*Livestreaming Funerals Before the Pandemic
Utqiagvik Presbyterian Church*

Livestreaming funerals has been one option. Utqiagvik Presbyterian Church (UPC) already modeled that option back in January, before the pandemic when Presbyterian, and village elder, Wesley Aiken died. His funeral was livestreamed over YouTube, and became a model for funerals and other large events across the arctic.

Since then, many churches have been doing something similar to help with social distancing during funerals. Livestreaming allows churches to invite only the most immediate family, and a couple of worship leaders to be present at the church during the funeral, while many others across the community, and across the world, can join at the same time.

Conference call attendance is another option for churches that do not have good internet access. St. Lawrence Island is one such region. Last weekend, Gambell Presbyterian Church used the presbytery's conference call phone line to include people from across the island at a funeral for Shannon Apassingok, son of CP Merle and Pani Apassingok.



Livestreaming Funerals During the Pandemic

Many churches are planning some form of official memorial service at a later date, to allow people to gather, and grief in the way that many long for. For many, grieving requires hugging, and crying together, and gathering to share stories. Churches and families are looking for ways to offer these at a later date.

May God guide all of us as we seek to adapt.

More Resources for Churches

State of Alaska Health Mandates

Note: Mandate 016, Appendix N, especially relates to reopening churches.
It was updated on May 7, giving more leeway than the previous version of Health Mandate 16.

<https://covid19.alaska.gov/health-mandates/>

Adaptive Change During a Crisis Kairos Time

by Jim Kitchens and Deborah Wright

[https://mcusercontent.com/1721a6b9451a1567ee53b00fc/files/1eda01ce-05c1-487c-9575-](https://mcusercontent.com/1721a6b9451a1567ee53b00fc/files/1eda01ce-05c1-487c-9575-de2e9b9eec17/Adaptive_Change_During_a_Crisis_Kairos_Time.pdf)

[de2e9b9eec17/Adaptive_Change_During_a_Crisis_Kairos_Time.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/1721a6b9451a1567ee53b00fc/files/1eda01ce-05c1-487c-9575-de2e9b9eec17/Adaptive_Change_During_a_Crisis_Kairos_Time.pdf)

May is Mental Health Month

New COVID-19 Mental Health Resources from the Office of Mental Health Ministry

https://mcusercontent.com/1721a6b9451a1567ee53b00fc/files/397aff7a-80db-4e98-a78e-8fc6eb60bd82/Mental_Health_Month.pdf

Mark Your Calendars

Ongoing

Wednesday Night Prayer Service

At 7:30pm

By video: <https://zoom.us/j/7959606340>

By conference call: 907-276-1095

May 25, 2020

Memorial Day Holiday

**October 9-10,
2020**

Our Next Presbytery Meeting

Location: TBD

Presbytery of Yukon - 616 W. 10th Avenue, Anchorage AK 99577 - 907-276-0914

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