Greetings, Friends!

These past several months have been one incredible roller coaster ride – and I am absolutely amazed at how well and how quickly our churches have adapted to so many changes! Many churches have moved to online worship and giving, reaching huge numbers of people in ways we have never imagined before. Other churches have found a renewed sense of intimacy within their own communities, deepening existing relationships to be stronger than ever. Some areas have been hit really hard by issues related to the pandemic, while others have been largely untouched by the disaster. Through it all, we continue to serve our Lord as faithful Christians going forth into the world.

Many of our presbytery’s discussions have shifted away from typical day-to-day business details in order to focus on bigger questions. We have begun to explore what it means to be the church in the midst of a pandemic and how things might change as we move forward. We’ve considered different ways to help churches update technology in response to changing ministry settings and how presbytery meetings and gatherings could adjust to new circumstances. We’ve taken a close look at our finances and realized that things might be a little brighter than we once thought if we look at them through different lenses.

Right now, we are facing some very significant, history-defining moments for our nation: the enormous uncertainties of a global pandemic, racial tensions, increased violence, and presidential elections. The ways our churches respond to these issues will impact the relationships we have with our surrounding communities for years to come. Although our opinions on these issues may be very different, we all share a common calling, “Love one another as I have loved you.” *(John 15:12 NRSV)*

I have no doubt that God walks with us in the midst of this turmoil. I have no doubt that God is offering new possibilities for us and is making the path forward clearer and clearer with each new day. I have no doubt that God is calling us to serve in ways we have not considered before – and I am excited to see where God will lead us in the months ahead.

Admittedly, the craziness won’t end anytime soon. Uncertainty will continue for much longer than any of us care to think about. Be kind to yourselves and each other. Take the time you need to deal with anxiety in healthy ways. Stay safe. Pray often. Be open to the work of the Holy Spirit within you, calling us forward to new ways of being the Church in this world.

Blessings and peace,

Rev. Marjorie Ackerman

Presbytery Leader