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# Battery Park Christian Church

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## A Letter From Our Pastor

Dear Friends,

Perhaps you recall that right around the late 1990's, many young Christians wore rubber bracelets that featured the four letters, "WWJD". These letters stood for a very important question: "What Would Jesus Do?"

Perhaps you will find it surprising, as I did, that this question wasn't a popular, modern trend but originated from a book called *In His Steps*, written by a Congregationalist minister named Charles Sheldon. It was published in 1896. In that novel, a small church fails a person in need in their community and then decides to reshape the life of the church to live solely by the mission of those four words. What would Jesus do? They would live into the question. Before the church or congregants made any decision, they carefully pondered and then acted as they believed Jesus would act.

It is a question posed to the American church well over a century ago. It remains the central question of Battery Park Christian Church.

In the midst of a pandemic, with folks worried about both health and economics, as we wrestle with decisions of what worship can look like... what would Jesus do? As questions of race and testimonies of people of color have taken center stage in the public square and as we wrestle with our faith in relationship with the suffering Body of Christ... what would Jesus do? As we look to how we prioritize our budget, enhance our mission, and care for one another... what would Jesus do?

Is it true that living the Christian life can be boiled down to something so simple? The answer is a tricky "yes". Yes, if we live our lives as Jesus would we will transform not just the church but the world. Is this an easy task? Charles Sheldon's characters found the answer that you probably already no. Is it easy? No, absolutely not.

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We are imperfect people in an imperfect church but this is nearly a perfect aspiration. I challenge myself and invite all of us to join together to live into that answer of discipleship. What would Jesus do? Let us go, every day, and do the same.

Peace and grace,

Rev. Jonah

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## A Letter From the Board

Friends,

We long to gather again in the sanctuary of Battery Park Christian Church to share in worship and join in fellowship. However, as the past months have revealed, COVID-19 is a serious threat to the well-being of our church and its members. Because of the severity of this threat, the Leadership of Battery Park Christian Church has decided that our worship services and education will be held online and not in person until at least June 21.

We understand that it is tempting to rush forward and gather as soon as it is legally possible. However, the spread of COVID-19 is a very fluid public health situation. **The current consensus among faith communities informed by Public Health research is that the best practice is to initially limit gatherings to 50 people, and even then, there are a number of changes to take into consideration.**

We are currently in **Phase One** of the “Forward Virginia” plan as it is currently outlined,. Under Phase One, we will continue to move forward in the following ways:

- All worship and education will continue to be offered online.
- All who enter the church for the reasons stated below will be required to wear a face-covering and utilize hand sanitizer placed at church entrances.
- We will continue offering a mix of video services and worship recorded in the sanctuary.
- The few people who gather to lead these recorded services will maintain at least 6 ft of space between one another with the exception of people sharing a household.
- Weddings and funerals may be limited in size.
- Office functions will remain as limited as possible. Those in the office will wear face-coverings if more than one person is in the office at a time. All surfaces will be regularly sanitized.
- High risk individuals , whether staff or volunteers, should continue to shelter where they feel safe.

A consensus among experts leads us to put the following guidelines in place once we move beyond Phase I and ultimately return to worship together. **Our goal for this is June 21, 2020.**

**We may need to limit attendance in the sanctuary** and those people attending must:

- Practice physical distancing in their entering, seating, worship and interactions. We will designate spots on each pew where each family unit/individual will be seated during worship.
- Face-coverings will be required.
- Ask all individuals to sign-in upon entering the church.
- Not sing as a group as a part of worship as saliva droplets and air projected in singing spread the virus.
- Not join in communal readings or shared responses for the same reasons listed above.
- Not physically serve communion or collect offering. We are investigating alternatives.
- Wash hands before worship, wear face-coverings during worship and use hand sanitizer upon entering the building.

In addition, we may need to do the following:

- Extensively clean before and after each worship service.
- Persuade the most vulnerable members and those who are not feeling well not to come (a difficult and sad task because this will likely include those who have the least access to online worship).

For those who rent our space, we will implement the following:

- Post signs indicating symptoms and urging people to stay home/seek medical attention if they have symptoms.
- Maintain a good stock of tissue, soap, hand sanitizer and disposable paper towels for drying hands.
- Clean the building regularly and between user groups, paying extra attention to high-touch surfaces. Groups may be asked to absorb the cost of this additional cleaning.
- Immediately ask a group to leave if they are not complying with all guidelines.

As Christians, we believe every person reflects the image of God. To be faithful in the time of COVID is to honor all guidelines and protect the lives and wellbeing of our neighbors. While we know it is tempting to gather as soon as possible, this does not honor the worth and dignity of our larger community. In order to model what it means to love God and one another during this difficult season, we will move cautiously and with great care and take each step in love and trust. Please know that we long to be together but we can only gather when it is faithful and right to do so.

Even though things look a bit different, *we are still Battery Park Christian Church, we are still community and we still love one another. We will get through this and we will get through it together.*

With Love,

The Board of Battery Park Christian Church and Rev. Jonah Smith-Bartlett

## Week of Compassion Focuses on Impact of COVID-19



Being unable to travel, the Week of Compassion Board of Stewards met virtually on May 27 to discuss the impact being felt all around the world. It has affected ongoing recovery work from other disasters like the hurricane in Puerto Rico last year and refugee assistance. As you know, Week of Compassion is the relief, refugee and development mission fund belonging to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada. Through this organization, we partner with other charities to help our money World Outreach donations go further.

At their meeting, the board voted to help alleviate suffering caused by the virus by allocating up to \$1.5 million in unrestricted funds which will be distributed over a six-month period. Extraordinary needs call for extraordinary action, so they will draw on reserves to support this response. The primary programs being addressed are food security and disease prevention in vulnerable communities already in crisis. Additionally, closer to home, additional funding is allowing for reactivation of a grant for households experiencing extreme financial hardship who are not eligible for state or federal assistance. Help will be given to congregations with feeding ministries serving their neighbors.

During this time of uncertainty the Church is called, more than ever, to respond with compassion, reaching those who suffer and sharing the love of Christ. The Week of Compassion Board of Stewards is doing just that-- serving as faithful stewards of the gifts you have shared with this ministry out of love and compassion. Along with other ministries of the wider church and with local congregations, Disciples continue the work of compassion, together.

Details and text in this article were taken from the website [www.weekofcompassion.org](http://www.weekofcompassion.org) where you may wish to read more and also make a donation direct to them. If you prefer, you can send money to Battery Park Christian Church and mark on your check "for Week of Compassion – COVID relief", and we'll make sure it goes to the right place.

### Pentecost Offering 2020



One of our "special" offerings each year is the Pentecost Offering. It is normally collected the last Sunday in May and first Sunday in June, but we're not there to collect this at the worship service. Instead, please send your donations direct to the church, marking the memo line on your check as "Pentecost offering". This is in addition to your regular offering.

In 2001, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) embraced a bold vision: to start 1,000 new churches in 1,000 different ways by the year 2020.

Today, we have welcomed 1,034+ new places of worship into the Church. The Table around which we gather has grown in language, diversity, and life experience.

Courageous leaders have answered the call to grow the denomination through the new church movement. They have reached the underserved, welcomed new neighbors, and created communities of faith. And we, as Disciples, have committed to supporting them.

Each year, half of this offering stays in your region to support and sustain new churches. The second half helps leaders across the United States and Canada through our “New Church” programs.

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# STAY CONNECTED

WE'RE NOT **CANCELLED**, WE'RE ONLINE!

Posted to BPCCC Facebook and BPCCC YouTube  
([www.facebook.com/batteryparkchristianchurch](http://www.facebook.com/batteryparkchristianchurch))  
([www.youtube.com "Battery Park Christian Church"](http://www.youtube.com/BatteryParkChristianChurch))

**Sunday Sermons @ 11 am**

**Wednesday Meditations @ 5 pm**

Archived also on the Church Website



**The church office is open physically twice per week and virtually anytime!**

**Church Office: Monday and Thursday 8am – 1pm**

-Emails, Voicemails, Paper mail, and in house administration (bills, facility maintenance etc)

**Virtually: Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday**

- Emails, Website, Tech Support, Prepping bi-weekly mailings and other duties as needed.

## **Thank You from The Garrets**

Thank you to all of you at Battery Park. The love and prayers of our church family means so much to us. I am doing well and continue to get better as we go. Hope to see you soon.

Richard Garrett

*Thank  
you*

## Tech Support

Do you need technology help? Zoom, WebEx, GoToMeeting, Livestream, Facebook? Today's new virtual communications can be overwhelming! If you need help setting up your technology so you can connect with your family please contact Lisa and she can help you by phone or email for support!



## Worship and Study Alternative Options

If you are not able to access our worship services online and would like a copy of Rev. Jonah's sermon mailed to your home please request these to Jonah or Lisa.

Also we still have a few copies of "Our Daily Bread" Devotional available for members who would like this mailed out.



### Income and Expenses, Jan 1 - May 31, 2020

Income	
Offering	28,094
Building use	10,650
Other	2,129
Total Income	40,973
Expenses	
Personnel	32,951
Utilities and Maintenance	21,162
Unexpected Major Expenses	2,495
Other	6,484
Total expenses	63,092
Net loss (taken from reserves)	(22,119)

### June Birthdays

Brooks Heckman	6/6
Mildred Hill	6/8
Margaret Izquierdo	6/12
Tyler Hinnant	6/16
NC Bailey IV	6/26