

Because We See

The pandemic has stretched the Church in many ways — but we are still very much … *here*. Although it was surely hard at first, we have expanded our thinking, and our doing, in new and innovative ways to close the distance, and be together. We have continued to worship. We have continued to build and shape community; we have continued to take care of one another. And on top of all that, we have continued to come together to serve those in need; both here in our own community and all over the world through our participation in special offerings and in the spirit of shared mission. Despite the difficulty, struggle and loss, the Church continues to declare its presence in the world, through different means, certainly, but toward the same purpose.

The Church has found life and vitality in a bevy of different places, too: online, in parking lots, on social media, and even on the phone. This reminds us that the Church has always existed beyond the doors of our own, and all buildings. Although we value our community and time together, and we surely miss those bonds when we are physically apart, the plain fact is the Church is not the building. Scripture reminds us time and again that God’s people belong with those in need, releasing people from the bonds of injustice and with the hungry whom we are to welcome into our homes, as Isaiah’s 58th chapter puts it. The Church finds itself with those who are thirsty, imprisoned, and suffering illness, as Jesus says in Matthew 25.

“When did we see you?”

“When did we see you?” — in a time of need, in a time of weakness? In a time of hunger, in a time of thirst?

Even without a pandemic, it is a truth, a reminder, that in every time and season, the Church finds itself and its Savior through relationships with those in need. We belong in this place, not just to help address those needs, though that is surely part of it. We belong there, also, because it is through relationships with those whom we see experiencing hunger, oppression, thirst, imprisonment, or illness, we might be transformed, too, as we become/experience/create/live the Church, **together**.

One Great Hour of Sharing is the largest way Presbyterians come together to do mission and ministry with those whom we see are in need. Through these gifts, we declare that the Church belongs with people whom we see suffering from the terrors of howling winds and natural disasters; those from whom we see COVID-19 took futures and livelihoods, and the whole cultures threatened as a result. The Church finds itself with those whom we see are thirsty because of too few water wells, and with those who are thirsty because of a lack of political will and the failure of powers and principalities to act in order to secure safe water for everyone. The Church belongs always, and forever, with those struggling for justice, righteousness and peace.

We give to One Great Hour of Sharing because of where the Church belongs, of **who** the church **is**. Please give generously to One Great Hour of Sharing so that our Church will continue to become, as Isaiah said, “repairers of the breach” alongside those experiencing great need. For when we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.

***Let us pray~***

*“Savior, do not meet us where we are, but find us where you are instead: with those experiencing injustice, hunger, thirst and great need. Amen.”*