**Coping and Hoping in the Time of Covid**

Week 4 Handout

Last week Sarah Evans suggested a phrase from one of our Confessions as a meditation point:

“In life and in death we belong to God.”

Here is a link to “A Brief Statement of Faith” which was created when the northern and southern Presbyterian Church reunited in 1983:

[https://web.archive.org/web/20120728223725/http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/101/brief-statement-faith/](https://web.archive.org/web/20120728223725/http:/www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/101/brief-statement-faith/)

**Book about learning to love oneself:**

Loveable: Embracing What is Truest About You So You Can Truly Embrace Your **Life** —by Dr. Kelly Flanagan

**Bible verses to meditate on when lonely:**

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.” —2 Cor. 1: 3-4

“Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. Relieve the troubles of my heart and free me from my anguish. Look on my affliction and my distress and take away all my sins.” —Psalm 25: 16-18

“A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” —John 16: 32-33

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” —Phil. 4: 6-9

**Article about using Ring Theory to provide comfort to each other:**

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/promoting-hope-preventing-suicide/201705/ring-theory-helps-us-bring-comfort-in>

**NIH article about loneliness:**

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/news/social-isolation-loneliness-older-people-pose-health-risks>

**Article about Addressing Loneliness in the UK:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-launches-governments-first-loneliness-strategy>

**Reflection/action points for this week:**

Consider in what ways do you feel lonely? What would it be like to experience a breakthrough to community and new life? Recall experiences when you felt connected and loved and let those memories assure you they can happen again.

Think of two or three people you could reconnect with today. Do you know two kindred spirits you could introduce to each other today? Look for new possibilities of community during this time of enforced separation.

“Only as we stand within the community can we be alone and only those who are alone can live in community. Both belong together. Only in the community do we learn to be properly alone, and only in being alone do we learn to live properly in the community. It is not as if the one preceded the other; rather both begin at the same time, namely, with the call of Jesus Christ.” —Dietrich Bonhoeffer, from “Life Together”