

A Letter From the Dean

Dear Members and Friends,

I'd like to come up with something wise and pithy with which to begin this newsletter, but I'm afraid nothing quite seems right. I think it's safe to say that we are all out of our comfort zones, in one way or another, and none of our previous patterns or rules seem to apply to the world we've found ourselves in right now.

Your board met via Zoom this week, and thought together about the most urgent business facing us – upcoming board elections, questions of how and when to meet as a chapter, and ways to be creative in the midst of the current situation to connect and learn from one another – which is always our goal as the AGO!

*So, we will be going forward with elections, and a ballot will be sent out shortly, utilizing a new system recommended by national, to ensure confidentiality.

*We have decided to cancel our May meeting, as none of our previously-scheduled spring presenters were comfortable holding anything online, and we felt that everyone is already a bit overwhelmed by life currently anyway.

*We will continue to hold (hopefully somewhat regularly) an online, social get-together, like we had about a month ago, with the plan to offer this about every three weeks, for whoever is interested. Links will be sent out over email, and feel free to email Gordon if you have questions about how to connect this way.

*And finally, we realized that everyone is dealing with the current challenges in different ways in their church and musical life, and we are curious to hear how about that – what your church is doing, and how are they doing it, and how it's going. So we're going to be starting a regular feature in the newsletter (which we'll put out as often or as little as seems necessary or helpful) where we can all learn from one another. I will eventually get these updates put on our webpage and link on Facebook as well, so if you know of other folks who are curious how different churches are responding, feel free to pass the link along to them.

Rick Van Oss suggested this idea, and he has offered to start, with a really complete and fascinating description of what they are doing at First Reformed in Holland.

This is what First Reformed Holland has been doing for services during the Covid-19 pandemic.

First Reformed Church in Holland has been doing live on-line streaming of the Sunday morning service for many years. Now, with the “Stay at Home” order, we do a mixture of live and pre-recorded elements. The organ music, sermon, and congregational prayer are all live. To do this we use only about 6-7 people in our sanctuary on a Sunday morning. These include: the organist (for prelude, hymns, anthems, and postlude), a pianist (playing voice parts for choral anthems and occasionally one of the prelude pieces), a singer to sing the hymns, two ministers (one preaches and the other is a

liturgist, and 1-2 audio/video people. Each of these people are never closer than 6 feet from one another - usually more like 20 feet apart.

The adult choir receives PDF's of the choir music each week so that they may sing or hum along in the safety of their own homes. We always send out fewer PDF's than copies the church owns. Choir members delete these PDF's after the one time use.

Pre-recorded portions of the service generally include: the Introit (usually submitted by kids singing or playing an instrument), certain announcements, greetings from members of the congregation, the Scripture Lesson(s) read by consistory members or other people from our congregation, and the Prayer of Illumination.

Slides are prepared with words and music of the hymns, the scripture lesson, words of the choral anthems, and ways to donate to the ministry of our church. The congregation is encouraged to send in pictures of their families worshipping from home which are shown at various times during the service as well.

A bulletin is e-mailed to members in order for them to follow the order of the service. Also, a letter from the pastors is e-mailed once or twice a week to keep the congregation informed about weekly activities they can be involved in from home. Several Sunday School classes for young children and our youth groups are held using the Zoom app.

Many in our congregation report that hearing the organ and seeing the sanctuary makes it feel more like being there. Our children's minister even made 8X10 copies of the pictures of each family in our church directory and taped them to the pews throughout the sanctuary.

Information on how to access these services may be found at: <https://www.frcholland.org/>
There are three ways to connect: Omnia, Facebook, and Vimeo. Sound quality is not always the best, but it's the best we can do for now.

A typical service goes something like the following:

- Organ Prelude (about 7 minutes - live)
- Greeting/Announcements (usually live by a minister with pre-recorded elements)
- Introit (pre-recorded by various members of the congregation - most often kids)
- Call to Worship (usually live)
- Hymn of Praise (the singer sings the verses live while slides of the words and music are projected)
- Invocation and Salutation (usually live)
- Choral Anthem (live - accompaniment played by organ, voice parts played on piano, or vice versa - words are projected - choir members have the music at home and join in if they wish)
- Congregational Prayer (often a mixture of live and pre-recorded)
- Prayer for Illumination (pre-recorded by a staff member or a member of the congregation)
- Scripture (often pre-recorded by members of the congregation - words projected)
- Sermon (live)
- Prayer of Blessing (live)
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Thank you, Rick – and best wishes to all of you during this time. Enjoy the sunshine this weekend!
---Rhonda

Chapter Officers for 2019-2020

Dean - Rhonda Edgington

Sub-Dean – Linda Fulton

Board Members – Roberta Kraft, Rick Van Oss

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