**Bearing Fruit – April 11, 2021**

**Praising God for Technology**

Last year, on a Friday in mid-March, the session of Southminster Presbyterian Church wrestled with the question of closing our church due to the pandemic.

That Sunday morning, four of us met, awkwardly standing apart, masked, iPhones in hand to offer worship via Facebook live. We bore witness to the love of God in Jesus Christ. Monday, we began offering daily “Heart to Heart” on Facebook live, using an iPhone. At the beginning of each Heart to Heart we first phoned a friend, followed by a scripture reading, reflection, hymn, prayer, and news. To limit social interaction, we kept our team of faithful volunteers small. Things have changed!

What could have been a time of broken communication and relationships has become a virtual bridge, enabling us to weave together the love of God and neighbor. We have spoken with the pastor of our sister church in Cuba, to members who have moved far away, and to members currently in South Africa. Friends in Ghana attended a virtual Zoom fellowship with us. Truly we became “One in the Spirit” worldwide.

Cell phones are great in an emergency but not for ongoing support. It has been a steep learning curve. The limitations of our equipment were beginning to interfere with the quality. Southminster upped her game with a grant from Chicago Presbytery of $1,491and a session authorized distribution from our Endowment Fund of $10,233.00. $5,000 of that went to video equipment, something that was never anticipated when the fund was established. Who knows what the Endowment Fund might help us with in the future?

We continue to work on the quality of our broadcasts. Just last Saturday comcast came and replaced the entire installation. In fact, the comcast technician, Patrick, gave his cell phone number to Ron Birchall so that if anything happened Easter Sunday, we would be supported.

This week our sermon is prerecorded. The Chicago Presbytery’s Executive Director Rev. Sue Krummel will give us today’s sermon.

The right equipment enables us to continue the witness of God’s love and help us bear the fruit of that love. We all complain about technology when it does not work right (and even when it does), but we have become dependent on it. Let’s count the technology that has enabled us to carry out our mission and ministry through this most difficult time as a gift from God and be thankful for it.