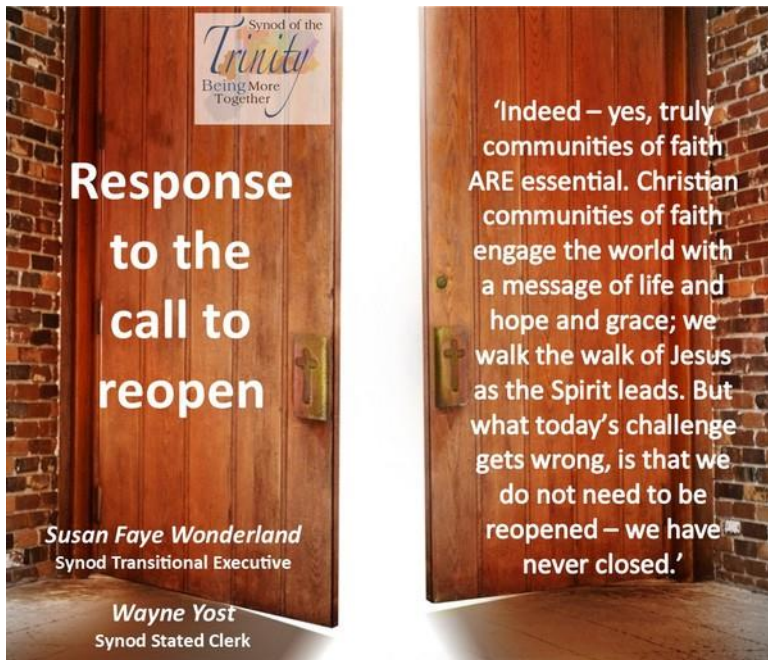


From: Susan Faye Wonderland, Transitional Executive and Wayne Yost, Stated Clerk



Watching you, walking with you, and hearing from you has been both humbling and a joy these last weeks. Your Synod of the Trinity staff has been listening and watching as you have learned new skills, shared hope, prayed without ceasing, served the vulnerable among you and wondered when our “what next” would become clear. Together we have been challenged to re-member what it means to be Jesus’ followers and to recall just how serious and all-encompassing it can be to live first for others as we live for Christ, both those whom we know and those whom we do not. In many ways we have been called to walk with eyes of faith and step out over the water, trusting that we will be buoyed up in this new

walk. **Recently, as opportunities to reopen our church buildings have become available to some of us**, the staff and I have again been watching and listening with great care, concerned for your safety and for the continued witness of our congregations. Deep conversations are being held as congregational leaders consider how to go forward at this time, seeking to sort out how they can best provide for one another and their ministries. Presbytery leaders have been walking with you sharing information, grace and wisdom as you – as we – go on as the body of Christ here and now. **I have wondered how the pressure of some moving to reopen buildings while others do not is impacting each one.** I have wondered how voices yearning to move quickly beyond the realities of the past weeks might be encouraging some to move into a future that is anything but where we were. Navigating all of this has been difficult enough. And today, another voice added to that struggle. Today, the president came out challenging faith communities to open – to open because faith communities are essential. Indeed – yes, truly communities of faith ARE essential. Christian communities of faith engage the world with a message of life and hope and grace; we walk the walk of Jesus as the Spirit leads. **But what today’s challenge gets wrong, is that we do not need to be reopened—we have never closed!** We have moved and are moving differently. We have learned new steps and developed sensibilities no one mentioned in Sunday School or seminary!

We do not know how long or how far the changes will take us – but we are willing to reach to get there because God’s people are always a people on the move, and this is our time to go – faithfully! Sessions! Pastors! **All who are part of a gathered community: please do not be moved too quickly from the care-filled paths you have chosen to follow as you navigate faithfully being in ministry and caring for yourselves and others, especially the most vulnerable among and around you.** Keep asking good questions about future and safety and call! Keep testing, learning and claiming the new ways in which we are walking! **Please take our role as essential seriously...**and by all means: remain open – even if buildings are closed. God has blessed us with the gifts of the Spirit, not to mention energy, intelligence, imagination – and humor! We can do this!

Amen! Blessings, Sue and Wayne