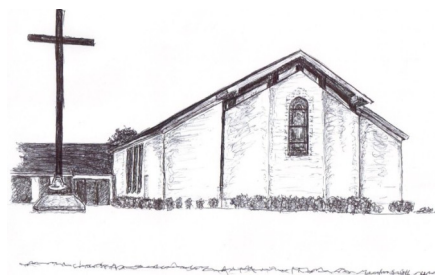


Presby News

February/March 2014



FROM THE PASTOR

Preparing sermons, for me, is like cultivating and nurturing a garden. You pray, study, read, observe people and think and try to give to each the attention necessary. Obviously, they do not all ripen and mature at the same time. Hopefully, you do not find yourself at Saturday night and nothing is ready to be "harvested" from your garden. Awful feeling!



Here are the rows that are planted in my garden at the present:

"The Meaning of the Apostle's Creed" (10 sermons for Sunday morning worship beginning January 19, 2014 and concluding Sunday, April 20, 2014).

"Lenten Meditations" beginning with an Ash Wednesday Service on March 5, 2014 and continuing for the 40 days and the six Sundays climaxing Easter Sunday, April 20. (Wednesday evenings)

"The Beatitudes: Pathway to Happiness" Six messages on the Beatitudes

"Anyway: the Paradoxes of Living the Christian Life" (Four messages for Sunday morning worship).

I see you adding them up and saying "Will he be here that long? That's 20 Sundays. I have asked myself that question. Only God knows. If you and The Lord permit me to stay (until June 20, 2014. That is 20 Sundays), here is what I am thinking:

1. All these are new sermons, not warmed over sermons from the past. I will work hard to make them fresh and hopefully a blessing to you.
2. I will continue to listen to you for at least 10 hours a week so you will be willing to listen to me 20 minutes on Sunday. I pray that these messages will touch you at the points of your deepest need and certainly not be answering questions no one is asking.

I am committed to give you the best that is within me. You are a wonderful congregation and deserve no less.

Yours in His service,
Doyle

You shall be
HOLY,
for I the
LORD your God
am
HOLY.

Leviticus 19:2, NRSV

SPECIAL DATES

February - African-American History Month

- Boy Scout Sunday, *February 2*
- Valentine's Day, *February 14*
- Presidents Day, *February 17*

March

- Transfiguration of Our Lord, *March 2*
- Ash Wednesday, *March 5*
- World Day of Prayer, *March 7*
- First Sunday in Lent, *March 9*
- Daylight-Saving Time begins, *March 9*
- Girl Scout Sunday, *March 9*
- Second Sunday in Lent, *March 16*
- First Day of Spring, *March 20*
- Third Sunday in Lent, *March 23*
- Fourth Sunday in Lent, *March 30*



Minutes of Stated Session Meeting
First Presbyterian Church, Alexandria, Louisiana
November 18, 2013

The Session met in the church library, 357 Windermere Boulevard, Alexandria, Louisiana. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. with an opening prayer by Rev. Doyle Bailey. Nancy Hendrix moderated the meeting and led in a devotional from Matthew 14:30-31.

Members Present: John Allen, Jim Hockensmith, Bill Higgins, Elizebette Kennedy, Jack Ready, Brandi Woolam

Treasurer Present: Jim Smolenski

Elders Excused: None

Guests Present: Doyle Bailey, FPC Temporary Stated Supply Pastor

A quorum was present.

Finance Report: Presented by Jim Smolenski, Treasurer

The financial statements for October, 2013, were distributed to the Session. The October, 2013, bank statements were reviewed and initialed by Session members.

Motion: That Session approve the October, 2013, Financial Reports.

Moved: Jim Hockensmith Seconded: Jack Ready

Motion: Carried

Approval of Minutes:

The Session members reviewed the minutes for the Stated Meeting of the Session on September 23, 2013. One revision was made to Rev. Doyle Bailey's title. It should be Temporary Stated Supply.

Motion: That the minutes for the Stated Meeting of the Session on September 23, 2013, be approved as amended.

Moved: Jim Hockensmith Seconded: Jack Ready

Motion: Carried

Clerk's Report: Presented by Clerk of Session, Brandi Woolam

Holy Communion was served on Sunday, November 3, 2013, during worship.

- Holy Communion was served on Sunday, November 3, 2013, at Emeritus.
- Received letter from Grace Presbyterian Church, Lafayette, requesting permission for a youth group of 12 to stay at FPC on Sunday, November 24, while attending the Youth Evangelism Conference.
- Received letter from Salvation Army for Christmas.
- Stewardship Commitment Letter and Commitment Card were mailed November 18, 2013.
- Received Thanksgiving Card from Emeritus.

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND SESSION ACTIONS

Congregational Life Report – Presented by John Allen

The Session reviewed the following calendar of events in the folders:

November 24, Sunday –

- Putting up the Christmas tree and preparation for the Hanging of the Greens
- Get decorations from the attic

- Put up the Christmas tree
- Inventory the Christmas decorations and wreaths
- Make a list of Christmas decorations that need to be remade
- Advent Candles – John (ask Jim where he ordered or bought them)
- Food: Sandwiches (make your own) – Brandi will pick up extra things and chips
- Tools: pliers – Laurie
- Hammer – John

December, 2013

December 1, Sunday – Hanging of the Greens

December 4, Wednesday – Committee Meeting

- Food – Sandwiches (make your own) – Brandi
- Open – Brandi

December 11, Wednesday – Bible Study

- Food – Pizza – John
- Birthday Cake – Sue Shipman
- Open – Annelize

December 18, Wednesday – Caroling

- Special time (ask Jack Ready)
- Food – Croissants sandwiches and hot chocolate – Sulin and John
- Ask Jack about the song books

December 25, Christmas

January, 2014

January 1 – No meeting

January 8 – Committee Meeting

- Food – Soup – Sulin – Potato soup and Chili
- Laurie – Bean soup
- King Cake – John

January 15 – Music – Ben Waites

- Advertise – email from Church office
- Press release – Sue Shipman
- Food – Chicken – Laurie
- Open – Annelize

January 22 – Bible Study

- Food – Covered Dish
- A-G Desserts
- H-N Veggies
- O-Z Main Dish
- Open – John

January 29 – Bible Study

- Food – Pizza – John
- Open – Annelize

February 3 – Souper Bowl of Caring

- Canned Food Drive and Money

Planning for the Year:

1. Adult Bible study during the Vacation Bible School
2. Cook book

3. Valentine's Day – making Valentine's Day cards for the homebound of the church and/or the people at the Oaks Nursing home in Pineville.
4. Easter Egg Hunt – invite the children from the Vacation Bible School
5. Vacation Bible School
6. Biblical Re-enactment - Three consecutive Wednesdays

Discussion followed about ideas for the new year: Adult Bible Study, Cookbook, Valentine's Day, Easter Egg Hunt, Vacation Bible School and Biblical re-enactment. The date for making Christmas Cards at Emeritus was moved to 3:00 p.m. Saturday, November 23, 2013.

Worship and Evangelism Report - Presented by Jim Hockensmith

Jim Hockensmith reported that plans for Hanging of the Greens and the Christmas Eve Service are on schedule. There was no other business to report.

Personnel Report - No Report

Property Report - Presented by Jack Ready

Jack Ready reported on the following:

- The bathroom updates will be done after January 1, 2014.
- The tile floors need to be stripped and re-waxed. Ready asked the Session if they want a professional company or Sexton Charles Bell to do the floors and when would be the best time to do it: Before Christmas or after January 1?

Motion: That the Session approve expenditures to strip and re-wax the tile floors by a professional flooring company prior to Christmas.

Moved: John Allen

Second: Jim Hockensmith

Motion: Carried

Pastor's/Moderator Report - Presented by Doyle Bailey, Temporary Stated Supply

Doyle Bailey discussed the Commitment Letter/Commitment Card, which were mailed November 18. He also mentioned the possibility of using stewardship testimonies, which might be enlightening. He suggested the possibility of a Bible Study re-enactment on Wednesday nights. Two suggestions were: (1) Judgment of Adam and Eve and (2) Exodus.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Discussion followed regarding a memorial donation in memory of Edgar Henao, Doyle and Barbara Bailey's son-in-law. The family requested donations be sent to the Norcross Soccer Association in Norcross, Georgia.

Motion: That the Session approve a memorial gift of \$100 in memory of Edgar Henao to be sent to the Norcross Soccer Association in Norcross, Georgia.

Moved: Jack Ready

Second: John Allen

Motion: Carried

Regarding the letter from Grace Presbyterian Church, Lafayette, requesting the use of FPC on November 24, Jim Hockensmith stated he would open the church for John Wamsley and his group.

Motion: That the Session allow Grace Presbyterian Church, Lafayette, to stay overnight at FPC on Sunday, November 24, 2013, while attending the Youth Evangelism Conference.

Moved: John Allen

Second: Jack Ready

Motion: Carried

Motion: That the Session find a way to preserve FPC valuable documents (historical and otherwise) for the church. Digital copies might be an option. A preservationist should be involved in the process.

Moved: Jack Ready

Second: Elizebette Kennedy

Motion: Carried

Motion: That the Session approve a Congregational Meeting to elect new Elders for 2014 on December 8, 2014. Approved by common consent.

Motion: That the Session Meeting be adjourned.

Moved: Jim Hockensmith

Seconded: Jack Ready

Motion: Carried

The next Stated Meeting of the Session will be, **Monday, December 9, 2013**, at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Brandi Woolam, Clerk of Session

**Called Congregational Meeting
First Presbyterian Church, Alexandria, Louisiana
Sunday, December 8, 2013**

The Called Congregational Meeting of the First Presbyterian Church of Alexandria, Louisiana, was called to order at 11:50 a.m. on Sunday, December 8, 2013, by Jane Conerly, Liaison to Ministry.

Jim Smolenski reported that the Nominating Committee had two nominees for Elders to serve as Session members. They are: Jack Ready and Jim Hockensmith.

Jane Conerly asked for nominations from the floor. There were none.

Ed Ware moved that nominations cease, and the nominees be elected by acclamation.

Wynn Ware seconded the motion.

The vote was taken by voice vote, and the motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:54 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Brandi Woolam, Clerk of Session

Minutes taken by: Sulin Best

Minutes of Stated Session Meeting
First Presbyterian Church, Alexandria, Louisiana
December 9, 2013

The Session met in the church library, 357 Windermere Boulevard, Alexandria, Louisiana. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Elder Jim Hockensmith.

Members Present: John Allen, Jim Hockensmith, Bill Higgins, Elizebette Kennedy, Jack Ready, Brandi Woolam
Treasurer Present: Jim Smolenski
Elders Excused: None
Guests Present: Doyle Bailey, FPC Temporary Stated Supply Pastor
A quorum was present.

Finance Report: Presented by Jim Smolenski, Treasurer
The financial statements for November, 2013, were distributed to the Session. The November, 2013, bank statements were reviewed and initialed by Session members.

Motion: That Session approve the November, 2013, Financial Reports.

Moved: Jack Ready Seconded: Jim Hockensmith
Motion: Carried

Approval of Minutes:

The Session members reviewed the minutes for the November 18, 2013 Stated Meeting of the Session and the December 8, 2013 Called Congregational Meeting.

Motion: That the Session approve the minutes for the November 18, 2013 Stated Meeting of the Session.

Moved: Jim Hockensmith Seconded: Jack Ready
Motion: Carried

Motion: That the Session approve the minutes of the December 8, 2013 Called Congregational Meeting.

Moved: Bill Higgins Seconded: Jim Hockensmith
Motion: Carried

Clerk's Report: Presented by Clerk of Session, Brandi Woolam

- Holy Communion was served on Sunday, December 1, 2013, during worship.
- Holy Communion was served on Sunday, December 1, 2013, at Emeritus. Jack and Judy Ready, Elizebette Kennedy and Rev. Doyle Bailey assisted.
- Received invitation from St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church, New Orleans, to attend the ordination of Layne Bailey Brubaker as Site Coordinating Pastor of the South Louisiana Young Adult Volunteers at 2:00 pm, Sunday, January 12, 2014.

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND SESSION ACTIONS

Congregational Life Report – Presented by John Allen

The Session reviewed the following calendar of events in the folders:

Changes to January 2014 schedule

January 5 (Sunday) – Taking down the greens

- After the service the Christmas decorations will be packed for storage
- Food – Build your own sandwiches

February 2014

February 2 (Sunday) – Souper Bowl of Caring

February 5 (Wednesday) – Valentine cards

- Making Valentine cards for shut-ins and others
- Members of the Church need to bring names to John Allen by Sunday, February 2.
- Food: Spaghetti and Sauce – Sulin
- Bread – Sue Shipman
- Salad – Annelize
- Open: Sulin

February 12 – Committee Meeting

- Food: Pizza – Laurie
- Valentine cookies – John
- Open: Annelize

February 19 – Bible Study

- Food: Chicken – Sulin
- Members are invited to bring side dishes
- Open: Sulin

February 26 – Bible Study

- Food: Covered Dish
- A-G Main
- H-N Desserts
- O-Z Veggies
- Open: Annelize

Discussion about Cook Book:

- Suggested Title: "Feast of Memories"
- Stories along with recipes
- A way to get new people involved – a meeting to reminiscence
- Raise money for missions
- Black and White Art work
- Typed using a font that will distinguish 1, l, and I (possibly Times New Roman)

February, 2014 Committee Meeting topics:

- Categories for the cook book
- How to include new people

Valentine Cards:

John Allen suggested that the congregation submit names to John or the church office by Sunday, February 2, so he would have them before Wednesday, February 5. The cards will have foam heart stickers on the front and a modified John 3:16 on the inside. Something like this:

*For God so loved
John Allen
That He gave His only Son
To die that I may live*

The Session discussed a Bible Application for children and its potential for FPC use.

Worship and Evangelism Report - Presented by Jim Hockensmith

- Jim Hockensmith reported that the Christmas Eve Service is set.
- He stated that he needs a candle lighter for the last Sunday of Advent (December 22). He reported that Ruth Coon, one of the money counters, will be out for surgery after the first of the year. Tom and Debbe Clegg, along with the monitor, will begin counting money on Sundays in January, 2014.

Personnel Report - No Report

Property Report - Presented by Jack Ready

Jack Ready reported on the following:

- Waiting on floors to be stripped. Will complete job as soon as machine is fixed.
- The boiler was inspected this week, and all was cleared with the inspector.
- The Sound System for auxiliary microphones has been down, and a new system has been ordered. It will be installed as soon as it comes in. (*Addendum: System came in and was installed 12/12/13.*)

Pastor's/Moderator Report - Presented by Doyle Bailey, Temporary Stated Supply Pastor

- Doyle Bailey reported on receiving an historical church document and his plans to take it to an archivist. He stated that he will get an estimate on the cost of having it preserved and report back to the Session.
- During the Christmas Eve Communion Service Rev. Bailey stated that he would like for families to come forward and serve each other. Communion servers will assist those who cannot come forward.
- Rev. Bailey stated that an online cookbook would be more feasible than a hard copy version.

Old Business: None

New Business:

After a brief discussion regarding the new hymnals, the Session agreed by common consent to review the new hymnals before purchasing them.

Clerk of Session Brandi Woolam submitted her letter of resignation as Clerk of Session, from the Session, the Pastoral Search Committee and the Nominating Committee.

Motion: That the Session reluctantly accept the resignation of Brandi Woolam as Clerk of Session, from the Session, the Pastoral Search Committee and Nominating Committee, with thanks.

Moved: Jim Hockensmith

Seconded: Jack Ready

Motion: Carried

Doyle Bailey reported that he and his wife, Barbara, are interested in becoming members of FPC. The Session members stated that a moderator would be asked to attend the Session Meeting to interview the Baileys.

Motion: That the Session nominate Elizebette Kennedy to complete Brandi Woolam's term on the Nominating Committee, pending Congregational approval.

Moved: Jack Ready

Seconded: Jim Hockensmith

Motion: Carried

Motion: That the Session nominate Bill Higgins to fill Brandi Woolam's vacancy on the Pastor Search Committee.

Moved: Jack Ready

Seconded: Jim Hockensmith

Motion: Carried

Motion: That the Session meeting be adjourned.

Moved: Jack Ready

Seconded: Jim Hockensmith

Motion: Carried

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm with a closing prayer by John Allen. The next Stated Meeting of the Session will be **January 20, 2014.**

Respectfully submitted:



CELEBRATIONS

Feb 05 - Fran Wall
Feb 17 - Delores McDaniel
Feb 22 - Gil Arnold
Feb 28 - J. Barry Herndon
Mar 07 - Robert Kennedy
Mar 07 - Brenda Willson
Mar 22 - Elena Glynn
Mar 22 - Roscoe Wilson



Feb 01 - Robert and Ruth Coon
Mar 14 - Charles and DeeDee Ellington
Mar 28 - Robert and Elizabeth Kennedy



Responders Schedule

	Usher Narthex	Greeter Front Door	Monitor	Communion Servers
Feb 2	Ben Yang Sulin Best (Oct-May) Helen McDaniel (May-Oct)	2 Vacancies	Jim Hockensmith	Jim Hockensmith, Feb Elder Annelize Benade Dirk Benade
Feb 9	Jim Huffman Stephanie Huffman	John Allen Liz Magee	Dirk Benade	
Feb 16	Bob Kennedy Elizebette Kennedy	Bill Higgins Martha Higgins	Roger Best (Oct-May) Vacancy (May-Oct)	
Feb 23	Jim Hockensmith John Allen	Mike Vickers Pat Turpin	Jim Smolenski	
Mar 2	Ben Yang Sulin Best (Oct-May) Helen McDaniel (May-Oct)	2 Vacancies	Jim Hockensmith	Elizebette Kennedy, March Elder Roger Best Jim Hockensmith
Mar 9	Jim Huffman Stephanie Huffman	John Allen Liz Magee	Dirk Benade	
Mar 16	Bob Kennedy Elizebette Kennedy	Bill Higgins Martha Higgins	Roger Best (Oct-May) Vacancy (May-Oct)	
Mar 23	Jim Hockensmith John Allen	Mike Vickers Pat Turpin	Jim Smolenski	
Mar 30	Mac McBurney Georgia McBurney	2 Vacancies	Bill Higgins	

Unwrap the gift

At church one Sunday, I noticed a woman carrying a Bible neatly wrapped in colorful ribbon, like a package. My first thought was that she must be giving it to someone as a present.



Throughout the next few weeks, however, I realized that was the woman's own well-used Bible. Whenever a worship service or Bible study ended, she carefully rewrapped the Scriptures with that shimmery strand.

What a great reminder that God's Word is a precious, practical gift meant to be opened and reopened regularly.

—Stephanie Martin

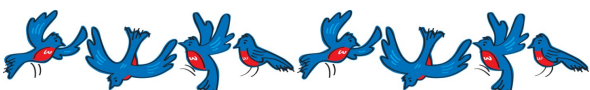
The touch of Christ

Disability advocate Joni Eareckson Tada, a quadriplegic since a 1967 diving accident, is also a cancer survivor. Breast cancer "was a bruising of a blessing," she says, "because it helped us face our own mortality."

The "us" refers to Ken Tada, her husband of 30+ years. In *Joni and Ken: An Untold Love Story* (Zondervan), the couple shares how physical challenges have brought them closer to God and one another. During the "worst of all nights," when pneumonia ravaged Joni's chemotherapy-weakened body, she asked God to help her sense his presence.

As Joni summoned Ken for the third time that night, her prayers were answered. She "could feel the touch of Christ" while her husband ministered to her needs and offered encouraging words.

Spouses — and, indeed, all Christians — are called to be Jesus to one another. He says, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40, NIV).



Ben Waites Concert

January 15, 2014



Great food !



Fellowship !



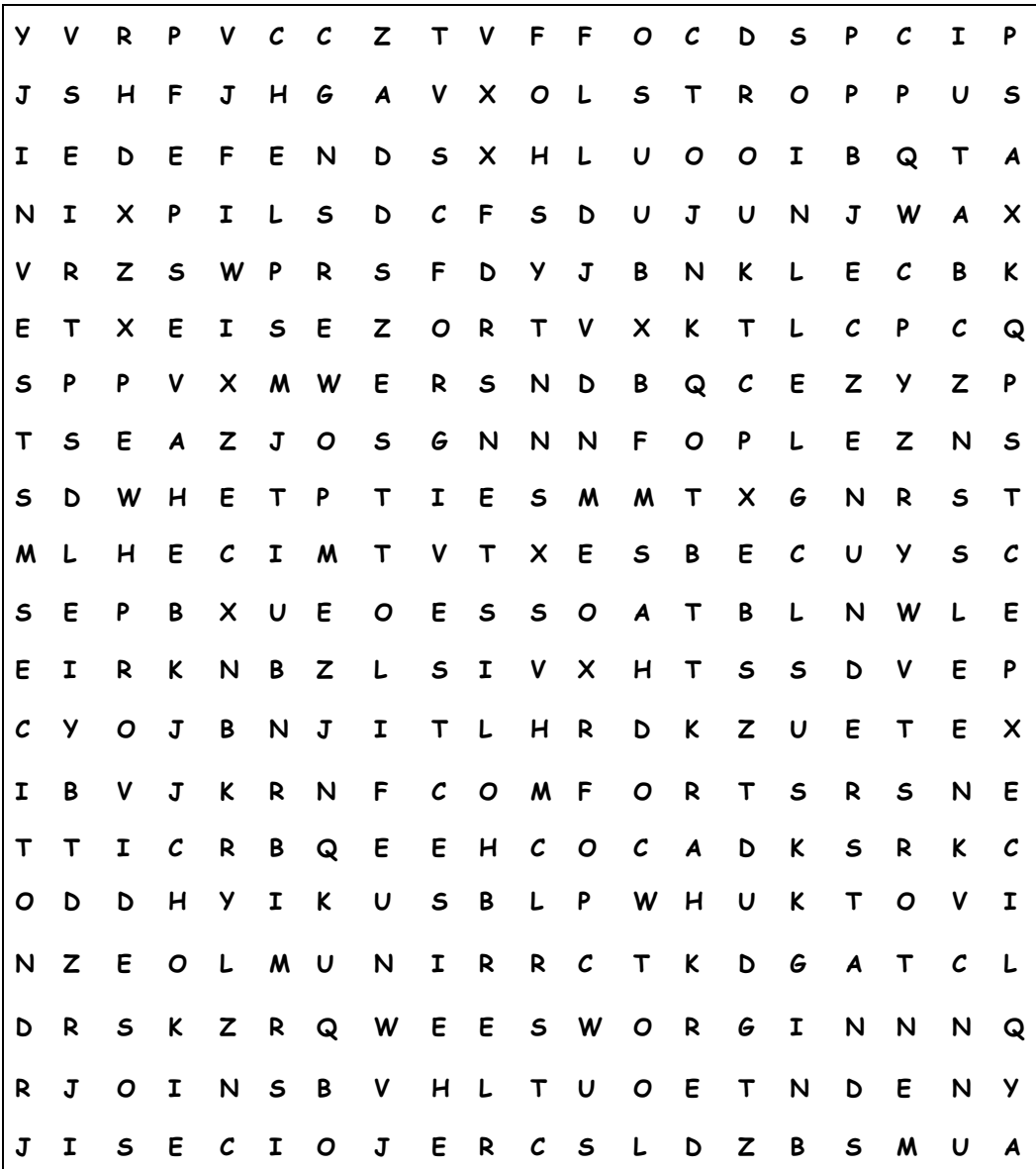
Beautiful Music !



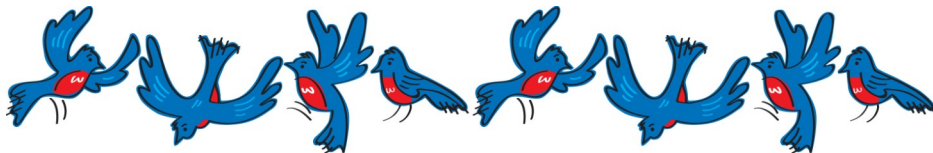
Fun !

ABC's of Love

Word Search



Accepts
Behaves
Comforts
Defends
Empowers
Forgives
Grows
Helps
Invests
Joins
Kneels
Listens
Mentors
Notifies
Overlooks
Provides
Quiets
Rejoices
Supports
Tries
Understands
Volunteers
Welcomes
Expects
Yields
Adds zest to life



~~oops!~~

From a worship screen in Lansing, Michigan:

nylth of the day

"I'm Gonna Live So God Can Sue Me"

please stand for prayer

Who does God *use* as his lawyer?



~~oops!~~

From a worship bulletin in Kansas City, Missouri:

CONFESSION OF SIN

Take away my quilt and iniquity.

Wash me and I will be white as snow

Jesus takes our *guilt*; snuggle into his love — and a blanket!

Youth Page

NEVER-ENDING GIFT

Seven days a week, remind someone special about God's love, the gift that truly keeps on giving.

John 3:16

What you need:

- Large plastic pill box with a compartment for each day
- Construction paper
- Craft glue
- Black permanent marker
- Heart stickers
- Scissors
- Bible
- Pencil
- 7 small treats (fish-shaped crackers, small candies, trail mix, etc.)

What you do:

1. Glue paper onto the container. Write “God’s Love” in permanent marker. Decorate with heart stickers.
2. Cut seven slips of paper. On each slip, write out one Bible verse about God’s love. (Examples include Psalm 63:3; Psalm 100:5; John 3:16; John 15:12; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:9.)
3. Fill each compartment with a different treat. Then place a folded slip atop each treat.
4. Give away the present. Tell the recipient to open the correct day for a week — and then refill the treats and verses and “regift” God’s love to someone else.



God's Love

We can't measure God's love for us. It starts before we're born and continues for eternity.

We can't measure God's love for us. It starts before we're born and continues for eternity.

Directions: Down the left-hand column, spell out the name of each number. Then write the circled letters on the blank lines in the right-hand column. Read the words on the right, from top to bottom, to see what Psalm 33:22 (NIV) says about God's love.

[illegible]

 PSALM 33:22, NIV

Twenty	.....	"May	Sixty	.....	us,	Fourteen	.....	our
Four	.....	your	Forty	.....	Lord,	Eighty-one	.....	hope
Ninety-nine	.....	unfailing	Seventy	.....	even	Nine	.....	in
Seven	.....	love	Six	.....	as	Twenty-four	.....	"you."
One	.....	be	Twelve	.....	we			
Twenty-eight	.....	with	Sixty-four	.....	put			



In like the Spirit

In many places, March is notoriously windy: "In like a lion ...!" Though I don't like the damp chill that's often part of the transition to spring, I love windy days. Something about the air's movement — a gentle breeze or ferocious gale blowing through trees, against the house, in my hair — breeds excitement in me, anticipation that something new is astir.

How fitting that in conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus said, "The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8, NRSV). Like Nicodemus, we fail to comprehend the Spirit of God. But Jesus reminds us that though we can't see the Spirit, we feel his love, see his actions of justice and hear his sounds. These include kind words, bold preaching, weeping for another, shared laughter and songs of praise.

—Heidi Mann



Who are you wearing?



Before the Oscars, a big question for every glamorous celebrity is "Who are you wearing?" Fashion reporters and fans are eager to discover and imitate the latest designers and styles.

Few of us will ever walk the red carpet in Hollywood, yet we receive a much more impressive wardrobe makeover when we accept Jesus as our Savior.

Through his death and resurrection, Jesus turned our filthy rags of sin into dazzling white robes of righteousness (see Isaiah 61:10).

This righteousness is embellished with good works that speak to our vibrant faith. How evident is your new "outfit" to people around you? As you get dressed each day, consider whether you're living in such a way that people will wonder "Who are you wearing?"

Quite a story



During Sunday dinner, a mother asked her son what he'd learned in Sunday school that day.

"Well," he said, "our teacher told us how God sent Moses behind enemy lines on a rescue mission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. When he got to the Red Sea, he had his engineers build a pontoon bridge and all the people walked across safely. Then he used his walkie-talkie to radio headquarters for reinforcements. They sent bombers to blow up the bridge, and all the Israelites were saved."

"Now, is that *really* what your teacher said?" the boy's mother asked.

"Well, no," he admitted. "But if I told it the way the teacher did, you'd never believe it!"

Relinquishing control

Marcia shared how she'd been struggling to relinquish control and let God direct her life. One day, amid this challenge, her daughter approached her for homework help, which called for the use of an iPad. As Marcia struggled to make sense of her daughter's question, the youngster kept swiping at the screen, zooming in and out and grabbing the tablet to turn it toward herself. "If you want my help," said Marcia in exasperation, "then let me help!"

Suddenly Marcia had an a-ha! moment: Hadn't God been saying the same thing to her all the while? To truly benefit from God's help, she would have to stop trying to do everything herself, let go, sit back and accept his guidance.



Valentine's humor

Go ahead and chuckle at these Christian pick-up lines — just don't expect them to be very effective!



- Now I know why Solomon had 700 wives ... because he never met you.
- For you, I would slay two Goliaths.
- The Word says, "Give drink to the thirsty, and feed the hungry"; how about dinner?
- Your hair is like a flock of goats descending from Gilead.
- I believe one of my ribs belongs to you.
- How many times do I have to walk around you to make you fall for me?
- You really float my ark.
- Me. You. Song of Songs: The Remix.
- How would you like to join my purpose-driven life



"Everything is so commercialized these days."

The double clasp

The Savior's hand — how close its hold,
That none can loosen, none can break.
No powers of heaven or earth or hell
That loving clasp can ever shake.



And over Jesus' wounded hand
The Father's hand of strength is laid,
Omnipotent to save and keep;
Thus is our surety surer made.

So, one beneath and one above,
Father and Son their hands unite.
How safe, how safe the ransomed are
Within that clasp of tender might!

—Annie Johnson Flint

A thirst for righteousness

While living in the Middle East, Bible scholar Kenneth Bailey gained new insight about Jesus' Beatitude "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Matthew 5:6, NIV).

In *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes* (IVP Academic), Bailey tells of traveling with friends through the Sahara Desert when it was 110 degrees in the shade, "and there was no shade." One of their goatskin water bags leaked empty, and after consuming their remaining water, they journeyed a day and a half intensely thirsty. Bailey's vision blurred, and his mouth was so dry he couldn't eat. Finally, they reached an ancient well, whose water was their salvation.

Bailey explains righteousness variously as peace, justice and right relationship with God. "As I staggered on [in the desert], my mind turned to [Matthew 5:6]," he writes, "and I knew that I had never sought righteousness with the same single-minded passion that I now gave to the quest for water."

Stop, look and listen

Lent, the season of the church year that's associated with repentance, begins on Ash Wednesday (March 5 this year). While some people deny themselves by giving up something for Lent, others prepare for Easter through special Bible studies or [devotions](#).

Christians observe Lent for these reasons:

- It causes us to STOP. Lent says, "Stop and rest awhile," as well as "Stop doing wrong."
- It tells us to LOOK. Look inward for an honest self-examination. Look upward to see the cross of Christ offering healing and love. Look forward to the hope of the Resurrection.
- It tells us to LISTEN. Listen to the words of Christ. Listen to the voice of God. Listen to the winds of the Spirit of God.

Stop, look and listen. These three words aren't only important for our safety in travel; they're also helpful for our journey through the 40 days of Lent.

"Love is that condition in which the happiness of another person is essential to your own."

—Robert Heinlein

Offering a lifeline

After a family member tried to commit suicide, New Mexico pastor Mark Kluzek decided to reach out to depressed people throughout the country. He posted encouraging articles on a website (www.GodCaresAboutYou.net), even listing his own phone number for people who needed to talk. Kluzek bought Google ads that would direct desperate people to the site, but after getting no response for a year, he was ready to end the experiment.



Then he heard from a man in Iowa who'd first dialed a suicide-prevention phone number that ended up being a bank in Hawaii. Kluzek convinced the man not to end his life and shared with him the good news of Jesus.

The God Cares About You ministry now includes evangelism outreach to a poorer region of Albuquerque, known to residents as the "War Zone." Volunteers are working to turn it into the "Lord's zone," Kluzek says, as they meet people's physical and spiritual needs.

Whether you lend a listening ear or provide food and clothing, your loving actions show individuals that God truly cares for each of them.

Unconditional love

No matter what sin we have committed, no matter how terrible it may be, God loves us.

—Billy Graham

First Presbyterian Church

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Doyle Bailey, *Pastor*

Jack Ready, *Choir Director*

Judy Ready, *Pianist*

Carolyn Sterne, *Secretary*

Delores McDaniel, *Nursery*

Charles Bell, *Sexton*

Sue Shipman, *Newsletter Editor*

Wednesday Night Schedule

Feb 5	Open	(Sulin)
	5:45	Spaghetti (Sulin), Bread (Sue), Salad (Annelize)
	6:30	Valentine cards for shut-ins and others
Feb 12	Open	(Annelize)
	5:45	Pizza (Laurie), Valentine cookies (John)
	6:30	Committee Meetings
Feb 19	Open	(Sulin)
	5:45	Chicken (Sulin)
	6:30	Bible Study
Feb 26	Open	(Annelize)
	5:45	Covered Dish (A-G: Main, H-N: Desserts, O-Z: Veggies)
Mar 5	Ash Wednesday Service - no meal	
Mar 12	Open	(Annelize)
	5:45	Chicken (Sulin) with sides from the congregation
	6:30	Lenten Study
Mar 19	Open	(?)
	5:45	Covered Dish (A-G: Veggies, H-N: Main, O-Z: Desserts)
	6:30	Lenten Study
Mar 26	Open	(Sulin)
	5:45	Lasagna (Sulin, John, Annelize) with sides from the congregation
	6:30	Lenten Study

First Presbyterian Church

357 Windermere Blvd.

Alexandria, LA 71303

Come experience God's love at First Presbyterian Church

Sunday School—9:45 a.m., Worship—11:00 a.m.