

First Presbyterian Church of Alvin



Press Bytes



To the Saints at First Presbyterian,

Greetings. I hope this newsletter message finds you folks doing well. Who in the world would have imagined this would happen, not only in our country but in the world. It's like an end of the world horror movie one would watch on late night TV.

All sorts of questions are being asked and will be asked after all this is over. Blame and finger pointing is sure to follow, maybe lawsuits etc. etc. We will honor and celebrate the folks who got us through this. One of my daughters is an RN serving an emergency clinic in Houston and was on TV last week with all they are doing to help deal with this virus. She has been exposed but is doing fine through all the things she must wear to test folks who might be sick. Having someone on the front line is scary.

The paper today had two articles I would like to share with you. Some good news and some bad news. Bad news first. Doctors are getting close to having to decide who gets the treatment and who doesn't. Right now, they treat all people the same but can it continue? Dwindling supplies means that there might not be enough ventilators or other supplies for everyone. That means doctors will need to decide who gets the necessary treatment and who doesn't. The sick with other diseases and other problems who have little chance for recovery apart from the virus, might be turned away for healthier patients who can survive. In China, many patients were initially turned away. In Italy, hospitals have given younger healthier patients priority for ventilators over older, sicker adults. This is a terrible thing for which to decide. Doctors and health workers do not want to make those decisions. My hope and prayer is that we do not have to move to that stage of care. My prayer is that we can rev up production of ventilators so no one will be turned away. All life matters.

Now the good news. People around the globe are noticing something missing in the air. Blue skies over Beijing, emissions dropping in Milan, less ozone in Houston, the hunkering down has brought clean air to the world. Fewer vehicles on road and fewer plant emissions have caused the air to become a lot cleaner in short time according to the satellites that monitor this from space. The satellite imagery has been dramatic. Burning less fossil fuel has been the reason for cleaner air. Clear water in Venice, clearer and crisper air in Austin. The National Academy of science tells us 100,000 people die from air pollution each year here in the USA. Global pollution of our planet is affecting all of us. Rolling back close to 100 EPA rules this week, passed under Obama, by the administration in Washington, will be devastating to our environment. The cleaner air and water we see today from less polluting should be a wakeup call for all of us no matter our political persuasion.

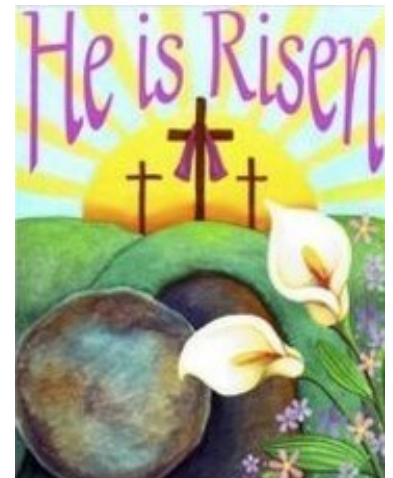
For me it is not political, it's moral. God, in Genesis, gave the earth to Adam and Eve. They were in charge of it and all life upon it. The word "subdue" has several meanings as God said, "subdue" the earth. It never means to destroy or misuse it. Some folks think we have permission to do as we wish but that's not what the word means. Subdue means more to "nurture" in the Hebrew. The earth is God's gift to us and we are its stewards. All of life fits together in a delicate balance. All of life needs all of life, from the little parts of nature to the greatest.

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Inserts:
April 2020 Calendar
Easter Lily Honor/Memorial





Children's Easter Celebration

On Easter Sunday, April 12 at 9:30 a.m. in the fellowship hall, the children will celebrate the resurrection of Jesus by doing crafts, listening to a story and participating in an Easter egg hunt. A hot breakfast will be served. Don't forget to bring your Easter basket!



Cancelled

April Birthdays

3	Sheila Follmar	17	Jo Myers
5	Amber Bennett	17	Martha Phipps
8	Natalie Aparicio	19	Ruth Frerking
10	Christopher Odom	22	Eric Grimmett
11	Audrie Gondesén	23	Shirley Brothers
14	Alan Ruskey	29	Jim Dallas

“We love Him because He first loved us.”

1 John 4: 9-10



Starting with Palm Sunday and continuing through Easter day, Holy Week and Easter are one of the most momentous times in the church year. We invite you to follow the path of Jesus through a series of church services – each unique – and each an opportunity to go deeper in faith.

Sunday, April 5, Palm Sunday:

Thursday, April 9, Maundy Thursday

Sunday, April 12, Easter Day



The Session is actively looking at options to accommodate our Congregation.

Please keep an eye on our website.

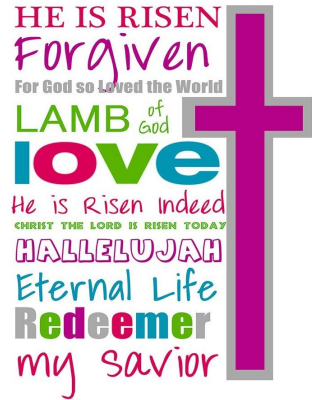
www.fpcalvin.org



PYE Happenings

Conclaves: February 28 - March 1

Some of our Youth attended Conclaves a few weeks ago. They met other Youth from Presbyterian churches throughout our Presbytery and have made lifetime relationships. They watched five Keynote performances regarding the main theme of Overcoming. Each Keynote was a step in the process of Overcoming. Step 1 is Acknowledge: In order to tackle a problem, one must first admit there is in fact a problem to overcome. Step 2 is Evaluate: Once a problem has been acknowledged one can take a step back to review how they got in the situation and work on steps to overcome. Step 3 is Implement: During this step, one uses the information they have gathered through step 2 to start making changes. Step 4 is Cope: Everyone copes in different ways. Coping could include talking to a professional, exercising, or even just crying. Step 5 is What Now?: This is when one can change their future by choosing a different path than the one they were on, by surrounding themselves with new people, activities, church, and many other opportunities. The mission project was making "homey" boxes for children to make their long-term hospital stay more like home. The kids helped create 52 "homey" boxes for Texas Children's Hospital! In addition to the different items mentioned above, kids attending Conclaves expressed interest in joining PYCC next year.



The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

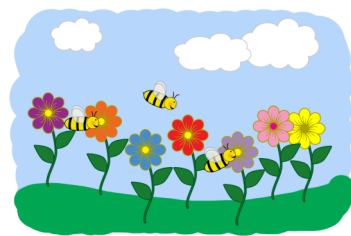
Psalm 34:18



For the Prelude on Sunday, March 1, Julie Hanford (aged 11) played "Allegro" by Joseph-Hector Fioco (1703-1741). Julie was accompanied on the piano by her mother, Alisa Hanford. Both are pictured with Pastor C. O. and Julie's father, Tony.

Confirmation

On Monday, March 9th some of our Youth and congregation members participated in a Confirmation Class. We look forward to the future when the Youth can meet with our Session to become official members of our church.





One Great Hour of Sharing Gifts Support Housing Affordability and Fairness

March 10, 2020 by Pat Cole

For more than a decade, Monica Jones enjoyed her Jersey City, New Jersey, apartment and a good relationship with her landlord.

However, a few years ago Jones's housing situation began to change. When a new landlord acquired her building, Jones soon started getting notices summoning her to court. At different times, the landlord contended that she had been late with a rent payment, had failed to pay an increased rent charge and/or had failed to pay the rent at all. Other longtime residents of her 18-unit building were having similar experiences.

Jones made repeated trips to court, and each time the allegations were dismissed. While she successfully fended off the legal challenges, Jones was growing weary of the hassle. She was tired of having to take time off from her job with New York City's city government. She felt alone in her battle and was concerned that one day the landlord might find a way to prevail.

Diane Maxon of Jersey City Together, a group that addresses housing and other community concerns, said Jones's landlord has a history of forcing people from their building, renovating the structure and raising the rent significantly. The landlord, she said, owns approximately 4,000 apartments in Jersey City.

Maxon, who chairs Jersey City Together's Tenants' Rights and Protection Group, said

these actions ran afoul of rent control and other housing regulations in Jersey City. However, she said local enforcement officials had largely ignored the violations.

"People were being illegally evicted, and rent was being raised up to three times what the original tenant had paid, which in itself is illegal," said Maxon. "You can't just randomly raise the rent just because you have renovated." She explained the amount of money invested in renovations dictates how much rent can increase.

Jersey City Together is committed to standing up for people trying to maintain a decent and affordable place to live. Gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing are helping the group in this endeavor.

In 2018, Jersey City Together pressed the town's government to enforce housing regulations more aggressively. The mayor responded by restructuring the board that governs landlord/tenant relations and instituting other reforms related to tenant protection. Maxon is hopeful these moves will make a difference.

Located just across the Hudson River from Manhattan, Jersey City has seen a dramatic increase in high-income families moving there from New York. They are attracted to Jersey City's newly renovated apartments, which are pricey but still much less expensive than comparable units in Manhattan. Maxon said this has created a housing shortage for middle- and low-income people.

Jersey City Together strives to amplify the voices of people in vulnerable housing situations. When Jones made her most recent appearance in court, after receiving notice that she was to vacate her

apartment in three days, Jersey City Together organized a group to accompany her and helped her find reasonably priced legal representation. Previously, she had had to face the legal system alone. This time she came armed with more knowledge of the law and the presence of Jersey City Together. She was vindicated once again.

“The judge didn’t even spend five minutes on it,” Maxon observed. “It was so ridiculous.”

One Great Hour of Sharing gifts are helping Jersey City Together pay the partial salary of a second organizer, which Maxon said is greatly needed. “There are so many things to do and so little time and money,” she said. “This grant has really facilitated us moving forward and making a difference, and we are eternally grateful for that.”

In Durham, North Carolina, One Great Hour of Sharing gifts are helping efforts to build more affordably priced housing in the city’s urban core. Offering gifts are supporting Durham CAN, a coalition of faith-based groups and civic organizations which has persuaded government officials to devote publicly owned land to affordable housing. Already, more than 400 affordable housing units have been built on land provided by the city and county.

Construction on hundreds of additional affordable housing units is expected to begin in late 2020 on 20 acres of abandoned and vacant land acquired by the Durham Housing Authority. To qualify for the affordable housing initiative in Durham, a family can make no more than 80% of the area median income, which is \$53,900 for a four-person household.

“Durham is quickly becoming a city with high-rise, highly priced apartments, which, in turn, is making it more difficult for those on limited incomes to find affordable housing,” said the Rev. Theodore E. Churn, executive presbyter and stated clerk for the Presbytery of New Hope. “This [affordable housing] is just one ministry that CAN has committed itself to in providing a more just community.” Durham CAN received the Presbytery of New Hope’s Passion-Driven Ministry Award in 2017.

One Great Hour of Sharing gifts are also helping to provide a decent place to live for people beyond the borders of the United States. For example, in Homs, Syria, One Great Hour of Sharing gifts have helped rebuild 40 houses and apartments destroyed during the civil war. Occupants of these residences were among the first to re-enter the city after violence subsided. The project was a partnership between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon.

One Great Hour of Sharing benefits the ministries of the Presbyterian Hunger Program, Self-Development of People, and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. Most congregations receive the offering on Palm Sunday or Easter Sunday.

Cont. from Cover

We are accountable to God for how we use this beautiful gift of our planet. We have no right to destroy it or abuse it. It does give all of us life and destroying it destroys our lives as well.

I think this virus is exposing us to the reality of our lives, who we are and what we are doing with our lives and society. A small little microorganism has brought the world to its knees. No matter how powerful we may be, how rich we may be, how in charge we may be, none of that can protect us from what is happening today. We will win this battle and God willing, come out stronger than before. I pray we will learn a lot about life and ourselves from all of this, and decide what is really important and what is not and who and what in life really matters. We can also renew and/or strengthen our faith in God who is overseeing all of life. We are not alone.

Love and Peace,
C.O.



“Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.”

Romans 12: 11-12





Ongoing Prayers

Shelley Steckert, Harold Petersen, Konner Ortiz, Martha Phipps, Lucy Pannell, Larry Petersen, Ana Petersen, Lewis & Edith Rockwell, Nancy Williams, Amelie Grefenstette, the troops killed in Afghanistan and their families, Jill Wheatley, Terry Johnson, the family of Louisa Vera, Doris Rasmussion, Ed Wells, Belinda Busscher, Matt Ober, and

the members of the Alvin High School Colorguard, Tony Rodriguez, Cindy Roberts, Irene Rodriguez & Family, Rachel Grimmett, Karen Herring, and people suffering from the COVID-19 Corona Virus.

Immediate Concerns : DJ McClendon, Lisa McCalla

Please call the church office with updates.

Elder of the Month - Wanda Cunningham

Refreshments for - Worship

Note to Congregation: Please remember that the Committee is only responsible for coordinating the refreshments. Please consider helping our committees in supplying refreshments for our after church fellowship. Its an easy and great way to be involved.

Thank You, Your Session

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

March 2020

The Session meeting for March 2020 was cancelled due to Covid-19. They are communicating weekly to keep us up to date with information regarding services and events for the future.



Easter

By Chris Lo

On Sunday, March 15, in a virtual sermon from Christ Church Cathedral in downtown Houston, the Very Reverend Barkley Thompson hypothesized to his online congregation that the early twentieth century theologian and apologist, C. S. Lewis' "The Great Divorce," was arguably one of the most important books about faith.

In "the Great Divorce," C. S. Lewis provided a fable about heaven and hell. In Lewis' hell, however, there were no demons with pitchforks, there were no hellfire and brimstone, no shrieks and cackle of punishment and pain. Rather, Lewis' hell was a sprawling city in a state of perpetual misty dusk, where a dark dull pallor pervaded everything. Lewis' hell was categorized by social distance.

The inhabitants of hell quarreled incessantly, which resulted in them moving farther apart from each other. They built houses on the outskirts of town, and whenever a neighbor moved in nearby, conflicts erupted again, resulting in the first person moving even further away. Lewis' hell was where social distance was the defining characteristic. A wilderness in which isolation and loneliness were finally the only norms.

Lewis' hell can be a description of our reality. In the one place that should be sanctuary in our time of need, social distancing has kept us from seeing loved ones, and prevented us from gathering as the Body of Christ. Right now, the COVID-19 virus is causing us to grieve. On March 31, in virtual Bible Study using Zoom, a Grace Alvin parishioner lamented that this Easter, we will be unable to share in Holy Communion.

On March 22, in a Lenten address recorded in Germany for the congregation at Christ Church Cathedral, the Reverend Scott Moore, Missioner to Nuremberg and Thuringia in the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, reminded

his audience of Jesus' instruction, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes"

(1 Corinthians 11: 26). This, he said, is accomplished through our worship experiences, when we check in and recalibrate ourselves as the Body of Christ.

Due to social distancing, this Easter we are missing the primary source of what draws us into the mystical experience of life. Through Baptism, however, we are incorporated into the Body of Christ and made members of the Kingdom. At that moment, we are adopted, anointed and made heirs of the Eternal Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is embodied through Jesus.

The fourth Gospel tells us that "the Word (Logos [λόγος]) became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14). As a church, we are the Body of Christ. As the Body of Christ, we embody the Kingdom of God. As Christians, we can not identify the Kingdom of God without identifying the Risen Jesus.

In this Eastertide, please remember that we are doing Kingdom work. Christians in the four corners of the earth are practicing what it means to be the Body of Christ. Unlike the residence of C. S. Lewis' hell, each time we recalibrate, check in, and raise our voices together, we need to return to the world and boldly proclaim "The Lord is Risen Indeed. Alleluia."

