



First Presbyterian Church

The Cross and Crown



April 2017

Extending God's Grace throughout Northeast Texas

CONTRIBUTOR'S PEN: JULIE ADKINS

Several years ago I attended a Synod of the Sun Face-to-Face ("job fair") event where churches seeking pastors and pastors seeking churches come together to meet and interview. (They don't do these any more, which is unfortunate, in my admittedly not so humble opinion.) One of those interviews in particular remains in my mind – although, fortunately for them, I can't remember which church it was – because they asked a couple of really strange questions. One of those was: "How do you explain the resurrection?"

I remember sitting there for a moment with my mouth hanging open, staring at the woman who had asked the question. I couldn't imagine that anyone would think that three years of seminary or any amount of pastoral experience would equip someone with the answer to that! How does any human being "explain" the resurrection? I couldn't even begin to guess what sort of answer she was hoping I would give . . . not that that would have made a difference, except that I might have been able to address the concern behind her question . . . if I had had a clue what it was!

Anyway, what I finally said was something like, "I can't possibly explain it. I'm not God," which seemed to satisfy the rest of the committee; and we went on to something different. But even after all these years, it still sticks in my mind.

Easter is not rational; it is not reasonable; it cannot be explained. I suspect that some of the traditions that have sprung up around our Easter celebrations may be an attempt to "domesticate" it a little. If we aren't careful, it becomes nothing more than a celebration of the coming of spring: flowers everywhere, a new outfit, finding hidden Easter eggs, singing festive music. All of those things are fine; some are fun; some are beautiful. But they aren't Easter.

Easter isn't just new green leaves on a tree that looked dead all winter. Easter is as if the tree died, and you chopped it down and burned half of it in the fireplace this winter, and then on Sunday morning you looked out the window and there it was again, full-grown and leafed out. Easter is not just a basketful of eggs symbolizing new life. Easter is as if you took the eggs, made an omelet, ate the whole thing, and then woke up Sunday morning to find chicks hatched out of the broken, empty shells. It is a mystery. It makes no sense. It is God at work.

I can't explain it. You can't explain it. We don't have to. All we have to do is celebrate the wonder of God's gift to us, and God's love for us.

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Our April lesson for Presbyterian Women will focus on who Jesus is through the lens of "our sister Abrahamic faiths, Judaism, and Islam." Last month we looked at early Christians writings which didn't make our New Testament canon. That proved to be a very interesting lesson, and lesson eight holds the same promise. You are invited to come join us for our study's next-to-last lesson on Monday, April 3 at 10 a.m. in the office conference room.



PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN

ATTENTION: NEW PRAYER REQUESTS MONTHLY

In order to keep our prayer requests current, our prayer list will start fresh at the beginning of each month. To keep your prayer request in the bulletin, write it on the back of an offering envelope, the attendance sheet or a piece of paper (please make sure your name is on it) or contact the church office, firstpres@peoplescom.net or 903-342-3011. We do not need the reason, unless it is death or an accomplishment, which go under a different heading. Also, please give relationship to you so others know who they are praying for. And PLEASE WRITE LEGIBLY.

As our prayers are answered, we give God thanks. For those with continued needs, we continue to pray.

Pastor

Session members:

Class of 2017
Bob Kelm and Ralph Gore
Class of 2018
Rick Drennan and Leeann Moos
Class of 2019
John Clark and Rhonda Thomas
Treasurer
Jerry Poe

Contact us:

Tina Hammer, Secretary
PO Box 493
301 S. Walnut St.
Winnsboro, TX 75404
Office: 903-342-3011
Fax: 903-342-3011
Email: firstpres@peoplescom.net
Office hours: M-Th, 9-noon

FPC Website:

www.easttexasgrace.org

Cross and Crown articles:
firstpres@peoplescom.net

Attendance:

February 26—32
March 5—32
March 12—31
March 19—32
March 26—30



Noisy Offering

**April: Winnsboro Community
Resource Center (WCRC)**

May: Blessing Box

**June: Winnsboro Summer
Lunch program**



From the Desk of Ruth Shelton

MY WISH FOR ALL . . . "Moses replied, "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!" Numbers 11: 29

Moses lamented: "I cannot carry all these people by myself, the burden is too heavy for me." God, who fully understood Moses' weariness, gathered Israel before the tabernacle. There He took some of the Spirit that was on Moses and put that Spirit on seventy of the elders of Israel (Numbers 11: 14, 16-17). Each worker was filled and flooded with the invisible God.

Then the Spirit broke forth. Sixty-eight of the seventy elders prophesied for a time and then ceased. But two continued to prophesy.

A young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." And Joshua, equally jealous for Moses' honor, added his sentiment: "Moses, my lord, stop them!" (11: 27-28). "Are you jealous for my sake?" Moses replied. "I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit on them!"

This one remark establishes the greatness of Moses.

Little souls are addicted to their own significance. They're annoyed when others gain prominence, for they, like Diotrophes, "love to be first" (3 John 9). They seek greatness for themselves, though in time this always has the opposite effect. In Dante's *Inferno*, the poet's vision of hell, he portrays those who have esteemed themselves more highly than others carrying boulders on their shoulders that bend them double so they can only look at the ground, for on earth they always look down on others.

Those who exhibit enduring greatness delight in seeing others use their gifts; they are content to decrease if others increase. They serve the glory of Christ and the good of His people. They have no greater joy than to hear that their children walk in truth and are surpassing them.

There is no more searching test than this: Am I as eager for God's kingdom to come through others as I am for it to come through me?

I ask myself: Do I take joy in the success of others, even my "competition" (Philippians 1: 18)? Can I pray for and encourage younger, more gifted men and women who take my place? Can I esteem them more highly than I do myself (Philippians 2: 3)? Am I willing to be anything (or nothing) if God's eternal purposes are served?

I cannot ask these questions without feeling shame, for they expose the selfish ambition that is mingled with all other motives. Oh, that you and I could say with Moses, "I wish that *all* the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them," and rejoice in their joy when they're honored and exalted beyond us.

"Let us know how to sit, as well as to rise," wrote John Wesley, "and let it comfort our declining days to trace, in those who are likely to succeed us in our work, the openings of yet greater usefulness."

This spirit can only grow in us as we are taken into God's great heart and see His passion to be glorified in *all* His saints (2 Thessalonians 1: 10). There we learn to care more for His work than for our own.

If I would do great things, "I must decrease" (John 3: 30 NASB).

Taken from: *Out of the Ordinary*, by David Roper; Discovery House Publishers.



We're Searching for Volunteers

Help Wanted

The young children in our church are in need of volunteer teachers for their Sunday School. We have a several options. One option is for a volunteer to assume responsibility to teach full-time. Another option is for volunteers to teach for a term of 4-6 weeks at a time, or volunteers alternate the Sundays in a schedule to be worked out among them. Jane has mentioned that she would enjoy teaching one Sunday a month, so that leaves the other three Sundays (and occasionally a fourth Sunday on long months). Please give this important volunteer opportunity prayer and consideration.

Our church family is small in numbers, and it is necessary for each of us to contribute in whatever capacity we can, large or small.

Could you please share your time and talents, for our children? If so, please contact Rhonda or Tricia.

Thank you, in advance.

Christian Education Committee

(Volunteers working with youth or children of the church will be required to have a background check, at the church's expense)

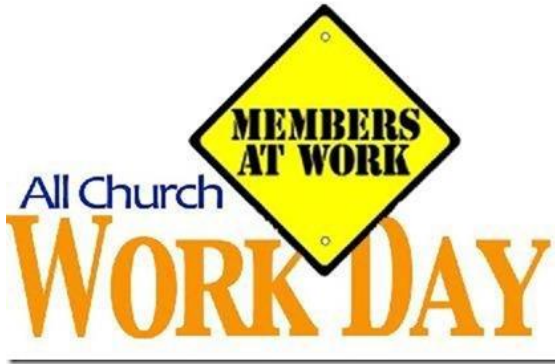
General Fund Summary - Jan - Feb 2017			
	Actual	Budget	Variance
Income	\$12,173.73	\$14,416.67	\$2,242.94
Expense	\$ 8,446.49	\$15,690.01	\$7,243.52
Net	\$3,727.24		

Note: Bank balance 2/28/2017 was \$63,552.07. Restricted funds totaled \$38,592.08, while unrestricted funds totaled \$24,959.99.



The PNC started receiving Pastor Information Forms in July, and have looked at 193 PIFs in these past 8 months. We have emailed people we were excited about. Disappointingly, some have responded that they didn't feel we were a good fit for them. Others have expressed interest, so we have talked to them by phone, and we have even met face to face with one person. But with each of these that we have talked to, something has made us realize they just weren't a good fit for our congregation. We feel *deeply* the responsibility to this congregation to find the right person for us and don't want to compromise and settle for less than what we feel our congregation wants. When we started this process, we were told it could take a couple of years or more. It's our hope and prayer that that will not be the case, but Laquita, Chris, Carolyn, Dan, and Tricia are committed to following through on the

charge we were given to find the pastor God intends to bring to us. I'm going to use a buzzword we've read in many of the PIFs. We ask that you continue to pray intentionally - not a casual prayer - but an earnest prayer that God will lead us to our new pastor. Soon. Or give ALL of us - the PNC and the congregation - continued patience as we wait for God's perfect timing.



Saturday, April 8 is work day at the church, starting at 8:30 AM. Outside, we will take care of much needed yard work, and inside we will clean out and organize closets, storage, and the kitchen. A yard vac and trailer for hauling debris will be provided, but if you wish to help in the yard, you might bring rakes, and/or other yard tools. You may wish to mark them with your name. We will have a mulcher, so if you'd like to take home mulch, bring large garbage bags. Don't forget your gloves. And after all the hard work, weather permitting, we are going to have a picnic! Hamburgers and hot dogs will be provided. You may bring sides such as chips and dip, beans, etc. Bring

your lawn chairs for our outdoor picnic. Ice and bottled water will be provided, but if you prefer soft drinks, bring your own. While this will be a day of hard work, it should also be a great time for fellowship. For questions, contact John Clark or Rhonda Thomas

Lilies for Easter

Each plant is \$8.00. If you would like to order one (or more), please fill out the information below and place the sheet in the offering plate with your check made out to Presbyterian Church for the proper amount (please indicate "for lilies" on check).

We will accept orders until 11 AM, April 6, 2017.

Given By: _____

In Honor Of: _____

OR

In Memory of: _____

Total # Plants Ordered: _____

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Bring a Friend to Church Inviting Current and Former Christians

Identify potential churchgoers. The first step to inviting someone to our church is to identify individuals who would be open to attending services but do not currently go. This will most likely be someone you know who is a practicing Christian who attends services at another church, or someone who still identifies as a Christian but has stopped attending services. Religious events like Easter make non-churchgoers more open to attending services. The easiest people to approach with an invitation will probably be:

- family members
- friends
- coworkers or classmates
- neighbors

Pray for guidance. As a practicing Christian, you know that prayer can be an important way to ask for guidance or to request a certain outcome of events. Inviting someone to church should be no exception. As you pray, ask for God's help identifying the right people, as well as the appropriate time to ask - ideally when that person is most open to worship (which only God would know). You should also pray for inspiration and eloquence, so that you can best serve your faith and your community by offering the best invitation you're capable of.

The City of Winnsboro with huge support from the City Council are planning the 2nd Annual Spring Clean-Up Event. The date has been set for Saturday, April 22, 2017 – 8:00 am until 3:00 pm or until the dumpsters are too full. This will be happening at the City Hall Parking Lot at 501 South Main St., Winnsboro, Texas and the City's Green Waste Site on CR 4403.

Plans are still evolving but here are a few of the things we are doing:

- Provide four (4) thirty (30) cubic yard open top containers for waste disposal
- Provide 1-2 Recycle trailers for recyclables
 - Giving away free recycle trash bags
- Invite groups to have collection trailers available so citizens can donate items that can later be sold (i.e. Friends of the Animal Shelter, Goodwill, etc.)
- Open the City's Green Waste Site for limb/brush/grass clipping disposal
- Refreshments – water/cookies/popcorn/other????

Now, why are we telling you all of this? We want to invite your group to get involved. Here are just a few ways we thought groups could help serve the citizens and community:

- Pick Up Service
 - Offer to drive around town and pick up items from elderly or disabled people
- Clean Up Service
 - Tackle areas around town that need trash picked up and cleaned up
- Help at City Hall or Green Waste Site
 - Help people unload items into the dumpsters, trailers, etc.
 - Make cookies or popcorn (in individual bags) to give away or donate water bottles.
- Help with people around town
 - You may know of a person or property that needs help being cleaned up. This would be a great day to tackle that project. Focus on elderly or disabled or even someone going through an illness, recovering from an accident or just having a bad year.

Please plan to join us and help make this event a success. When we all work together we can make great things happen! If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know. My e-mail is sgriffin@winnsborotexas.com; office number is 903.342.3654, and cell number is 903.335.0066. Thank you for this consideration.

On Behalf of the Mayor and City Councilmembers: Shelly Griffin, City Secretary

First Presbyterian Church

Birthdays/Anniversaries

April 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Noon Al-Anon
2 COMMUNION 9 AM Ringer practice 9:45 Choir practice	3 10 AM PW office 2-4 pm Bible Study	4	5 6 pm Supper & Bible basics	6 <i>Lily orders due by 11 AM</i>	7	8 clean-up day 8:30 AM inside/out bring tools- rain or shine Noon Al-Anon
9 9 AM Ringer practice 9:45 Choir practice	10 2-4 pm Bible Study in Sanctuary (music)	11	12 6 pm Supper & Bible basics	13 6 PM Maundy Thursday Service/Communion	14 Good Friday	15 Noon Al-Anon
16 Easter Sunday OGHS offering No lunch 9 AM Ringer practice 9:45 Choir practice	17 2-4 pm Bible Study	18 <i>Session reports due by 11 AM</i>	19 6 pm Supper & Bible basics	20	21	22 Noon Al-Anon
23 Session	24 Cross & Crown articles due by 9AM 2-4 pm Bible Study	25	26 6 pm Supper & Bible basics Annv. Walenta	27	28	29 Noon Al-Anon
30 Noisy Offering: Winnsboro Community Resource Center						