



First Presbyterian Church

The Cross and Crown



April 2020

Extending God's Grace throughout Northeast Texas

Pastor:

Rev. Dr. Jerry Carpenter

Session members:

Class of 2020

Jane Els and Dan Wilson

Class of 2021

Sandy Corder and Kelly Holloman

Class of 2022

Patricia Fields and Slade Weaver

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PASTOR'S PAGE: REV. DR. JERRY CARPENTER

John Steinbeck wrote a book entitled, "The Winter of Our Discontent." It is about a man from a formerly wealthy family who works as a clerk at a grocery store that his family once owned. He thinks about memories and plans he once had but now they are vanished because of his circumstances in life.

We are at such a place in life at the time I write this. We are all experiencing a disruption in what we consider "normal" and we have no idea how long this will last. Each day seems to run into the next day with our lives being lived in a very predictable manner. We arise each morning and get ready for a day lived within the confines of our homes except for allowable travel to grocery stores to hunt for needed items or to doctors to check in and see if we are still okay. Places we once visited just for pleasure such as restaurants are not available to us for a while. Outings and trips we had planned seem to have fizzled into the abyss because places we would stay or transportation we would use cannot be reliable. The Winter of Our Discontent has led to the spring that follows. The sun has not shined much in the past few weeks and many of us have some form of the blues.

Even our attendance at our church has been stopped due to regulations that we cannot meet in groups for fear of spreading the virus that haunts our land. We have missed seeing our friends for fellowship and worship. We have missed the routine we have on Sundays. We have missed our Lenten Study that we had to cancel due to this disruption. Why are our lives so out of focus because of this societal problem?

This situation reminds me a bit of the problem the Israelites faced when the Babylonians invaded their land and killed many and took all survivors into captivity in their land. After they destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem and leveled the land of anything productive, they carried off thousands into exile that would last several generations. The Israelites had the choice to be rebellious and stubborn and not get along with their captors or to blend into society and intermarry with them. Both choices were made and it shaped the future they had when they were released after Cyrus of Persia conquered the Babylonians and he sent them back home. Those who remained pure of Babylonian influences became the true Jews. Those who intermarried with the Babylonians and became part of their culture became the Samaritans. Those two clans never got along after they became part of Jewish society again.

We are a people of exile at this moment. Our lives are not our own to determine where we can go and what we can do. Our lives are being controlled and dictated, for our good and the good of society in general, by governmental authorities to whom we have given our approval and acceptance of their dictates. We know it

is for our own good even if it is not comfortable. We may feel like being rebellious and having our own way but we know in the long run it is better for us all if we just blend in and do what we have been told to do.

Psalm 137 is one of the saddest portions of scripture in the Hebrew Bible. It reflects the experience of the Israelites during the Babylonian captivity. “By the rivers of Babylon—there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion. On the willows there we hung our harps. For there our captors asked us for songs, and our tormentors asked for mirth...” (1-3b) The psalm moves from despair to anger and the wish of retribution upon the Babylonians. It is not a happy psalm. It is one filled with despair and anger at the way they were forced to live their lives.

We are in exile now, from life, from worship, from fellowship with one another. But...release will come soon and joy will return. We are planning for worship and the future just as if it will be happening on the first Sunday of April. If it does, we will see you then. If not, then we will plan on it being the next week, or the next week. That is what hope is about, not giving up, but planning for the future and knowing that the future will be there for us when we need it.

We are not alone. God is with us. Thanks be to God.

Noisy Offering

Iglesia Maranatha in the town of Salama, Guatemala



SERMON TITLES FOR APRIL:

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Apr 5 | Palm Sunday
Matthew 21: 1-11
“The Humble Servant” |
| Apr 9 | Maundy Thursday
John 13: 1-20
“Kneeling to Serve” |
| Apr 12 | Easter Sunday
John 20: 1-18
“Resurrection Joy” |
| Apr 19 | Second Sunday of Easter
John 20: 19-31
“Confronting Doubts” |
| Apr 26 | Third Sunday of Easter
Luke 24: 13-35
“Strangely Warmed” |

**We have NO April
birthdays &
anniversaries:**

**(Please notify the office if I do not
have your birthday)**

Attendance:

March 1—29

March 8—32

March 15—13

March 22—0



Jane's Journey

We might have had to cancel our services here but I ended up “going to church” more than ever while being quarantined for Covid-19. Through the miracle of electronics I was able to watch three or four different worship services last Sunday. There are a variety of different ways to do this: some live and some recorded. I watched one of my former pastors who is now preaching in Michigan on their church website. Another church had a combination of live conference call with a recorded message from the pastor. Then I saw James Spurgeon give a sermon right down the street from us at the Winnsboro Reformed Church. And one of my fellow commissioned pastors had a video recording on Facebook. Then I ended the quiet spring evening by lighting a candle and watching a Taize’ service broadcast from France. It may be a silver lining to the cloud of this quarantine that we have found a multitude of ways to gather as the body of Christ.

Because most Presbyterians preach from the same lectionary passages every Sunday I was treated to a variety of sermons based on the same scripture.

When I came to Psalm 23 I immediately thought of that one phrase: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear not, for thou art with me.” This is a psalm that Jesus would have been familiar with and might even have been thinking of as he carried his cross to his death.

Right now the whole world is in the middle of a sickness that hovers over us and that threatens all of us with the shadow of death. We are all walking in a time of dark uncertainty. We don’t know when, how, or even if, this virus will affect our lives. It’s a pretty safe bet the answer is that it will but the uncertainty of how much is a huge shadow looming over the valley we walk through. I don’t know about you, but I will admit that I’m a little afraid.

I remind myself of two things: a God who loves me is in charge. The same God who created the universe and who created me is still in charge of what ultimately happens. God always gets the last word.

And I remember a quote from the movie, “The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel.” The hotel manager was fond of saying “Everything will be alright in the end. And if everything is not alright then this is not the end.”

Thinking of this gave me the courage to look at the passage with new eyes and see something I had missed: it’s only a *shadow*. I stopped being afraid of shadows a long time ago. They have no power over me.

In the meantime, we have a congregation who cares about each other, who enjoy each other. Let’s not give that up totally. Since we can’t be together physically, I hope we can find other ways to stay in touch. If you need a phone number or mailing address for anybody the church office will have it. Or you can call me and I can get the information for you. (972) 345-8346 or email me at jels@peoplescom.net



Music Notes

The Ringers and Singers will practice on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. They will present special music on both of these Sundays featuring combined efforts of the two groups along with Charlie on the trumpet on Easter. Ringers 9:00 and Singers 9:45 Sunday mornings. After Easter, we will take a break.

April 2020 Revised Common Lectionary for Sundays and Festivals

Palm/Passion Sunday—April 5

Sixth Sunday in Lent

Liturgy of the Palms

Matthew 21:1–11

Psalms 118:1–2, 19–29

Liturgy of the Passion

Isaiah 50:4–9a

Psalms 31:9–16

Philippians 2:5–11

Matthew 26:14–27:66 or Matthew 27:11–54

Tuesday of Holy Week—April 7

Isaiah 49:1–7

Psalms 71:1–14

1 Corinthians 1:18–31

John 12:20–36

Maundy Thursday—April 9

Exodus 12:1–4 [5–10] 11–14

Psalms 116:1–2, 12–19

1 Corinthians 11:23–26

John 13:1–17, 31b–35

Easter Vigil—April 11

A minimum of three Old Testament readings should be chosen.

The reading from Exodus 14 should always be used.

Genesis 1:1–2:4a

Psalms 136:1–9, 23–26

Genesis 7:1–5, 11–18; 8:6–18; 9:8–13

Psalms 46

Genesis 22:1–18

Psalms 16

Exodus 14:10–31; 15:20–21

Exodus 15:1b–13, 17–18

Baruch 3:9–15, 32–4:4 or Proverbs 8:1–8, 19–21; 9:4b–6

Psalms 19

Isaiah 55:1–11

Isaiah 12:2–6

Isaiah 61:1–4, 9–11

Resurrection of the Lord—April 12

Easter Sunday

Acts 10:34–43 or Jeremiah 31:1–6

Psalms 118:1–2, 14–24

Colossians 3:1–4 or Acts 10:34–43

John 20:1–18 or Matthew 28:1–10

Third Sunday of Easter—April 26

Acts 2:14a, 36–41

Psalms 116:1–4, 12–19

1 Peter 1:17–23

Luke 24:13–35

Monday of Holy Week—April 6

Isaiah 42:1–9

Psalms 36:5–11

Hebrews 9:11–15

John 12:1–11

Wednesday of Holy Week—April 8

Isaiah 50:4–9a

Psalms 70

Hebrews 12:1–3

John 13:21–32

Good Friday—April 10

Isaiah 52:13–53:12

Psalms 22

Hebrews 10:16–25 or Hebrews 4:14–16; 5:7–9

John 18:1–19:42

Deuteronomy 32:1–4, 7, 36a, 43a

Ezekiel 36:24–28

Psalms 42 and 43

Ezekiel 37:1–14

Psalms 143

Daniel 3:1–29

Song of the Three 35–65

Jonah 1:1–2:1

Jonah 2:2–3 (4–6), 7–9

Zephaniah 3:14–20

Psalms 98

Romans 6:3–11

Psalms 114

John 20:1–18

Second Sunday of Easter—April 19

Acts 2:14a, 22–32

Psalms 16

1 Peter 1:3–9

John 20:19–31

Session Highlights

The Session met on March 8. Here are some of the highlights.

- The Session heard from Reid Committee members Rhonda Thomas, Becky Poe, and Armel Crocker who presented the proposed 2020 Reid budget. They explained the various groupings of the budget and how it is set up to be spent and encouraged the Session to use the money allocated for Session spending as needed. The Session moved to approve the proposed budget.
- Our bookkeeper, Shannon Monk, will be leaving to pursue a new business adventure. The Session is working on replacing that position.
- Pastor Jerry reported that the Ash Wednesday service and the first Lenten study were both well attended.
- We are securing licensing required in order to post music both performed by the choirs and sung by the congregation during the service. This will allow us to post specials and even whole services on Facebook and on our website. The licensing also covers many other legal aspects dealing with the use of music and lyrics during the service.
- And the best is saved for last! We are getting new flooring in the Reid building, a portion of the sanctuary, and the sanctuary foyer! Dan Wilson and his co-chair, Beaven Els, have secured bids from several flooring companies. Samples have been in the Reid building for several weeks. Dan sought input about these samples from church members. The Session agreed that the sample with the longest commercial use warranty is the best choice. Some of the funding will come from the portion of the Reid fund set up for such spending. Dan is looking into the best way to fund the remaining balance. So say good-bye to that dirty, stained carpet and hello to new water-resistant luxury vinyl planks!
- The next Session meeting is scheduled for May 3 since the usual second Sunday will be Mother's Day.

To the Reid Foundation Committee and
First Presbyterian Church of Winnsboro Texas,

Thank you for all the faith, love and support that you have continued to contribute to my pursuit of education, growth as a Christian and spiritual journeying. No matter how near or far, Winnsboro and the PCUSA will always be my faith home. From being baptized with you in Winnsboro; graduating seminary in Austin; to now attending seminary in Pittsburgh: you continue to reveal yourselves as the best of friends, mentors and ministers. All of your letters; your kindness in friendship; your ministry to my mom, dad and grandmother; and the recent Louise Reid Foundation Scholarship are all blessings that I hope to thank you for by paying it forward and sharing in my living witness as you have shared with me in your living witness.

In stewardship of these many blessings in Christ and through you, I dedicate myself to assuring that nothing is wasted and that these gifts be multiplied in my words and deeds, love for God and neighbor and in living and proclaiming the Good News. Although the path that God has put me on has become longer and taken me farther than I could have ever expected, I want you to know that it is a good path, full of good people rich in wisdom, mercy and love. I pray that all these gifts of fellowship, providence and learning that you make possible in Christ in me come back to you and to the church in Winnsboro in double. Thank you.

God bless and keep you in the love and life of Christ.

Sincerely,



Jacob Gene Wilson

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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).

March 29, 2020 will be the last day we accept orders.

Given By: _____

In Honor Of: _____

OR

In Memory of: _____

Total # Plants Ordered: _____

Total Enclosed: \$ _____



Upcoming PW Meetings/Devotionals

Apr 7: Chicken Spaghetti Cook-In **POSTPONED**

Jun 6: Annual Saturday Luncheon

Sep 8: Meet @Els house in Pickton

Nov 3: Alice McGregor presents her trip to Israel

Mark your calendars now and plan to join us!

April 2020 (events subject to change)

First Presbyterian, Contacts, Holidays in United States

Apr 2020 (Central Time - Chicago)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29 Last day order NO SERVICE TODAY Noisy Offering	30	31	1	2	3	4 12pm - AI-Anon
5 Communion Palm Sunday Practice	6 2pm - Bible study	7 5:30pm - Lenten	8	9 Maundy Thursday	10	11 12pm - AI-Anon
12 Easter Sunday One Great Hour of Practice	13 Easter Monday 2pm - Bible study	14	15 Tax Day	16	17	18 12pm - AI-Anon
19 Family Lunch	20 2pm - Bible study	21	22	23	24	25 12pm - AI-Anon
26 Noisy Offering	27 2pm - Bible study	28	29	30	1	2 12pm - AI-Anon