



FIRST WORD

October 2020



Anniversaries

10/13 Duane & Joanne Wussow



Birthdays

| | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 10/02 Rhonnie Besonday | 10/08 Susan Steiert | 10/12 Kathy Stinnette | 10/18 Annie Goodrich |
| 10/02 Mary Funk | 10/10 Jim Trice | 10/13 Terry Sargent | 10/21 Joanne Combs |
| 10/03 Mike Heath | 10/12 Audrey Buttery | 10/16 Anne Brothers | 10/23 Mark Edwards |
| 10/04 Victor Bryan | | | 10/31 Joan Knowles |

Prayer List

| | | | |
|------------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Mary Andersen | Patsy Dyson | Jud Joyce | Suzann Parrish |
| John Britton | Mardell Franke | Paul Kneuss | James Pynn |
| Barbara Campbell | Tim Franke | Carson Linderman | Dave Reifsteck |
| Alan Crowe | Karla Garland | Lela MacLeod | Bill Sisunik |
| Barbara Crum | Ron Garland | Diane Maddox | Sue Steiert |
| Yvonne Daume | Walker Hayes | Christy Miller | Larry Stickwood |
| Marty Drabek | Carol Hazlett | Jeff Neil | Sam Tillett |
| Linda Dykas | Demetra Jones | Brian Oles | Laverne Torgerson |

Pray for those in the Armed Force

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Mitchell Swanson, USAF | LSC (SS) Matthew E. Edwards | Cpl. Ashley Lawson, USMC |
| Capt. Connor McCubrey, USMC | Lucas Brooking, USAF | L. Cpl. Nick Schneider, USMC |

UNITED WAY FUNDING EXTENDED TO NOVEMBER

Throughout the pandemic, we have provided free carry out meals to the community in need. Each Monday, Wednesday and Friday, we pack and prepare meals that include food provided by Glory Days in Wesley Chapel, to which we add desserts, fruit and bottled water. Zephyrhills Water recently donated a pallet of water for this project, and we receive dessert donations from various individuals. The volunteer teams that help each week have done an amazing job! We serve approximately 160 people at each meal, and have served nearly 9,000 meals! The United Way just extended the funding for this project for an additional 60 days. What a blessing it is for us to be able to serve.

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink...” -Matthew 25:35



Dear Friends –

We continue to navigate these unusual times and circumstances together. Don't you just wish we could return to "normal?" Our every interaction seems to be fraught with uncertainty in one form or other. Coffee fellowship, which we totally took for granted in the past, is unlikely to return in the near future. Other familiar activities may look different as we move forward. One important thing remains: we are still the Body of Christ together and Christ is still the Head of the body the church. We still need each other, we still have a responsibility to each other, and there is still much we can do together, even in this new socially distanced atmosphere.

We truly are the Living Community of Faith! In the August/September sermon series on the Living Community, I challenged you to consider several questions as they relate to our church, congregation and community. I encourage you to keep these questions before you as, together, we continue to seek God's will and direction.

Thermometer or Thermostat

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "There was a time when the church was very powerful. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society. When the early Christians entered a town, the power structure got disturbed ... But they went on with the conviction that they were a 'colony of heaven,' and had to obey God rather than man. They were small in number but big in commitment..." Together, let's consider the question:

- What do people say or think about the Christian community at First Presbyterian Church of Zephyrhills? Are we a thermometer, merely recording the ideas and principles of popular opinion or are we a thermostat – seeking to transform our community?

Transforming and Transformed

In light of the command and example of Christ to love one another and in light of our salvation we keep seeking ways to live out our faith. Through prayer and questioning we continually are asking, seeking, knocking. In light of this, let's consider these two questions:

- 1) What are we to do? Individually and as a faith community – what are some commitments we could make to tangibly join God in what God is doing in our community? You might call this our question of mission. Put this on your prayer list daily. (sometimes God calls us to do more, sometimes God calls us to stay where we are, sometimes God calls us to even let go) Asking, seeking, knocking – praying is how we know.
- 2) Who are we to become? What are the practices that form us into the image of Christ? How do we do this in ways that are unique to us and to our community? This question is as important as the first, says author Tim Soerens, "God does not just want us to be agents of transformation but to be transformed as well." Together we ask, seek and knock.

Better Together

For the early Christians in Rome, controversies existed around food, drink and holy days. These differences of opinion were controversies of the highest order, which threatened to split the church. Neither side would accept the other's viewpoint; instead, they used the issues against each other. "They" eat meat! "They" have ridiculous rituals. It wasn't doing either side any good to vilify the other side. It was just pulling them apart. Think about some of today's controversies within the church that tend to pull us apart and together let's consider these questions:

- What are the issues that cause us to use the word, "they" or even worse, "they all"? Write them down and spend a little time considering how these issues might lead you to judge a brother or sister in Christ. Consider how essential the issue is; does it prevent someone from saying, "Jesus is Lord?" How can you welcome a brother or sister who holds the opposite view from you?

Friends, I pray that we will continue to do the hard work of being in community together. It isn't always easy and times such as this can add to the challenge, but together we continue to proclaim, "Jesus is Lord!" And together, we continue to be the living community of faith.

You are in my prayers!

Denise



FOOD PANTRY UPDATE

It has been exciting to watch our Food Pantry expand and grow from a once a month bag of groceries to so much more. The Food Pantry is open every Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and grocery bags are also available during meals on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Each Monday, a team of volunteers delivers, sorts and prepares donations from Meals on Wheels of bread, baked goods, fresh fruit, vegetables, salads, prepared items, meat and more. These items are always welcomed and they are then used to supplement the grocery bag of canned goods. Recently, thanks to a wonderful donation from the Stickwood family and a grant from the Presbytery of Tampa Bay, we were able to expand into a second area adding a commercial refrigerator, new flooring and paint. Our dedicated, but small, group of volunteers works hard to make sure we are able to continue this valuable service to the community. Maybe God is calling you to help in some way; if so, contact Joyce McDonagh for information.



What Mask Are You Wearing?



Walmart's seasonal section is already stocked with candy corn, large bags of a variety of different candy bars, and so on. I wonder how these commodities are going to be handed out on October 31—Halloween. The pandemic has created a new normal (longer than we expected), however, for children getting excited about what costume and mask they will wear this year, and where they will wear it, may be somewhat unsettling.

What masks) have you been wearing since March? Mine have changed from the thin gauze type to plain white cotton, and two with patterns that I purchased from a neighbor. But, what mask are your wearing behind the current array of masks on the market? For many of us it has been one of loneliness, grief, frustration, fear, anxiety, and possibly your new occupation as a "homeschool teacher."

This new normal has still given our Stephen Ministry the ability to continue to connect, but differently. We have offered phone calls, virtual face talk (if possible) and if meeting, social distancing. Fortunately, I was able to stay connected to my Care Receiver through phone calls and recently social distancing at Panera's.

The important thing to remember is that we, here at First Presbyterian of Zephyrhills, are continuing to reach out to you. Maybe you feel your need isn't worth a phone call to the office or to one of our Stephen Leaders, but it is! We don't want to lose the spirit of Stephen Ministry because of alternative ways of connecting. In fact, you may know someone who may not have heard of Stephen Ministry, but could use a friendly voice at the other end of the phone. If so, please contact one of us and share about your friend or your need. We are always here for you.

The Lord, in His sovereignty, allowed and maintains control over this pandemic. He may just be challenging us to reach out to someone in need or for you to reach out to us.

Our motto, "Christ caring for people through people," remains steadfast and strong regardless of any season or circumstance.

Reaching out with much love,
Patty Joyce, Stephen Leader

WELCOME TO WORSHIP!

We re-opened the Sanctuary for in-person worship on August 23 after having put into place a number of safety measures:

- Wearing of masks is required (including during singing)
- Touchless hand sanitizer stations are at the door
- Greeters open the door and assist in finding a seat
- Seats are socially distanced
- No handouts are used
- Entry is through 19th Street entrance
- Doors are opened at 9:40 each Sunday
- Coffee Fellowship is not offered at this time



We continue to be diligent in making sure that worship is meaningful and safe as possible. Even though we are socially distanced, it is good to see familiar faces. If you are ready to be here, we welcome you to come. However, if you are not quite ready, that is okay, too! We welcome you to continue worshipping online worship through Facebook and our Website as long as you like. Feel free to call if you would like more information!

**The First Presbyterian
Church of Zephyrhills**
5510 19th Street
Zephyrhills, FL 33542
(813) 782-7412



October 2020

*First
Word*

“Together We Serve”

Office Closed Except by Appointment
Office: (813) 782-7412 E-mail: Firstpcz@verizon.net
Sunday Worship Service at 10:00 AM at: Firstpcz.org

Church Staff:

Rev. Denise Lay, Pastor
Cheryl Heath, Office Administrator
Debbie Edwards, Director of Music
Jason Edwards, Choir Director
Tracy Clemmer, Nursery Attendant

Deacons

Joyce McDonagh,
Moderator

Class of 2020

Maggie Andersen
Ron Bergstrom

Class of 2021

Catherine Coffey
Bob Crum
Donna VanTassel

Class of 2022

Mike Heath
Audrell Howard
Joyce McDonagh

Session

Barbara Crum, Clerk
of Session
Bob Crum, Treasurer

Class of 2020

Doug Dorgan
Mardell Franke
Rhonda Register

Class of 2021

Mary Margaret Trice
Roy Marks

Class of 2022

Barbara Crum
Tracy Linderman