The Bridge

First Presbyterian Church of Granbury

February, 2021

From the pastor

Rev. Drew Travis revdgtravis@gmail.com



The word of the day seems to be "unprecedented." I hear that word tossed about so often in conversation, in the media, in our reflections on the year we've just been through. I think the word has been more than a bit overused in recent months. In fact, I think its frequent use has been unprecedented.

Yet, there has been a lot happening as of late that we've not experienced before. We continue to battle COVID-19 and we've not dealt with anything like this pandemic before and not had such a health crisis for 100 years. That pretty much qualifies as unprecedented. Just two weeks ago, our nation's capital was under siege and the capitol building was occupied by a mob while our senators and congressmen and women sought safety. No one has breached that building in over 200 years. That day was unprecedented in our history and certainly in our lifetimes. The inauguration of our 46th president on January 20 was a very different affair than it has been in the past. There were few Americans able to participate and security was extremely tight. There was no parade through the streets of DC and no celebratory balls late into the night. A woman was inaugurated as Vice President and Mr. Biden became the oldest president to take office. All these things are unprecedented. Maybe it's just a good word for our time.

We in the Christian faith know a thing or two about unprecedented happenings. We have just celebrated a virgin birth and the arrival of the Christ child. That expression of the love of God in this babe in Bethlehem is an unprecedented expression of God's love for us. This God who has reached out in relationship throughout history over and over again chose to come to us in the flesh of human creation. Amazing. Unprecedented.

Now we move from Christmas to Easter and celebrate once more the salvation offered in Jesus Christ upon the cross, a salvation offered through God's Son. It is yet another unprecedented act of God's love for you and for me. When else has the Savior arrived in the cry of an infant and salvation been offered by one who enters the city on a lowly ass? God does things God's way and often the love of God is displayed in unprecedented ways.

The spiritual practices of Lent are an opportunity for us to reflect on the unprecedented ways God enters our lives. For 40 days we focus on ourselves a bit in the context of God's love. We focus on our faith and what it means to call it "our" faith. We focus on the good grace of God in Jesus Christ and the gift that is given for the living of life. We examine our own lives and strive to discover how our lives have been made different in Jesus Christ. In Lent we do a little reconnoitering about our lives of faith.

It is important work. It's nurturing to contemplate the unprecedented love of God and what it means for us. It's nurturing for us to consider ourselves in the context of God's love and grace so we may more fully realize the enormity of God's love. It helps us move from Christmas to Easter and learn of ourselves and our God as we journey.

I hope you'll join us each Wednesday evening in Lent, beginning Ash Wednesday, February 17, for a time of worship and reflection and prayer. We'll begin at 6:30 and finish by 7:00. Since we're not meeting in-person, each service will be live streamed. We hope you'll make it a Lenten discipline to set aside 30 minutes each Wednesday evening so we might gather together separately. Each service will be available online later if you are unable to join us at 6:30. We're calling this Lenten time "Journey toward Jerusalem." We hope you will join us and journey with us. It's kind of unprecedented – we've not done it this way before.

Care well for yourselves and for one another,

Drew

Prayer of the Month

Pat Collins, Prayer chain coordinator pat.collins37@yahoo.com



If you're crabby and you know it, raise your hands. Smack! Smack!

People have reasons for being out of sorts. Genuine, legitimate reasons. "Things aren't going my way and they haven't for almost a year," might be one of them. I think modern psychology would say "feel your feelings," "express your emotions," "if you are sad, be sad." I say, I've never found that helpful for the life-isn't-the-way-l-want-it existential angst. Have you? I'm not talking about grief from illness or the death of someone you loved. I think psychology is helpful, maybe necessary, for recovery into the world of going-forward-with-life. And, I think knowing what you are feeling is very important. Always. I'm talking about a refusal to make peace with conditions as they really are, right this moment. In other words, pandemic life.

The thing about our God and our faith is that it is impervious to the vagaries of our mundane or even our pandemic life. It asks us to keep our mind on our Lord to achieve perfect peace. It asks us to seek justice. It asks us to lift our eyes unto the hills where our help comes.

In other words, shift your focus away from yourself. Look further away. It is paradoxical that when it comes to fault finding, our focus should always be *on* ourselves and when it comes to being helpful in the world and following Christ, our focus should always be *away* from ourselves. Our life in Christ is paradoxical. We give up our lives to live eternally in Christ.

Well, we need lots of prompts to get from life-stinks-right -now to what-does-Christ-ask-of-me-right-now. Prompts can include church (screen time counts), Bible reading, inspirational reading, prayer, meditation, looking for a path of service, doing something selfless or

sacrificial. Each of the things listed deserve expansion. For example, what will you focus on in your reading? Old, New, words of Jesus or an apostle, someone who has led an inspirational life. You understand my point about each "prompt" being deep and wide. It doesn't matter how you get your mind focused in a healthier direction, I.e., away from yourself, only that you do.

Prayer

We pray for those suffering illness of any kind. Restore them to balance. We pray for those who are grieving death, let them soon find good memories of those they lost, it is a sign of healing. Lift those who are struggling. Father, hold them secure until they can stand for themselves. Let us share resources, Father, to prevent hunger in our communities. Bless our healthcare workers. Sustain them as they work among suffering and death. Heal their hearts moment by moment so they can do the work which we desperately need. Our children, Father, protect our children. Remind adults who care for them of the sacred nature of their work. Let their parents remember ways to cope with life's hazards so they can lovingly parent. Keep children and adults away from substances that impair their judgment and coordination. Let them find you, Father, so your strength can aid them to live a life sustained by faith.

Unite our country, Father. Inspire our elected representatives to lead without personal gain of wealth or power. Let idealism flourish where it has withered. Let honesty and transparency become admired rather than denigrated. Inspire each of us to be a good citizen.

And, Father, we pray for inspiration and endurance, Father. Keep us healthy mentally, emotionally and physically. We seek this trifecta so we can live beyond ourselves, finding inspiration in you and the life of those who serve you well. In Christ's name, Amen.



I want to thank each and everyone who helped me pray so hard save my son "Pat" and myself when we had Covid 19. I survived but Pat's case was more severe and he passed away 12-27-20.

Sincerely, forraine Schmitz

Congregational Care

Susan Younk Kidd, elder 817-573-9153

susanyounk@gmail.com



February Birthdays 1 Sandy Haberkamp

- 3 Gregory Gifford Jack Gilmore Kay McMillan Paul Holmes
- 7 Howard Hafner
- 8 Ted Dolan
- 9 Laneal James Stephanie Mosley
- 11 Kathy Smith Kelton Conner
- 13 Linda Bowlin
- 14 Wayne Delyea
- 18 Vanessa Faulkner
- 19 Hal Marlar
- 21 Trish Goller
- 22 Jerry Teitsma
- 23 Lloyd Sigrist Maureen Walker
- 26 Beverly Williams
- 27 Drew Travis





February Anniversaries

- 7 Frank and Carol Hengels Christopher and Kathy Smith
- 8 Mark and Sheila Higgins
- 10 Gerald Althouse and Carol Boyd
- 11 Dan and Shirley Crise
- 14 Robert and Betty Werbung Nancy and Steve Wilmeth

At care/retirement facilities

Courtyards at Lake Granbury Mary Skinner Jimmy & Donna Callahan

Waterview at Lake Granbury Ted Dolan Nita Collinsworth

The Cove at Lake Granbury Eloise Pauli Warren Rutz

> **Quail Park** John Cheney Charles Basket

The Oaks of Granbury CH Tubbs

Autumn Hill Manor (Weatherford) Dee Holt At home and/or receiving treatment

Jean Haight Edith George Mark Higgins Diann McHaney Connie Darne' Lynn Schoeneman

Martha Ferrill Ed Smith Stan Bowlin Bill Lowe Ruth Gump

WE MOURN THE PASSING OF OUR MEMBERS Jerry Althouse & Jeanie Smith

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

- *Lorraine Schmitz continues to recover from Covid as she mourns the death of her son and daughter-in-law.
- *Carol Boyd continues to recover (at home) from Covid and the flu as she mourns the passing of her husband, Jerry.
- *Martha Ferrill continues to recover from a fall and Covid.
- *Connie Darne is recovering at home from knee replacement surgeries on both knees.
- *Mark Higgins is home recovering from a hip injury.
- *John and Karen Stahlman are recovering from Covid.
- *Steve Wilmeth was hospitalized for a large blood clot. He is recovering currently at home.
- *Dee Holt has had a series of falls.
- *Our prayers for the family of Jeanie Smith on her passing to the Church Triumphant.

OUR EXTENDED FAMILY

- *The passing of Lorraine Schmitz's son from Covid.
- *The passing of Anne Mays father.
- *The passing of Sylvia Hickey's cousin, David.

Heavenly Father, we ask you to surround our loved ones with your grace and healing.



Associate Pastor

Rev. Brenda Church rev.brenda.church@gmail.com



If you are like me, when our Lenten season was interrupted by Covid last year, you didn't expect that we'd be entering into another Covid-modified Lenten season a whole year later. I think sometimes God grants us grace to not know how long our trials really will last. It's a common story in the Bible. Job never imagined the extent of his pain (or the extent of the ramblings of his misdirected friends). Abraham never imagined that his promised son wouldn't take his first breath until 25 years after the promise was made. Moses never imagined that his call at the burning bush would take him from the throne of Pharoah to a 40 year hike around a relatively small piece of the land, promised.

When Peter and Paul and the rest of the church planting disciples first began preaching the Good News to Jew and Gentile alike, they never imagined that Jesus' promised return wouldn't happen in their own life times. In many of the epistles, the people were told to prepare for the Lord's return was imminent! In his letter dated about 50 AD, Paul told the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 4: 17 "Then **we** (emphasis mine) who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them (those who had previously died) to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever." Clearly, Paul thought that he would be alive when Jesus would return...and so would the vast majority of the church in Thessalonica. Fast forward to about 64 AD, when Paul wrote his letters to Timothy and Titus, just a few years before his own death. In these letters, Paul encouraged and instructed those who would take on the mantle of proclaiming the Good News after his death. It had become clear to Paul that Jesus would not return as soon as expected. Even still, I am sure Paul would have never imagined that nearly 2000 years later we would still be waiting.

So, what are we to do during this time when we continue to await the return of the Lord and also continue to await relief from Covid? What are we to do as we enter another Lenten season under the haze of pandemic? What are we to do when we feel like giving up? I think the answer is to stay the course, trusting in God to work even this for good. And while we wait, we can also learn how we are to display our faith from another of Paul's later letters, the letter to the Romans. There is wonderful wisdom for us, in this season of difficulty, in these words in Chapter 12: 9-21:

⁹ Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰ love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. ¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰ No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

What if we take our cues from this passage and strive to live out these wise words? What if we use this extended time as an opportunity to be refined more and more into the image of Christ? What good might come from even this time, if God's people would strive to honor the other and trust the Lord? It might exceed anything we could ever imagine!

Let's do Lent like this...all for the glory of God!

Presbyterian Women



White Breakfast and Lent

Normally we would be planning our White Breakfast right now, which is held in conjunction with our Ash Wednesday service, (February 17, this year). Our White Breakfast was brought to FPC by Beverly and Don Williams, whose prior church in Michigan held a similar service. The color white is for purity, purple for Lent, and green for the new and sustained life we have in Christ. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, and normally, PW serves breakfast shared in fellowship just as Jesus shared a meal with his disciples. Hymns, communion, scripture, imposition of the ashes, and a quiet meditation to open our hearts and minds to the presence of God are all a part of the service. Drew and Brenda will share a sermon that is penitential and reflective in nature.

The congregation is invited to receive the ashes on their foreheads. When we come forward to receive ashes, we are saying that we are sorry for our sins, and that we want to use the season of Lent to correct our faults, purify our hearts, control our desires and grow in holiness so we will be prepared to celebrate Easter with great joy. Usually, as the pastor dips his finger into the ashes, spreads them in a cross pattern on your forehead, he says, "From dust you came and to dust you shall return."

With this focus on our own mortality and sinfulness, we can enter into the Lent season solemnly, while also looking forward in greater anticipation and joy of the message of Easter and Christ's ultimate victory over sin and death. The mood is solemn, may have long periods of silence and worshipers will leave the service in silence.

The ashes of this holiday symbolize two main things: death and repentance. Ashes are equivalent to dust, and human flesh is composed of dust or clay (Genesis 2:7), and when a human corpse decomposes, it returns to dust or ash. Death is a part of life — we are finite. Ash Wednesday is the one time of year the church is really honest about that. We don't live forever, so the choices we make and the things we do are important, because we're only here for a short time.

Lent is a 40-day season (not counting Sundays) in which the Christian's heart is focused on repentance and prayer, fasting, reflection, and ultimately celebration. It is always 46 days before Easter Sunday. The 40-day period represents Christ's time of temptation in the wilderness, where he fasted and where Satan tempted him. Lent asks believers to set aside this time each year for similar fasting, marking an intentional season of focus on Christ's life, ministry, sacrifice, and resurrection.

To some, Lent means "giving something up" — maybe chocolate or television or beer. But Drew encourages us to take on something — to commit ourselves to doing something that will deepen our faith during Lent, be it daily Scripture reading, working in a homeless shelter, or cutting back our spending so we can give more to help others.

When you go home and when you wash the cross off your forehead, remember your baptism in Christ and the good news. Even on Ash Wednesday, mortality isn't the last word. God still has the last word.

This year the Covid-19 virus has us staying apart as much as possible. However, the up side of this isolation is that it offers the perfect time to repent, pray and reflect on our relationship with God and one another; preparing ourselves for the ultimate celebration of Easter!

Resources: The Presbyterian Outlook, Christianity.com

Watch for more information to come on our Ash Wednesday Worship service and Lenten Worship Services, about 20 minutes long, on Wednesdays during Lent.

All PW activities including, White Breakfast, are cancelled until further notice, due to the spread of Corona virus.

ORZO SALAD WITH TOMATOES, FETA CHEESE, AND GREEN ONIONS

14 c red wine vinegar

2 T fresh lemon juice

1 t honey

½ c olive oil

6 cups chicken broth

1 lb orzo (or riso)

2 cups red and yellow teardrop or grape tomatoes halved

1 7 oz package crumbled feta cheese (1 ½ cups)

1 cup chopped fresh basil

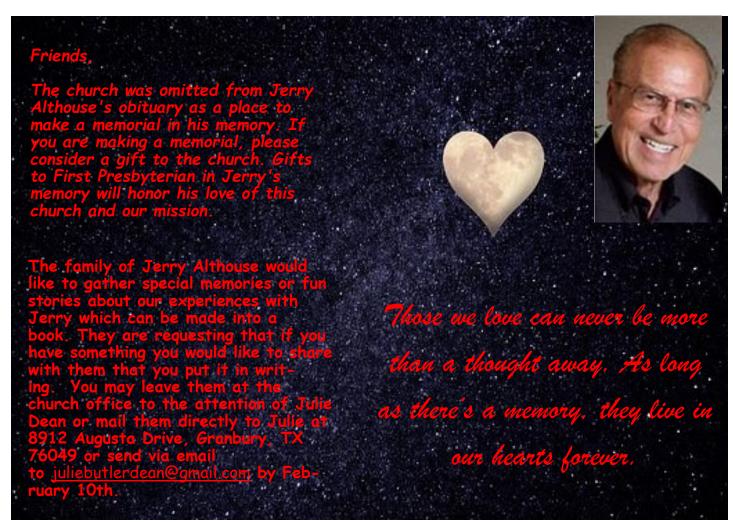
1 cup green onions sliced

½ cup pine nuts, toasted

Whisk vinegar, lemon juice, and honey in small bowl. Gradually whisk in oil. Season vinaigrette with salt and pepper to taste. (this can be made 2 days ahead) Cover.

Bring broth to boil in a large heavy saucepan, stir in orzo, reduce heat to medium, cover partially and boil until tender but still firm to bite, stirring occasionally. Drain. Transfer to a large wide bowl, tossing frequently until cool. Mix tomatoes, feta, basil, and green onions into the orzo. Add vinaigrette, toss to coat. Season with salt and pepper if needed. Good to make 2 hours ahead and let stand at room temperature. Add pine nuts, toss and serve at room temperature.

This makes a lot and keeps several days in the refrigerator. Wonderful salad to take to a Pot Luck or a picnic.



Worship

Julie Dean, elder juliebutlerdean@gmail.com



The Sunday immediately prior to Ash Wednesday (February 14th) we will celebrate the Transfiguration of the Lord, because this event marked a transition in Jesus' ministry in which he "set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51), where he would die.

In Jesus' transfiguration, we are assured that Jesus is the hope of the ages. Jesus is the One who fulfilled the Law given through Moses, the one dreamed of by the prophets, of whom Elijah is the greatest.

In celebrating this event, we rejoice in the divine majesty of Christ, whose glory shone even when confronted with the cross. It is given us for our journey through Lent toward the agony of the cross and the victory of the empty tomb. We celebrate this mystery in order that our faith may be renewed. We are transformed into the new being in Christ as we join Christ in his death and resurrection in Lent and Easter.

An excerpt from the **Companion to the Book of Common Worship** (Geneva Press, 2003, 148-149)

Matthew 17:1–9 Mark 9:2–9 Luke 9:28–36 *(reading may include verses 37-43)*



The Way to Shalom

A Lenten Journey to Peace and Wholeness

Lent is all about spiritual renewal. It is a sacred time of preparation for Easter and a time to reflect on what God has done to redeem us and how we can live a whole and full life as a child of God.

Many of us see Lent as a season of penitence, fasting, service and contemplation — but at the top of our list should be a prayer for the acquisition of peace. In our devotional this year, we invite you to reflect upon the gift of shalom, the Hebrew word with a host of meanings: peace, security, well-being, health, completeness. Our spiritual goal: *exploring how can we receive this gift of shalom and, in turn, bestow it upon the world.*

Now, more than ever, we deeply crave shalom. Our world is in desperate need of peace. The United States has just come out of a contentious election, a struggle with a global pandemic, and painful racial violence. Poverty, misery and despair fill many corners of the world. Yes, we desire peace. We need peace.

Every week from Ash Wednesday (February 17) through Easter (April 4), this year's devotional focuses on shalom — and what it can mean in our lives and how we can bring it to the world. We explore themes of justice, peace, healing, hope, repairing and reconciliation. You'll find Scripture readings along with beautiful meditations and prayers written by the director and staff of the Presbyterian Office of Public Witness in Washington: the Rev. Jimmie Hawkins, Catherine Gordon and Christian Brooks. You'll be challenged and moved — and hopefully, spiritually enriched.

The Way to Shalom is online and free for download or printing. You're invited to use it, share it, excerpt from it and make it your spiritual companion this Lent.

https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/today/lent2021/? utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=2021+Lenten+Devotional+from+Presbyterians+Today&utm_campaign=Presbyterians+Today+-+January+2021+Newsletter

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SERVICE

Each Sunday at 8:45 am we debut our service on YouTube and Facebook. You can ALWAYS go back and watch later – all of the services are archived.

Services are currently recorded in advance and edited together, but that process is subject to change. One thing is certain – we will continue to worship with you Sunday mornings.

COMMUNITY

Join us at facebook.com/fpcgranbury for updates, photos, prayers, and more. And don't forget to like and share our posts.



OFFERING

Don't forget that you can give online at fpcgranbury.org/give

You can make a one-time offering, or you can set up recurring payments using your bank account or debit card.

First Presbyterian Church Granbury, Texas

303 W. BRIDGE ST FPCGRANBURY.ORG

817-573-2337

Christian Education

Nancy Bennett, elder nbennett0803@gmail.com





LENT

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday—February 17th this year!

And although our gathering may look different, we know that this is a time for prayer and reflection. If you are thinking of adding a devotional or personal study to your Lenten practice, here are some suggestions:

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary (www.pts.edu) is again offering their Lenten devotional. They have a number of options including audio versions, email, Facebook and an app for your phone or tablet.

PC(USA) —this year's study, *God's Gift of Shalom Makes Us One*, can be found at pcusa.org/2021lent

The church receives a couple of devotional booklets, you may request one be sent to you by contacting the church office.

And finally, Grace Presbytery will be offering a walking prayer which we hope to be able to share with you. Look for more details in the weeks ahead!

Stewardship

Jack Gilmore, elder jgil429169@aol.com



Stewardship, A Way of Life

Thanks again to everyone for participating in our 2021 Estimate of Giving Pledge drive. You have reached out with your hand and with your heart to touch others for Christ.

I'm pleased to report that our pledges total \$348,146.00. Our session combines these pledges along with our estimated non pledges offerings to arrive at the church's total estimated 2021 income. We then complete our 2021 church budget which will be presented to you, our congregation, at our congregational meeting February 7th via email.

Blessings to everyone, stay safe and hopefully get a vaccine appointment.

Jack Gilmore

Stewardship Elder

Please watch for news regarding which events will occur when we have less restrictions.

February 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31	1	2	8	4	5	9
8:45 AM Online Worship via Face- book & YouTube		10:00 AM Staff Meeting				
7	8	6	10	11	12	13
Congregational Meeting via email 8:45 AM Online Worship via Face-						11:00 AM - 12:00 PM Pauley Service in Columbarium
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
8:45 AM Online Worship via Face- book & YouTube	Bridge Articles Due	5:30 PM Session via zoom	6:30 PM Ash Wednesday On-Line worship via Face- book & YouTube			
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
8:45 AM Online Worship via Face- book & YouTube			6:30 PM Journey toward Jerusalem Online worship via Facebook & You tube			
28	1	2	8	4	5	9
8:45 AM Online Worship via Face- book & YouTube		10:00 AM Staff Meeting	6:30 PM Journey toward Jerusalem Online worship via Facebook & You tube			



To celebrate your birthday (or that of a family member or friend), and in thanksgiving for God's gift of grace, please consider making a gift of your own, in the amount of \$1 for each year of your (or your honoree's) life, to sustain the permanent endowment funds of the church.

Please notify the church office when you make your gift that it is a birthday offering. If honoring someone else, please so note. If giving online, please provide this information in the "Notes."

:oT

First Presbyterian Church of Granbury
202 W. Pearl St.
Granbury, TX 76048