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Newsletter for February 2021

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From the Desk of the Pastor

Greetings to all and Peace. So much has happened in our world since my last newsletter article in December and it almost seems surreal to see it all unfolding.

Before I touch on that, let me give you a short update. As you know I had a reverse shoulder replacement on December 21. The results so far are remarkable. My pain is almost non-existent and my motion is already more than I had prior to surgery and I want to thank everyone for their prayers, cards and phone calls. I have limitations, but expect a full recovery in about 3 more months as my Doctor tells me.

It seems unfathomable to think that in 2 short months we would experience so much! The COVID rates have increased markedly, the vaccine has become available, however, there are not enough doses to yet stem the tide. Last summer we saw rioting and looting in the streets, but what we saw on January 6 was beyond our worst nightmares. The rioting and pillaging of our Nation's capital and the threat of more at all of our State capitals is so much more than even the cynics could have imagined.

I am fully aware of the fact that we live in a country where people have the right to voice their objections and even to protest a decision when they feel strongly enough about it and I am proud to live in such a country where people have that right. Unfortunately, just because some things are allowed, that does not mean that we have the right or authority to do whatever we want in the name of justice.

The Apostle Paul addresses this in 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 in this week's lectionary. Paul says: Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; but anyone who loves God is known by him. Hence, as to the eating of

food offered to idols, we know that "no idol in the world really exists," and that "there is no God but one." Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many gods and many lords—yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. "Food will not bring us close to God." We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. **But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.** For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. ¹³ Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

I understand that nothing that has happened over the past two months has anything to do with food, but it does have everything to do with a few leading many in the wrong direction because they feel it is their right to do so. I guess it comes down to authority and respect.

This nation was founded on the basis that God is the head and acknowledged the authority of scripture as our guide. As our nation has "matured" and society has discovered and developed so many technological advances, it seems that we have shifted our allegiance, or belief, to instead believe in our own power and ability over that of God.

*From the
Pastor*

In our Gospel Lesson from Mark:1, Mark tells us: They went to Capernaum; and when the Sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. **They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, "What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him."** At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

In Jesus' day they questioned his authority and you know where that led. After the sermon on Sunday, someone told me that they had their tv on before they came to church, and all the televangelists were preaching on Revelations and how close the end was. My comment to that person was that indeed a case could definitely be made that the end is near, however, scripture also tells us that we will not know the day or the time so I hesitate to subscribe to such talk.

The point though is that we, as a nation and world, have allowed the vocal minorities to lead us so far astray, that society has bought into the self-sufficiency and that might makes right rhetoric as well as the fact that God must not exist and that scripture is outdated. I suspect that if those who framed our constitution could have foreseen what is happening today, they might have done things differently.

As I have said over the past couple of weeks, if we, the Body of Christ, had taken our job seriously over the past hundred years or more, perhaps things might be different. Unfortunately, we did not and society has drifted so very far from our founders. It is time for us as a Body of Christ to stand up and take back the principals on which this country was founded. While some of the televangelists predict the end is near, and it might very well be, the reality is that we are told in scripture to continue to prepare and make sure others around us are also prepared as well.

Society needs to know that there is a better way and that even though something is legal or permitted, that does not mean it should be done. Instead, as Paul says, **but take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.**

Friends, through all things, we have become the weak in number, but we are still strong in the Lord, and it is up to us to take the fight to the enemy – Satan – who has influenced so many because we have allowed God to be removed from so much of our world. God is still there – we know that – but because we have been silent for so long, Society has forgotten God and instead looks elsewhere for guidance.

Our nation was founded as the land of the free and the Home of the Brave, but now so much of the world sees us as just another troubled country in a troubled world. We need to find a way to make sure Society knows that God is still the authority in our nation and the scriptures are true and just as pertinent and fresh as when they were written. We need to reclaim this country and lead it back to the greatness that set our nation apart from the rest of the world.

God has called us, each and every one, to make a difference in our church, our community and our world. As a body of 60 believers, we are small, but remember that the church as we know it today, began with 12 faithful followers. Yes, we need the entire Body of Christ to step up as well, but perhaps it must first begin with us. Go with God and know that all things are possible in God who strengthens us.

Peace and Love,

Pastor Josyph

**** Pastor's Report**

Miles Driven Last month -- 92
Miles driven month to date – 0
YTD Miles driven to date for 2020 – 1,335

Visits - 6
Home – 1
Hospital Visits –
Nursing Home –
Phone Visits – 5



**** Presbyterian Women**

January 12, 2021. Present: Karen Brock, Cissy Butler, Alice Anglin, Mary Richmond, Bette Roberts, Pat Collins, Jean Andrews, JoAnn Holt, Sue Hosterman, Laura Atkison, Armour Shin, Marjorie Bronk and Janie Howell.

Thirteen women met in the Norris Building at 1:00 pm for cookies and coffee provided by Pat Collins, prior to the monthly P.W. meeting which began at 1:30 PM with prayer offered by Moderator Alice Anglin. Armour Shin led us in Lesson 4 of our Horizon Bible Study *Into the Light* written by P. Lynn Miller. The subject was Lamenting Death and, since everyone present had experienced a painful loss, it was a sweet time of reflection and sharing on the sorrows and even joys that surround the death of a loved one.

Janie provided the jocularity for the opening of the business meeting. Treasurer, Mary Richmond, reported that we have \$3,058.58 in our account as of December 31, 2020. To date the Red Stocking Offering has yielded \$1,460.00. This total is less than our 2019 total of \$2,162.00, in part because we were not able to have our Annual Christmas Party/Red Stocking Event. (In case it slipped your mind, it is never too late to contribute to the Red Stocking!)

During the Treasurer's Report, the subject of giving to LA Care in 2021 was discussed. Marjorie Bronk reported that LA Care is not in need of extra funds at this time. The suggestion was made that we give the \$25.00 allotted monthly to LA Care to Backpack Buddies through May. JoAnn Holt moved and Jean Andrews seconded the motion. Motion carried. At our May meeting we will revisit the needs of LA Care and make future plans at that time.

Correspondence included an appeal from Project Cure for receiving blankets. (You can make or buy receiving blankets and bring them to the church if this project touches your heart), a thank you note from Delaney Dawson for her card and Christmas gift, and a thank you note from LA Care for donations sent in 2020, as well as a Christmas card thank you from Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services for our donation in 2020. All correspondence is posted on the PW Bulletin Board in the Norris Building.

There being no old or new business, Alice closed the meeting with our virtual friendship circle and prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Janie Howell, Secretary

**** Session Review**

The Burnet Presbyterian Church State Session Meeting took place on January 19, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. through Zoom. In attendance were Nancy Allen, Pat Collins, Jamie Horn, Sue Hosterman, and Rev. Josyph Andrews, Moderator. Carl Spinner, Treasurer and Marsha Spinner, Clerk. Billy Don Weaver was absent. A quorum was present.

Pastor Josyph opened the meeting with a prayer.

After a time for "Sharing and Caring," Pastor Josyph gave an opening devotional based on selections from Jonah.

Josyph gave the Session his Pastor's Report.

The following decisions were made:

- To approve the 2021 Budget which removes Marsha Spinner from the payroll because she was asked to take a six month leave of absence from the Music Director position
- To accept the Statistical Report which will be submitted to PCUSA
- To observe Communion on the first Sunday of every month, Ash Wednesday, and Maundy Thursday.
- To elect Carl Spinner as Treasurer and Marsha Spinner as Clerk of Session
- To put financial support of LACare on hold, but know that LACare is in need of volunteers
- To approve World Communion Sunday, Peace and Global Witness Offering (October), the Thanksgiving Offering, Joy Gift Offering (Christmas), One Great Hour of Sharing (Easter), and Birthday Offering (Summer).
- To add an outreach before school in August: "Undies Sunday" (contributing new underwear for the Rainbow Room and school nurses to use as needed)
- To approve the purchase of a new Shark vacuum for \$280

While other issues were discussed, no other decisions were made.

The meeting was duly adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled for February 16.

Josyph closed with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Marsha Spinner

**** Men of the Church**

The Men of the Church will hold a breakfast meeting in the Fellowship Hall at 8:30 am on Sunday, February 7. Our food will be prepared by Emma Scott. We will maintain social distance.

This will be our first meeting in 2021, so we cordially invite every man of the congregation to attend. Our lesson will be based on Jeremiah 29:12 where God promises, "When you call upon me, and come and pray to me, I will listen."

Submitted by Richard Spinner

**** P.W. Virtual Winter Retreat**

On Saturday, January 23, 104 Presbyterian Women joined together via ZOOM for a virtual retreat titled New Year, New Normal? We were welcomed by Sheri Ditman and Lori Black, the Co-Moderators of Presbyterian Women of Mission Presbytery. Attending from our church were Alice Anglin, Marjorie Bronk and Janie Howell. While we did see many friends from other churches, it is wonderful to note that Pastor Carol Clarke was also in attendance.

The Keynote Speaker was Susan Jackson Dowd, Executive Director and President of PW, Inc. Susan is the former managing editor of Horizons Magazine. She gave a thorough overview of the history of Presbyterian Women and the strides they have made, from lobbying for voting rights to ordination. How quickly we forget!

Laurie Palmer, the new Stated Clerk for Mission Presbytery, gave an interesting talk about her background and how it led her back to Texas where she had previously served as a Pastor in San Antonio and as Stated Clerk for Mission Presbytery for a short time 20 years ago. Laurie was an engaging speaker and we look forward to hearing more from her at other events.

The last speaker was Jo Ann Burrell, P.W. Vice Moderator for Mission Relationships, who was reporting from New Jersey where it was 7 degrees! Jo Ann was a lively presenter, clearly passionate about Mission, and gave us many tips about being the hands of Jesus during a pandemic. Her parting quote was "Individually we can be broken, but together we can be strong!"

The meeting ended with the Mission Presbytery Choir singing a beautiful rendition of Be Thou My Vision.

Submitted by Janie Howell

**** Praying for Persecuted Christians**

Open Door.org has ranked Nigeria as the 9th most dangerous country in the world for Christians. Almost half of Nigerians are Christians – 95.4 million people from a population of 206.2 million – but most of these are in the southern portion of the country. It's in the north and central regions of Nigeria that most persecution of Christians happens.

The main threat is religious nationalism. More Christians are murdered for their faith in Nigeria than in any other country. Violent attacks by Boko Haram, Fulani militants, ISWAP (an affiliate of so-called Islamic State) and other Islamic extremist groups are common in the north and are becoming more common further south. Men and boys are particularly vulnerable to being killed, with the intention of lowering the birth rate of Christian communities and removing their sources of income.

In the November, 2020 issue of Faith & Justice, a magazine published by Alliance Defending Freedom, there is an article about a Nigerian girl who converted from Islam to Christianity. When her family demanded that she turn back to Islam and she refused, they took her to an Islamic cleric's house where she was imprisoned, tortured, and starved in an effort to make her renounce Christ. Though she escaped and found refuge with a Christian friend, they were both persecuted until an attorney supported by Alliance Defending Freedom took on her case and obtained an injunction from the state's High Court, restraining those who were trying to force the girl to return to Islam.

This article and other information about Nigeria and the plight of Christians there are posted on the Mission Bulletin Board in the Norris Building. Please pray for your brothers and sisters in Christ that the hearts of the extremists will be softened and that all people will be able to live and worship in peace. Also, please pray for those who are putting their lives in jeopardy to reach out and help in these dangerous situations. Thank you.

Submitted by Janie Howell

**** LACare Update**

In the month of December, 711 individuals from 293 families were served by LACare.

The needs for this month are pasta, rice, and dried pinto beans.

Submitted by Hap Zimmerman

**** Christian Education Committee Report January 15, 2021**

Both adult Sunday School classes report no needs. Cissy's class is still meeting face-to-face and Carl's class is meeting online. The teachers for the children's class remain prepared, with someone in charge of each Sunday. Lessons have been prepared that should last us several months.

One question. I assumed that the morning devotional before classes fell under this committee, which may have been a mistake on my part. What I was trying to achieve was:

- 1) Ensure that each week was signed for early enough to be put on the calendar, and
- 2) Try to engage people who might not have been participating in this but have much to offer.

I'm sorry if this should be under some other committee, just please clarify this for me.

**** Mission and Stewardship Committee Report, January 15, 2021**

The committee met on January 15 to review our plans for the year. Present were Nancy Allen, Marjorie Bronk, Janie Howell, Richard Spinner, Cissy Butler, and Jane Zimmerman.

Issues discussed:

- What to do about many requests outside of our current benevolent recipients. Those who have asked for help this month who are not current recipients:
 - Highland Lakes Family Crisis Center
 - Presbyterian Outlook Foundation (Publication)
 - Evergreen (Presbyterian outreach to individuals with special needs)
 - Salvation Army

The decision was made to report these to the session, but to continue to give as a congregation to those we currently give to at this time.

- Thank you notes received: Mission Presbyterian for \$194.67 Peace Offering
- Joy Offering received: \$470.
- Lent materials: Every year we have bought Lent devotional booklets and bookmarks to distribute to the congregation. The committee moves that this year we buy only the bookmarks as the devotional books are not highly accessed. The bookmark "The Teachings of Jesus," which has daily readings, was

selected. These will be put in the Sunday bulletin and mailed to those who are receiving the newsletter by mail. An announcement will be made that if you want a bookmark and are not currently receiving the newsletter by mail to let Betty know and we will mail one. A copy of this bookmark is attached to this email.

We reviewed our current mission efforts and made the following suggestions:

- LA Care – put financial support on hold as at present LA Care is doing well financially, but to ask for volunteers
- Meals on Wheels – continue unchanged
- Sewing Project (Currently 24 receiving blankets have been contributed since Jane Zimmerman asked for them last month)
- Bears for Africa – continue unchanged
- Respite Care – on hold until after the pandemic
- Backpack Buddies – Thank you to the Women of the Church for their generous contribution to this project. See the list of requested snack items after this article.
- Emergency Gift Cards – continue unchanged
- Presbyterian Women – continue unchanged
- Men of the Church – continue unchanged
- Monthly Identification of a Country for Prayer for Persecuted Christians – continue unchanged
- Support for Missionaries (Pakistan Project) – Review the website to see which missionaries are still in the field as many of them have resigned during the pandemic. Update the poster in the back of the sanctuary and make a poster for the fellowship hall.
- Country Oaks – continue unchanged
- Prayer Walk – continue unchanged
- Thanksgiving Committee Meal – continue unchanged

Changes or approval of special offerings: The committee expressed concern that so many of the special offerings come at the same time: Peace Offering in October, Thanksgiving Offering in November, Joy Offering and Red Stocking Offering in December. We would like to review the Thanksgiving Offering later in the year to see if we can be more deliberate and effective in reaching the community at this time of year. We discussed that typically the Red Stocking offering is early in December and the Joy Offering at Christmas. We decided not to suggest changes at this time, but to

continue to think about this issue. The committee moves that the current special offerings (listed below) are tentatively approved:

- Fall – World Communion Sunday and Peace & Global Witness Offering (First Sunday in October)
- Thanksgiving Offering
- Winter – Joy Gift Offering (Christmas)
- Spring – One Great Hour of Sharing (Easter)
- Summer – Birthday Offering”

The Red Stocking Offering is an effort of the Women of the Church and thus we did not list it as one of the congregation’s special offerings.

We move to add an additional outreach in August (before the start of school): “Undies Sunday,” in which members contribute new underwear to be distributed to the Rainbow Room and school nurses for use as needed.

- Time and Talent Surveys: The return this year was low, but the committee felt that this may have been an effect of the pandemic. Whether or not to continue the Time and Talent Survey will be revisited before fall when the stewardship letter is mailed.
- Minutes for Mission: For this year only, Minutes for Mission will be in the newsletter except for the months in which a special offering is being collected. On these months, the Minute for Mission will still be included in the announcements during Sunday service.

Motions from the committee:

- Put financial support of LA Care on hold
- Approve special offerings for 2021
- Have an “Undies Sunday” in August

*Respectively submitted,
Nancy Allen, Committee Chair*

**** Backpack Buddies Snack Items**

The folks on the Mission Committee asked that we republish the Backpack Buddies snack list in the newsletter.

All foods packaged in individual servings and shelf-stable, please.

Cheese Crackers	Animal Crackers
Granola Bars	Gelatin w/fruit
Fruit Snacks	Cereal (individual packages)
Fruit Cups	Instant Oatmeal
Pudding Cups	Apple Sauce
Gold Fish	Soup, spaghetti, ravioli in individual servings with pop tops
Breakfast Bars	
Pop-tarts	



December 3, 2020

Lynne Marie’s 98th Birthday!

February Birthdays

- 7 Jack Butler**
- 7 Billy Frankum (85!!)**
- 9 Judy Olson**

Happy Anniversary

- 3 Linda and Billy Don Weaver (3rd)**

Happy
Valentine’s Day!