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## It Takes Grace...



Just a couple weeks ago (in February) the temps were in the 70's. Earlier this week (in March) we barely made it above 20! And it snowed! As the saying goes, "Who'd a thunk it?" Oh yeah, I almost forgot. God did think it! And it did happen! "For to the snow He says, 'Fall on the earth...'" [Job 37:6a]

Makes me wonder what other things we aren't even thinking about that God has under total control...

- \* Worrying about the weather?
- \* Worrying about your health?
- \* Worrying about that old fridge that's making noise?
- \* Worrying about the kids/grandkids?
- \* Worrying about the country?

\* Etc. Etc. Etc. Etc.

So, what truly is causing you concern today? Are we willing to admit that we are certainly responsible for some things happening (or not), but that an awful lot of what bothers us we can't begin to have any control over? Can we go from admitting that to believing God is in control – total control – and that He has proven Himself to us all over the years? How likely are you today to just say, "God, I know You are in charge. You are not wringing Your hands; You do not have sweat on Your upper lip, wondering how my issues (or anyone else's) are going to turn out today." If this is not likely to be your prayer today, maybe you should focus on what God has already told us in Scripture:

- \* "Cast all your anxiety on God because He cares for you." [1 Peter 5:7]
- \* "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you..." [John 14:27]
- \* "Do not be anxious about anything..." [Philippians 4:6-7]

\* "When I am afraid, I will trust in You..." [Psalm 56:3-4]

\* "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest..." [MT 11:28-30]

\* "Cast your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you..." [Psalm 55:22]

Worry is an issue of trust. Consider the things you are capable of and responsible for, then act as if you believe what the Bible tells you – God is in control and will take care of your other stuff very well. Don't miss what Easter is all about: Christ died on a cross and rose from death so we don't have to worry about our divine debt for the dumb things, the wrong things we have done. If we believe the Easter story, we know God has already taken care of us – for now and for ever. Be glad it's a gift of grace because none of us can afford it on our own.

Blessings,  
RevLon

### Special dates in April:

- **Fifth Sunday in lent, April 2**
- **Palm/Passion Sunday, April 9**
- **Holy Week, April 9-15**
- **Maundy Thursday, April 13**
- **Good Friday, April 15**
- **Easter Sunday, April 16**

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## LENT TO EASTER

Most of you that are reading this have been in this for a while. And by this, I mean you have been followers of Jesus and the Way for several years. On Ash Wednesday, we had a service where we began a journey over 40 days leading up to Easter. It's a time of self-reflection, a time to contemplate your life and your personal journey with our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ. For several it's a time to give up something that may be getting in the way of that relationship. Or you may have chosen to add more prayer time or scripture reading or spending more time in serving others. The journey, though, is not just limited to 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter. It's true that this is for us a time when we reflect but what about before and after?

March 3 and 4 we hosted a youth retreat here for middle and high schoolers from 5 different churches in our Presbytery. We spent a good amount of our time together going through an exercise of self-reflections on where we felt we were in our individual journey with God. To be honest I had high expectations of what God would do during our time together. When you work with teenagers though some of you know that what you expect doesn't always look like what you think it should. And that's okay. Over the years I've learned that God is in the business of touching and changing hearts my job is to point them towards Him.

Where is this heading? We have an op-

portunity for the mature in faith to impart wisdom on those just beginning their journey of faith. Those of you that have been doing this for years have an opportunity to invest in the next generation. How do you do that? First, pray for them. Pray that they won't be victims to the temptations that Satan throws at them. Jesus's example for our Lenten season was to know during physical hunger that He relied on spiritual food. When Satan challenged His faith in God He answered with the truth that man can find no satisfaction in false gods. And when Satan tested Jesus with provision in the midst of trials Jesus again answered Him with the wisdom that God's will cannot be twisted by mere whim of what we think is best in the situation. Pray that these young people will follow and love God with all their heart, mind, soul and strength and love one another as much as they love and care for themselves. Reach out to them and introduce yourself and be genuinely happy that they've chosen to be here on Wednesday evenings even if they never cross the doors on Sunday. Maybe, just maybe some of you will see your younger self in them or see the similarity between them and a grandchild and want for them the same good. And maybe when they see what genuine love looks like they'll want to be around more than just Wednesday. Maybe God's trying to get you to point them to Him

more than you giving up something for Lent. Include them in your prayers and show them genuine love. Here's their names: Olivia Thomas, Emilee Higgs, Emily Fischels, Keelie Carter, Cody Jervis, Justin Case, Allie Downey, Matiah Hawkins, Madison Cummings, Abby Brown, Ashlee Goodwin, Cheradon White, Kaleb White, Makayla Stone, Haley Cope, Hunter Harris, Dee Allen, Jonathon Yates, Isabella Tapp, Alexander Howard. There are those on this list plus others that have graced our group that have not returned but we have a saying, "It only takes one time to be a part of our family!" and we pray that they are still on their journey with God finding their way towards a deeper and closer understanding of how wide and deep His love is for them. May we be the ones who lean into them and share what truth and love looks like. Because we have Easter to point to the truth of God's love for us! And may we celebrate His love and sacrifice gives us life eternal, life abundant and an unending love. God is good, all the time. And all the time, God is good!

"Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today." Deuteronomy 6:4-6

Jesus replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Matthew 22:37-39

## YOUTH NEWS



Thanks to everyone who prayed for and helped out with our youth retreat held here at our church. A special thanks to Becky Moore and James McClain who came in and cooked and helped with clean up. Thank you to everyone that provided homemade goodies for the retreat too. We had a blessed

time together with 25 students and 9 adults participating. We served at the Humane Society and Hopkins County Christian Food Bank on Saturday. We pray that all that were here grew deeper in the knowledge and wider in their influence of God's love for them!

Thanks to everyone who came and contributed to our Ash Wednesday Youth Fundraiser. We were blessed to receive \$1040.00 to help fund all the activities we do with our youth groups. Thanks for your support and encouragement!

## QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES ARE IN...

Late last year, we requested all members and regular visitors to complete a four-page survey. There were 171 questionnaires sent out.

We received only a total of 34 responses.

26 of the responses came from people who have been members for more than ten years. 30 of the responses came from people who had attended 3-4 times in the past month.

Only 11 had attended Sunday School or Bible Study in the 3-4 weeks.

Most liked about our church was: the people/a sense of family/Christ-like spirit/there's a heart for ministry/Christ-centered/the activities/a sense of community involvement/mission. When asked about how likely they would be to recommend our church, the highest percentage of "targeted" people would be adults over 40, married couples, and unchurched adults. A lower number of people said they would be likely to recommend our church to families with children, single or divorced adults, and teens.

There was near unanimous support for a statement that the church should try to reach out more to younger adults.

There was also a high number of people who said we should be putting more emphasis on families with children and evangelism.

A narrow majority of people have not invited anyone to visit our church in the past six months.

Asked if they would be willing to change the church's worship if it would attract new people, 26 people said yes.

Regarding what might make our

church more attractive to newcomers, the answers ranged: better flow of worship/more upbeat worship/shorter sermons/enthusiasm in singing/ be a more active church/offer different days for activities/music selection and speed (too sluggish with hymns and too repetitive with choruses)/one hour for worship/more traditional/mix contemporary with traditional/stronger Sunday School program.

Our identity as Presbyterian Church (USA) seems to be split as to whether it is a hindrance or a detriment. Some felt it depends on one's knowledge of the denomination, others felt that most don't know what PC (USA) is.

Nearly everyone would like to see our church become larger. Nearly everyone felt there is a scriptural mandate to personally share the gospel.

Our Sunday School and Wednesday Night Bible Study are not highly attended. When asked, "Even if you are satisfied with your own biblical understanding, would you consider attending for the benefit of others?" 23 people said yes. (Based on that response, we are assuming an uptick in attendance.)

We asked for general comments at the end of the survey. Of those who responded, we got a fair amount of personally positive responses along with a number of personally negative. Regarding specific suggestions, the focus seemed to be on shortening our worship services by incorporating shorter sermons, not singing entire songs (contemporary and hymns), some wanting to shorten liturgy while others were wanting more Presbyterian tradition

(which would involve a good amount more liturgy), no mini-sermons (at the benediction, prayer time, or reading of scripture).

It should be noted that I have sat with a small number of people, asking them to read the results and help me personally to understand what they felt the sense of the overall response was. I then sat with Rob, Mike, and Ann (since much of the survey focused on worship) and we looked in depth at the entire set of responses. Next, this written report was given to the Session for review, also. The final step is to send this same report out to the church through our newsletter.

I am grateful to the 34 people who deemed it a good thing to take the time to complete the questionnaire. I do wish others would have felt it worth their while and for the benefit of the church to have completed the survey, also.

I'm thankful for the help we received in accumulating the gathered information; that in itself was no small task.

To the best of our ability, we will discern all we can from the information and go forward with a better knowledge of where at least a portion of our church family feels the path should take us.

I'd also add that, as always, I welcome the opportunity to sit with anyone or any group within the church family to discuss the results of this questionnaire or any other topic on your minds.

Blessings,  
Lon



**"Nearly everyone felt there is a scriptural mandate to personally share the gospel."**



## YUCATAN MISSION TRIP

As the month of April begins, please keep our Yucatan Mission Team in your prayers as they travel to San Diego Buena Vista to install a new water treatment plant on the property of Getsemani National Presbyterian Church. Keep in mind that while this is the “travel team,” our whole church is doing mission through your

prayers and all kinds of support imaginable. Thanks to everyone who came and helped make crafts and training items after our fellowship meal on March 15!

The travel team: Rick and Susanna Lee, Pete and Peggy Phelan, Larry and Suzanne Wilson, Sean and Kari McCance, Lon and Pat Lorton, Tem Major, Bill Reed, Abby Brown, Emily Fischels,

and Dick Peyton. Pray for good health, safe and timely travel, great fellowship, and a wonderful water treatment facility for the entire community of San Diego Buena Vista (and for Tem to make it through customs without being detained).

## GOD’S WARM PLACE UPDATE



For nearly six weeks, we opened our doors to folks in the community who had no warm place to spend their nights. We had about a half dozen guests who took advantage of warm soup, a soft mattress, and breakfast each night the temperature/wind chill dropped to freezing or below. We learned a lot, and come next winter we will be able to offer this needed ministry

for the entire cold weather season. We had much help from folks in the church and community in preparing meals and hygiene packs for each guest. Thanks, too, to all who volunteered their time as hosts, cleanup crew, and overnight monitors. Many of you contributed to getting this ministry off the ground. Hopefully, the word will spread in the community and even more guests will find

this to truly be God’s Warm Place on cold nights come next winter.

## ON THE INSIDE

Yesterday a good friend asked me how I was doing. She was more than sincere. She truly wanted to know what was going on in my little head. I told her I was struggling with being a member of PCUSA. She understood.

When I became a member of the Presbyterian Church in another town we were PCUS, you know, the southern branch. Then we came under the unification umbrella headquar-

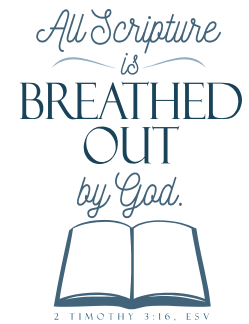
tered in Louisville. I still indentified myself as a Bible believing follower of Jesus Christ. I still am.

However, it seems to me the PCUSA has left me behind as it has become an institution that ordains practicing homosexuals, marries same sex couples, is anti-Israel / pro-Palestinian, pro choice, and a litany of other all inclusive enlightened ideas. My struggle includes the fact that I believe the Bible is the

infallible inerrant word of God. God means what He says. I find myself leaning toward PCA or the more moderate EPC, or EOC.

I love my local church, First Presbyterian, Madisonville. I have issues with the Western Kentucky Presbytery and the General Assembly. I say these things to preface this request: Pray with and for me.

Loving you in the Name of Christ Jesus, Pete



“...the Bible is the infallible inerrant word of God. God means what He says.”

## TWO MORE GREAT BANQUETS THIS MONTH

Be in prayer for (and support as you are able) the Great Banquet weekends in the month of April:

Men's Great Banquet #176 – April 20-23

Green River Prison Banquet #12 – April 27-30

## HOLY WEEK ACTIVITIES

Palm Sunday:

Celebrating the Triumphal Entry of Jesus Into Jerusalem

Thursday:

7:00PM Maundy Thursday Communion Worship

Friday:

24-Hour Prayer Vigil in Sanctuary

Easter Sunday:

7:00AM SonRise Communion Worship in Chapel

9:00AM Breakfast in Gym (with Egg Hunt for the Youngsters)

10:15AM Resurrection Communion Celebration in Sanctuary

Our Choir's Cantata Presentation – "Salvation's Story"

Remember to bring live flowers for our Floral Cross





## APRIL BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

3rd	Darrell & Bev Engelhardt (A)	15th	Mike Agin		Olivia Thomas
5th	Dan Martin	18th	Dale & Sharon Davis (A)	29th	Gavin Ricketts
	Kendrick Nuttall	21st	Darrell Engelhardt	30th	Russell & Susan Fischels (A)
6th	Aimee Goodwin		Phyllis Klym		
7th	Anna Leasure	23rd	Patsy Sutton		
10th	Doug & Suzanne Henley (A)	26th	Mary George Peyton		
	Laura Ken Hoffman	27th	Caitlynn Perryman		
11th	Susan Edmondson	28th	David & Alisa Betts(A)		
14th	Erin Winstead		Michael Hunt		
	Michael Skultety		Reed Tabor		



# April 2017

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3 9:30 AM Norma Siria Cr 6PM GB Tm Mtg	4	5	6	7	8
← SPRING BREAK →						
9 	10 6PM GB Tm Mtg	11 7PM Session Mtg	12 5:15 Fellowship Meal 6:00 Activities 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	13 7PM Maundy Thursday Worship	14 24 Hour Prayer Vigil	15
16 	17 6PM GB Tm Mtg	18	19 5:15 Fellowship Meal 6:00 Activities 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	20	21 Men's Great Banquet #176 →	22
23 →	24 6PM GB Tm Mtg	25	26 5:15 Fellowship Meal 6:00 Activities 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	27	28 Green River Great Banquet #12	29
30						