



First News

*Building Faith, Changing
Lives, Sharing Christ*
April 2020 Edition

Peace and Grace from our Lord Jesus Christ!

In Romans, Chapter 8, in the midst of deep suffering in the church at Roman, Paul writes,

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,[k] neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I have always found that I return to this passage in trying times. The words of Paul remind me that while the world is tumultuous, volatile, and erratic, God's love is constant. In these trying times of social distancing and self-imposed isolation and washing our hands to the point that they are raw, we need the constant and eternal promises of God. The question for us this day is, "How do we use God's promises of continued and everlasting love in daily service as disciples of Jesus Christ?"

First, in reminding us of God unending love that cannot be broken, we are given power and courage to serve. Christians, from the movement of the "Empty Tomb," have been given extreme levels of courage to face trying times. Because He lives, we have the courage to face tomorrow. Because He lives all fear is gone. We have the courage to endure persecution and suffering. We have the courage to withstand a plague or famine or a virus.

Second, such courage leads to, and builds us up for, a character of service. As Christian we serve each other as we seek to emulate our Lord who said,

44 and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mark 10:44-45

We are called to serve. Thus, during this time of trial and isolation you are still called to serve others. Serve others by calling your neighbor who lives to your right and then call the neighbor who lives to your left. Share hope and positivity when those around you lack faith. Practice healthy protocols as best you can as an example to others. Send an e-mail of encouragement to those you love. Then, tell them why you love them. Be creative, find ways to serve others while at a distance.

I am reminded of Jesus' account of the Father's love in his parable of the "Prodigal Son." Jesus says, that after all the son has done to reject the Father, squander his inheritance, and dwell with the pigs, it is the Father who waits daily, from a distance, for the son's return.

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Peace and Grace from our Lord, Jesus Christ, continued...



The parable says, “That while the son was at a distance, the Father saw him.” Though we are all at a distance from one another for the foreseeable future, we can “look from a distance” and identify human need and determine how we are being called to serve as Christ’s disciples.

Finally, though these are trying times, though these are scary times, though this virus is real and dangerous, do not succumb to fear. God has given us the intelligence, resources and wisdom to overcome this treat. In faith and trust we continue to engage in best health care practices and advised protocols. Yet, God warns us in regard to the danger of fear;

18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love casts out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. 1 John 4:18

Earlier in his letter, John says, “God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. (1 John 4:16b)” As Christians, no matter the adversity or crisis, we are never to be overcome with fear, rather, we are to overwhelm the adversity with love.

In this crazy time in which we are living, focus on how you can continue to love, how you can serve from a distance and how you can engage in safe and healthy practices as an example to others.

Let me leave you with one final scripture passage of assurance in tough times. This is from Matthew 6:25-34. Jesus says do not worry;

25 “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life[e]?

28 “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Be safe. Be well. Call the church if you have need or know of someone who does. May God be with you. May God bless you and yours!

Sincerely,
Tim Womack



Worship, Music, & Arts

We have some wonderful things planned for Music and Arts this month, and the world had different ideas for us! As of this moment, nothing has been cancelled. In the spirit of “Re-thinking, Re-placing, and Re-visioning”, we are going on a week-by-week basis to reschedule as many things as we can. We appreciate you for your understanding and flexibility during this unprecedented time in our world.

The Easter Cantata, originally scheduled to take place on Palm Sunday, will be postponed to a later date. This beautiful work will be performed before the start of Pentecost, which is on May 31st. We are still looking forward to being joined by The Oceanside Brass Quintet (with social distancing, of course) on Easter Sunday.



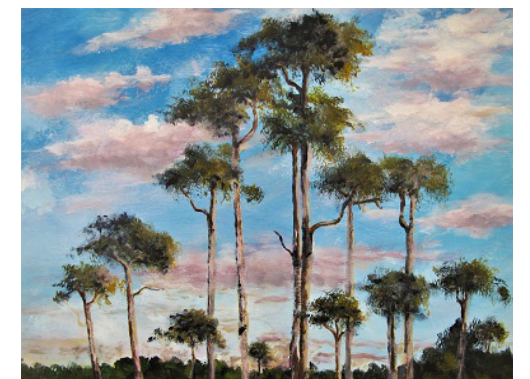
Sorry, Sergey!

Our dear friend Sergey Belyavsky remains in Russia due to the travel ban, and his concert is tentatively postponed until Friday, April 24 at 7:00pm. This may change, however, and we ask that you bear with us and stay tuned for updates via facebook and the website.

Art Gallery Changes

The Galleries at First Pres will see a new rotation of artists for this Spring. While the opening reception of our April show will take place (now tentatively) on Sunday, April 26, from 4:00-6:00pm, Jacob will be offering a video walkthrough of our galleries so that those who wish to see the artwork will have an opportunity to do so online from home. Please keep an eye out for this video to be posted via our facebook page and LiveStream. Featured artists will include Dale Risney, Suzan Phillips, and Donna Ware.

We will also celebrate the final show to be curated by Peter and Carole Coe. The Coe’s have truly enjoyed their involvement in the inception and organization of The Galleries at First Pres, and we are so thankful for their hard work and dedication to the art. Sadly, all good things must come to an end, and the Coe’s have decided that it is time to hand over the reins to someone new. If you are qualified and interested in this volunteer position, please see Dr. Jacob Craig for more information.



Another Upcoming Concert(?)

A special performance featuring Dr. Jacob Craig and two of his friends, King’s Baptist Church Music Director, Matt Stott (violin), and the Orchestra Director at Vero Beach High School, Mark Shuping (cello), is scheduled (tentatively) to take place in the Sanctuary on Sunday, April 26, at 4:00pm. Stay tuned for any changes, and we hope to see you at this concert!

Mission

Cuba Mission

This year our Cuba Mission Team, (Michael York, Vera and Hattie York, Deb Alich, Carol Campbell, Susie and Steve Nystrom, Carol and Tom Smoyer) traveled to our sister church in Cabaiguan, Cuba, a small town in central Cuba. For some, this was their first trip to Cuba. Michael and I had been to this church three times in the past 5 years. The goal of our mission is often asked and we have learned that friendship and sharing is a major part of this relationship. We bring lots of “things”, medicine, clothing, and all manner of small items from electrical outlets, printer ink, filters for the bus etc. The most important thing we bring however, is a shared concern for each other. We know the church and its members. And we return to visit and care for each other. Many mission trips often do not return to form friendships.

Rev. Michael York especially wanted to be there to baptize the new born daughter of Pastor Marlon Irrarragorry and his wife Elizabeth. One of Marlon’s other daughters, Flaviana was also baptized. We taught the Sunday school class of some17 children of mixed ages. The older children helped the younger ones. They loved to read out loud from the Bible. The presence of Michael’s two daughters, Vera and Hattie added another dimension to our relationship. The children blended in and played with the church children. Language was not a barrier. We played games and laughed without needing to speak each other’s language. Pastor Marlon was really the only one who could translate for us.



We visited the homes of several of the church Elders, we participated in the Saturday night fun and games with the families and their children. We watched as many people of the community came to the church to fill their water bottles with the clean filtered water that “Living Waters of the World” had installed in the church. Michael York and Jonathan Womack had helped to install a similar system in the Cabaiguan Mission church close by.

The church ladies, elders, and deacons fed us three meals a day. They cheerfully greeted us and hugged us when words failed. We felt cared for and loved by their kindness, generosity and sincere smiles of affection. Kisses on both cheeks was the usual greeting.

Cuba is a country where many have very little but they have an abundance of love for their families and for each other. They don’t dwell on what they don’t have but on what they do have. They have much to teach us.

-Carol Smoyer
Missions Chair



Fellowship

BLANKET SUNDAYS



If you have contributed to our annual Presbyterian Women’s blanket Sundays this year, thank you for playing such a crucial role in giving to our needy in our community.

Pastor Linda McCrae of Central Christian Church in Indianapolis shares my sentiments so well. “It is because of your generosity and sharing that we are able to touch the lives of our homeless neighbors.”

We are all on this mission with God and I thought you might like to see what WE contributed this year together:

Blankets	91	Throws	24	Sweaters	112
Jackets	69	Coats	10	Sweatshirts	37
Sheet sets	25	Towels	38	Shirts	16
Socks	41 pairs	Pillows	9	Pants/shorts	11
Gloves	7 pairs	Slippers	6 pairs	Flannel pajamas	5 pairs
Bathrobes	7	Hats	4		

A total of 520 articles were brought in! A total of \$676 was also collected in the pew envelopes for Church World Services. Organizations within our community who received the donations included The Source, The Hope for Families Center, Naomi House, Salvation Army Social Services and the Senior Resource Center.

I thank God for such a wonderful and giving congregation and I thank you for allowing me to be a part of it.

-Sandy Thiel
Blanket Sundays 2020 Coordinator



Fellowship - Presbyterian Women

The Kenya Children's Mission Project: Part 1

It is overwhelming to be so warmly received by so many people in Nairobi's Mathare Valley. As you walk the steep pathways of this vast valley (which are narrow gulleys that serve as the only drainage for the rains), people of all ages greet you with smiles and handshakes, hugs and "high fives". Packed into metal shelters, a few 5-story apartment buildings, and living in the streets, it's easy to understand how 900,000 of the poorest people in Nairobi live there. The conditions are worse than you can imagine.

Yet, children run and play and people smile and greet one another—in this place of destitution HOPE is alive and well in the eyes of so many and they are truly a community. It is extremely humbling to observe.

Most of the housing is rental and electricity is so expensive that most do not have it or they find a way to "borrow" it, which is very unsafe. It is the main reason that fires causing loss of lives and possessions are quite common.

Jude and the Jali Familia Team (our nonprofit partner) work out of the Redeemed Gospel Church in Mathare, a simple set of buildings which house the church, trainings for children and adults, and Jali Familia's office and storehouse.



Habiba, Naphtali, and Margaret, the three people who run the two orphanages, blow you away with their hearts, their dreams, and their struggles, but most of all their absolute determination to take care of the Mathare children and inspire them to wholeness in life and as children of Christ.

Fellowship - Presbyterian Women

Continued from previous page...

Habiba does not speak English, but understands some. She has been inflicted with HIV for decades, but is a well-respected woman and experienced mid-wife in the Valley. She and 15 children from ages 2 to 19 live in a temporary, rented, cave-like, one-room metal shelter with a dirt floor. Naphtali, a 60-year old man with endless energy and a smile that would melt the hardest heart, cares for 36 children in four tin rooms with dirt floors. He says he has "4 goals for the 36 children he cares for—protection, food, education, and a future". They fetch water from 300 meters away and when possible pay for water to bathe or go to the toilet. It is a struggle to have one meal a day.

The funds raised by our congregation and Presbyterian Women (\$30,212 in total) are being put to extraordinary use. Thus far Jude and the Team have succeeded in fulfilling \$3,900. in needs. With those funds they have purchased food staples for both homes; paid 3 months in rent; purchased a complete set of clothing and shoes for all 51 children; food, cooking, transportation and staffing for 65 people for the December 18 Christmas event; 3 sets of bunk beds and mattresses; school uniforms; and a sewing machine, hair cutters and grooming tools for skills training. It is remarkable how far our dollars stretched.

Stay tuned to upcoming issues of First News to read all about the Christmas Gifting event and the second phase of funding now in progress.





News and Notes

Happy April Birthdays!

1 Byrn Williamson	23 Sarah Jane Moore
1 Kay MacMillan	23 Barbara Burrows
1 Nevena Yancy	24 Josh Frantz
2 June Bercaw	25 Jerry Reichert
2 Nat Norton, Jr.	25 Christie Jeffries
3 Art Haeberle	26 Hugh Oldach
3 Betsy DiBenedetto	26 Paul Williams
4 Marge Albertson	26 Jon Forest
4 Jean Simmons	26 Mary Ellen TenEyck
5 Jeff Rayfield	26 Erik Carlsen
6 Barbara Gormas	27 John Ashby
7 Bonnie DeWaters	28 Bill Rountree
7 Bob Clements	28 Lynn Sinclair
9 Barbara Rigby	29 Biddie Mearns
10 Gary Peirce	30 Dolores Foster
11 Janel Lund	
11 Brad Smith	
13 Jean Doud	
13 Margot Williams	
13 Cris Grant	
15 John Reed	
15 Melissa Peirce	
16 Carole King	
16 Heather Reeb	
17 Carol Beaty	
17 Les Herbst	
18 Graham Bingham	
18 Catherine Reichert	
19 Kirk Mearns, Jr.	
19 Ryan Caddy	
20 Gigi Giampietro	
21 Jane Thompson	
21 Marsha Brizzie	
21 Betty Burtch	

Church Leadership

Rev. Dr. G. Timothy Womack, Senior Pastor
 Rev. C. Michael York, Associate Pastor
 Rev. Dr. Fred Foy Strang,
 Min. of Congregational Care
 Dr. Sam Rutland, Theologian in Residence
 Dr. Jacob Craig, Director of Music and Arts
 Jacob Strang, Youth Director
 Carie Robbins, Director of Children's Ministries

ELDERS **indicates Elder/Trustee*

Class of 2020

Carol Campbell, *Steve Harrison, Steve Nystrom,
 *Noel Thompson

Class of 2021

Deb Alich, *Harvard "Bud" Johnson, *Carol
 Marks, Kari Palmer

Class of 2022

*Jerry Garrett, Phil LoGiudice, Bonnie Nolan,
 Carol Smoyer

Clerk of Session - Connie Herr

Treasurer - Scott Westermann

Director of Development - Allan Bixby

Trustees-at-Large

2020 - John Reed; 2021 - Melissa Shine; 2022 -
 Bob Satola

BOARD OF DEACONS

Class of 2020

Peter Coe, Churchill Cooke, Maggie Fleming,
 Sally Lowndes, Barb Schwin, Susie Stoughton

Class of 2021

Scott Berran, Sue Coffey, Michael Goodfellow,
 Charles Hancock, Jan Satola, Floy Turner

Class of 2022

Mary Bingham, Reita Byrket, Keith Martin, Jeff
 Morgan, Barbara Reed, Richard Thomas



April Schedule

Scriptures and Sermon Titles

April 5, 2020

Palm Sunday

"Thus It Begins"

Matthew 21:1-11

Rev. Dr. Tim Womack

April 12, 2020

Easter Sunday

"Surprised Once Again!"

John 20:1-18

Rev. Dr. Tim Womack

April 9, 2020

Maundy Thursday

"The Sacred Mandate"

Corinthians 11:23-26

Rev. Dr. Tim Womack

April 19, 2020

"My Lord, My God"

John 20:19-21

Rev. C. Michael York

April 26, 2020

"Stay with us, Lord"

Luke 24:13-35

Rev. Dr. Tim Womack

We will continue to offer worship exclusively online until further notice.

Worship Times

8:00 am - Chapel worship via Livestream

9:00 am - Sanctuary worship via Livestream

11:00am - Repeat airing of the 9am Livestream

You can also view these broadcasts after the live service has ended.

(See the last page of this newsletter for more information)

If you have any trouble accessing any of our livestreams, please contact the church office.

Dr. Tim's Tuesday Bible Study will also be available online through the church website and Facebook page. To access the class through our website, www.firstpresvero.org, simply scroll down to the bottom of the homepage and click on MEDIA. From there, click the "Faith Building Classes" icon and select the video of your choice from the list that will appear on the right-hand side of the screen.

Fellowship

We are “Re-packaging” our Wednesday Night Dinners

In the spirit of our goal to re-vision and re-package our ministries, we will continue to offer a “Grab and Go” dinner on Wednesdays. The menus will be announced week by week via email and facebook, and meals will be available for pick-up in the circle outside the Center for Christian Life. Please call the office at (772) 562-9088 to reserve your meal.



You are also encouraged to take a meal for someone who is self-isolating! Donations for your meal(s) will be collected as you drive through. Pick up takes place from 5:00-5:30pm.

Hospitality

Welcome new members! Joined in February and March:



KEELER, Mr. Frank
KEELER, Dr. Bonnie
Photo coming soon!



TIMMONS, Mr. Michael
TIMMONS, Mrs. Aya-ko
First Year Friends:
Joe & Joan Smith



KLINE, Mrs. Carolyn
First Year Friend: Carol Smoyer



FARR, Rose
First Year Friend:
Cindy Rogers



PRITCHETT, Mr. Pat
PRITCHETT, Mrs. Beth
First Year Friend: Carol Marks

Discipleship

Youth Rummage Sale Changes

We are not canceling or postponing as much as we are ‘Re-Thinking, Re-Placing and Re-Visioning’ our ministry for the next several weeks.” The Rummage sale within this time is not something that we can commit to best practices and with keeping in the lines of social restrictions that our government has issued.

We are NOT taking any more donations.

While the rummage sale is no longer going to take place at this time, we will be using the donations that were already given to sell on online marketplaces and locally to still raise some money for the Youth that way. This being said, we are re-visioning our Youth Fundraiser for this time that social distancing is upon us and we are re-placing the Rummage Sale with a Youth Fundraising Wall!

If you would like to donate to the Youth Ministry, visit FirstPresVero.org, and click on the “Five Talent Church” tab at the top. Choose “Discipleship”, then scroll down to “Youth Ministries”. You will see a box that says “Youth Fundraiser Wall”. Click on it to access the fundraiser site.



You can also scan the code to the left on your smartphone for direct access to the Youth Fundraiser Wall page! Once there, you will find additional directions on how to donate.

Thank you all for your understanding and Generosity! The Youth and myself are very grateful for the wonderful generosity and support of the congregation and all the volunteers that have made all this possible.

Sincerely,
Jacob Strang
Youth Director

Vacation Bible School 2020

North Castle is hidden in a frozen land. The King’s valiant Knights are on a quest in search of the King’s Armor. But, the armor isn’t what they think it is. This year’s VBS - *Knights of North Castle: Quest for the King’s Armor*, invites children to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of God’s power by exploring how we put on the armor of God! Mark your calendars for June 8-12, and stay tuned for registration dates and volunteer opportunities. For more information, Contact Carie Robbins, Children’s Ministry Director at childrensministry@firstpresvero.org.



First Presbyterian Church
520 Royal Palm Boulevard
Vero Beach, FL 32960
<http://www.FirstPresVero.org>
(772) 562-9088

How to Access our Live Streaming Worship Services, Events, Bible Studies, Podcasts, etc.

We broadcast our live streaming in two ways:
Via our website - <http://www.firstpresvero.org>,
On our facebook page - <http://facebook.com/FirstPresVero>

You can also use either of these options to watch worship after the live service has ended. For the most up-to-date information, please "like" us on Facebook and check back often for any updates and changes to upcoming events. Also, be sure that you are receiving our emails by joining our mailing list. Simply send an email to Robyn at robyn@firstpresvero.org and let her know you would like to be added. If your contact information/location has changed, please notify us as soon as possible so that we may stay in touch.



Tech-savvy? Scan this QR code directly from your smartphone to be automatically directed to our website for access to livestream videos, worship services, and additional updates!

"For God Loves a Cheerful Giver"

Even though our doors are closed for in-person worship for the foreseeable future, we wanted you to know that your offering can still be accepted via mail or in person via the secure dropbox just outside of the church office door.

Did you know that you can also give an offering online?

To give online from our website, visit www.firstpresvero.org and scroll down until you see the "GIVE ONLINE" button.
This will take you to our secure online portal!

You can also use your smartphone for mobile giving.
Simply text "Firstpresvero" to the number 73256 and follow the prompts!

