



FPC Chronicle

First Presbyterian Church
Crystal Springs, MS



April 2020

The New Normal [for now]

It is extremely rare when an event affects virtually everyone in the world, but the new coronavirus [COVID-19, to use the medical name] is such an event. Our lives have been drastically changed as we do what we can to reduce the spread of this deadly virus. So what does this mean for our congregation? What can we expect when it comes to church activities for the foreseeable future? The elders and deacons have spent considerable time in discussions, study and prayer. It has been their decision for the present time to cancel all regular activities at the church **until further notice**. Beginning Sunday, March 29th, we will broadcast a livestreaming worship service at 11:00 A.M. This will be done via Facebook on the church's new Facebook page. We highly encourage everyone to set aside this hour for worship from your home, just like you would plan to worship at the church under ordinary circumstances. We very much need to communicate with one another and worship as a fellowship of believers, even though we are physically separated. We also need to keep in touch with each other. Since we can't physically do that like we normally would, we can take advantage of social networking using tools such as Facebook, email, texting and telephone calls. Check on one another and help one another in any way you can.

Please be on the lookout for updates as changes warrant as you receive prayer chain messages, text or email messages, or updates posted on the church's website. Things can change quickly so stay informed. If you aren't sure what is going on you can call the church office or anyone you know that might know what is going on. Pass on prayer requests as needed to the office. [Leave a message on the church office phone if you need to.]

We look forward to the time when these restrictions will relax, and you can be sure that when we can do that we will let you know. Thank you for your patience and love for Christ and His Church.

WIC

Psalm 56:1 When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. God tells us plainly that He loves us, will protect us and will direct our paths. We should always put our trust in him. During these unsettling times please feel free to call on anyone in our church for support by calling on the phone, texting or emailing. And most importantly please keep our church family, town, state and country in your prayers continuously. We will all be back together again soon. Right now give everyone a pretend hug!

There will be no WIC meeting March 29. If you signed up for a committee for the May reception please get together with your members by phone. When we meet again, we will finalize our plans hopefully in April.

Birthdays: 3- Tommie Barnhart; 6- Beverly Hood, Resie Taylor & Brandy Triplett; 14- Laura Westmoreland; 17- Janie Lagerwey

Mission Minute

This month our regular \$1500 went to BAIC (Beginning Again in Christ); \$300 to Engaging Disability with the Gospel; \$2000 to French Camp; \$2000 to Palmer House and \$1500 to MTW (Brent Kooi). Please be in prayer for our church and missionaries.

Jim's Gems

Beyond what you read elsewhere in this newsletter [Yeah, I wrote that, too.] I want to encourage us all as we go through a strange and difficult time. I say it is strange, but only to us who have never experienced any kind of disease or harmful virus on this scale. We should remember that in the past there have been terrible "pandemics" such as the Black Death, the Bubonic Plague and Yellow Fever. I've been reading a bit about some of these, and especially how the church should address them. As with most issues we face in life it is wise to learn from the past. Ecclesiastes teaches us that "there is nothing new under the sun," even though the specifics will vary. How did Christians deal with widespread hardships in the past? How we deal with them today has a lot in common with the trials our forefathers faced.

The situation we are in today with the COVID-19 virus can be challenging even to mature believers in Christ. Two unhealthy emotions tend to stand out with Christians in our present trial: fear and worry [or anxiety]. Our uncertain futures have been rendered even more uncertain since the coronavirus began spreading across the world, and increasingly restrictive measures have been implemented. Many people have been laid off from work. Schools have either closed or are using social media to continue teaching and learning. We simply cannot do many things we normally would do. And we are using new terminology in the process ["social distancing" is ordinarily the last thing Christians want to do]. The economy has taken a big hit. We could list other troubling aspects about life right now, but my concern is to remind us all what a difference it makes to know the love of God through our trust in Jesus Christ. So many times we are assured in Scripture that God will always care for His redeemed people.

Let me finish with two biblical challenges. The first is to consider why God has allowed this virus to rock our world. The Bible teaches that God does everything for a reason, and many times it makes a connection between calamity and our need to turn back to God when we have made other things more important than God. Wouldn't it be great if thousands of people realized because of something called the coronavirus [which I had never heard of until a few months ago] that their lives are being lived on eternally shaky ground, and that they need to have a right relationship with Him through Christ? We should pray for that, shouldn't we? After all, we know that the great need of the hour is not just to get this "problem" eliminated so we can return to business as usual. It is to impact people's eternal futures through a mighty movement of the Spirit of God to change them forever. The other challenge is for each of us to look in the mirror. Let's ask ourselves honestly, "Where is my trust?" Am I depending on the government to solve this mess? [DON'T listen to the secular media's coverage of this. For the most part they have a foolish agenda.] Am I convinced this virus will never kill me? Those who are clinging to Christ by faith will be safe forever in His loving care. That doesn't mean we won't suffer. It does mean that nothing, no matter how horrible, will separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. So persevere. Patiently let God do His holy will. Pray for His kingdom to come. Bear witness to the assurance you have in God's promises. They cannot and will not be broken.

Youth News

Greetings Church Family,

As you can imagine there is no news to report for the youth group because of the current COVID-19 situation. However, I would like to share with you a passage from Romans 8 that has been comforting to the Gilliam family during this time.

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be [a]gainst us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. [] 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As it is written "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Grace and Peace,
Grant