

## Special Dates of Interest:

- > National Day of Prayer, *May 7, 2020*
- > Mother's Day, *May 10, 2020*
- > Armed Forces Day, *May 16, 2020*
- > Ascension Day, *May 21, 2020*
- > Memorial Day, *May 25, 2020*
- > Pentecost, *May 31, 2020*

## It takes Grace...

Well, friends, here is your FPC newsletter for May. These have certainly been strange times. Who would have ever thought we would, as an entire nation, voluntarily shut down nearly every aspect of life as we have come to know it? In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, I do hope you have found some time to reacclimate yourselves to some core values we have as followers of Christ. One area that has smacked me in the face has been the acknowledgement that my prayer life has needed some major attention for quite a while. With that, I offer this Scripture passage and some honest thoughts on prayer...

*Then Moses climbed the mountain to appear before God. The Lord called to him from the mountain and said, "Give these instructions to the family of Jacob; announce it to the descendants of Israel: 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians. You know how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own special treasure from among all the peoples on earth; for all the earth belongs to me. And you will be my kingdom of priests, my holy nation.' This is the message you must give to the people of Israel." [Exodus 19:3-6 (NLT)]*

I have come to realize that I (and possibly you) have a

really one-sided concept of prayer. We think that we are the ones who initiate prayer. But most often, if not always, it is God who speaks first. Moses knew this. God would put him in situations that created a need for God in Moses' life. The needs themselves were actually orchestrated by God in order to drive Moses to Him. A generation ago, Pastor Manley Beasley preached that "problems are God's messenger boys telling you that God has an answer."

In Exodus 19, Moses went up on the mountain, seeking the Lord. But it was God who "called to him from the mountain," and it was God who spoke first. Please notice this: It was God who initiated the conversation. Go to the last book of the Bible and you will see in Revelation 3:20 one of the greatest statements on prayer. God is the One who is knocking. God is calling us to open the door. To pray is to simply open the door and give God access to our needs. Looking at what's going on in today's headlines, looking at what may be going on in your life today, the greatest qualification we have for prayer is our neediness... and our willingness to open the door and let God in. When Moses responded to God's call, the Lord gave him the most wonderful, encouraging words – not only for himself but for the whole nation. These are

the kinds of things God really wants to communicate to each of us, and for the benefit of others beyond us...if our prayer life might begin with our understanding of being dependent on Him, and our willingness to pray with expectancy.

Have you ever considered that God really wants our prayers more than we want to pray? He knows better than we do that we cannot and will not do His will and glorify Him fully if we are not communicating with Him.

God is knocking and calling on us all day, every day. I'm convinced the tragic things going on around us and around the world serve as His invitation to extraordinary prayer and an extraordinary revival for spiritual awakening. Look around, church. Wonder about and ask God: Are these perceived needs we have today God's own personal invitation for us to pray with listening ears rather than a wish list? Blessings,  
Lon

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## PLEASE CONTINUE TO BE THE CHURCH

**“...hopefully,  
we are getting  
God’s Word  
out through  
you—through  
you as you  
stay in touch  
with your  
family and  
friends and  
neighbors.”**

These are strange times that none of us have experienced before. I can tell you that I personally would much rather be greeting each of you on Sunday morning with a handshake or a hug. Far from that, it’s weird and not an easy thing to preach to a camera. I am learning, though, that on the other side of the camera is not merely the faithful who usually walk into the sanctuary on Sunday mornings. I’m hearing from some people in more distant places who have had a relationship with us over the years. I’m hearing, too, from folks like my cousin, Marilyn. She lives on a farm in Rural Route Ipava, Illinois, but is sitting this isolation out in her daughter’s home in

Michigan. Her church back home isn’t able to have live-streaming worship services, so she has been watching ours. There are other people in other places who have tuned in to First Presbyterian Church’s website, Facebook, and YouTube channel. We are getting the Word of God out through on-line Bible studies, videos, live-streaming, and... And hopefully, we are getting God’s Word out through you – through you as you stay in touch with your family and friends and neighbors. And please, stay in touch with each other here at our own church. Be in touch with each other. Be in touch, also, through your prayer requests to the church and

with your continued giving to the financial needs of our church.

This is a strange time in the life of the church – the whole church and our own little part of the family here in Madisonville, Kentucky. Remember, though, that we can and will continue to be the church...

We will continue to minister to the needs of our own and we will continue to minister to the needs of the community.

## PEACE

As we are in times that are uncertain and foreign, I am reminded that we are blessed even in the midst of this time. Staying focused on and in tune with God during this time can be difficult if we allow the fear and anxiety to overwhelm us.

Jesus stepped into the world He created and lived with us, the ones He handcrafted, to show us a new way of life. Could this time be for us a way to refocus? I mean could we actually see this as a time to spend more time with God and our families? Could we start to see the clutter of stuff and start to clean out not just our closets and attics and garages and those junk drawers but to also unclutter our minds to understand in the midst of even difficult pandemics that God is with us. Joy is mentioned 91 times when I did a search in just the New Testament, peace 89 times and love 260. More than enough reminders of God’s word reminding us that we have love, joy and peace of Christ to overwhelm the hate, despair and chaos that is trying to distract us.

Easter has just been celebrated and we need, I believe, to be reminded that for those first disciples and early believers that life had difficulties. But even in the midst of the difficulties Jesus speaks love, joy

and peace into their lives and ours too. Remember that Jesus stepped into the room of people hiding behind locked doors. People in fear for their lives and for their faith that had been, from their perspective, dismantled in just a few days. Jesus refuses to be lumped into the ordinary and predictable, He is supernatural, extraordinary and life changing! They that killed Him thought they had defeated an uprising and quieted the rebellion but little did they know they were not in control and neither are we. Jesus said in John 18:37, “You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true.” We are blessed to have the truth that our love, joy and peace are found in our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ! He also said in John 14:6, “Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.” “I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.” Said Jesus in John 16:33. And again as we reflect on Jesus words for us, let me close with His

words to His disciples on the day He revealed them an empty tomb and His living body, “That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! “Peace be with you,” he said. As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord! Again he said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.” Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” John 20: 19-22

May His peace be yours now and forever, Amen!  
In Christ’s Love,  
Rob

Romans 12

## HOPE

Last night I received a call from a friend of mine who attends the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. She told me that God wanted her to share with me her testimony that she believes God is real, Jesus is the Messiah, and the Holy Spirit is present among us and He put on her heart to let me know that my prayers have been received. WOW! I mean, WOW!! God is redeeming His people! I share this because the conversation brought me to tears, and that there is Hope. All too often we dismiss those of other faiths, or those within our own, as lost with no true salvation. Last fall I was sharing with a gentleman my prison/jail ministry, and out of the blue he told me that Jesus had saved him from addiction and homosexuality. He is currently three plus years

clean, sober and bondage free. I'll never forget the time I was serving on a GB/WtE/Cursio weekend at Vienna, IL; while being prayed out after my talk, one of the men thanked God "for taking a complete a\$#@e and making him into a man of God", and it was true. God did, and continues to do so. Even though we may give up on people who are still in their struggle with the world, God never will. Quite often when an inmate is released, and I'm present, he or she will thank me for helping them. I usually tell them if they think I did something it was Jesus, I'm just another beggar sharing the bread I found along the path. Hopefully, by the time you read this, we will be on our way out of COVID-19 praising God for His saving Grace and

for the lives we have. And, that we will use these lives to better the land we live in. The next time you encounter one who you may think needs God's help, remember we all do, and that Jesus said we are to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, give water to those who thirst, heal the sick and visit those in prison. Not everyone's prison is material, some are cloaked in darkness. We need to reveal the Light. Get out there, serve, and pray. Someone's life is depending upon it. It may be yours. On the Inside, in more ways than one, Pete



## Finances At A Glance March 2020

Income	\$21,434.43	YTD	
Expense	<u>-\$23,744.04</u>	YTD Income	\$54,000.07
Net	- \$2,309.61	YTD Expense	<u>-\$75,920.32</u>
		YTD Net	- \$21,920.25
<u>Undesignated</u>		YTD Undesignated	
Income	\$17,007.18	Income	\$43,083.59
Expense	<u>-\$18,950.85</u>	Expense	<u>-\$67,233.63</u>
Net	- \$1,943.67	Net	<u>-\$24,150.04</u>
<u>Designated</u>		YTD Designated	
Income	\$4,427.25	Income	\$10,916.48
Expense	<u>-\$4,793.19</u>	Expense	<u>-\$8,686.69</u>
<b>Operating Funds</b>			
Beginning Balance	\$254,327.56		
Investment Account	\$200,000.00		
Ending Balance	\$53,750.90		



May

BIRTHDAYS  
& ANNIVERSARIES

4th	Tem Major	Steve Arnold
8th	Chesley Wilson	19th Monty Crawford
14th	Rob & Denise Wilson (A)	28th Alan Johnson
15th	Calvin Griffith	29th Pat Bonney
16th	Emily Fischles	
	Rick & Susana Lee (A)	
	Linda Shanks	

# May 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
→						
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Mother's Day →						
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	Memorial Day					
31						