

IT TAKES GRACE...

Well, folks...As the saying goes: “You can *almost* stick a fork in me; I’m *almost* done.”

We have moved nearly everything into the new home and will be out of the manse soon, and we’re praying Social Security and the PC(USA) Board of Pensions will be good on their promises. September 1 is steamrolling its way forward and I will be a retired pastor. It all still seems a bit surreal, but I have to admit there are things I’m looking forward to. Just as I am sure that, as much as I feel your love, there are some in the church thinking, “Maybe after 19 years we can take our chances on somebody new. New can be good.”

I guess the thing I want to impress on all of us is this: I’m not your first pastor; I won’t be your last pastor. But as pastors do come and do go (eventually), the true constant presence here at FPC is Jesus Christ. He has stayed and He remains, even to encourage you as you welcome and minister with a new pastor.

I want to thank all of you for the many ways you have allowed me to be your pastor. Over the course of nearly 200 years, FPC has obviously had more than a few pas-

tors. And sometimes I wonder about those who preceded me. I wonder about the people and families they served? What has the passion of the church looked like from one season to the next?

I know for my time I’ve watched children grow up. I’ve baptized, performed marriages, received new members and officiated at what seemed to be too many funerals. (If my count is right, we have received 142 new members and had 95 deaths of members since May of 2001.) I’ve visited hospitals for surgeries and injuries and sicknesses and births. I’ve had countless visits at nursing homes. Together, we have realized many dreams, lived through a few tough trials. And together, with Jesus, we have persevered.

We all need to remember there has always been and always will be that one constant: Jesus Christ. He has been here from the beginning, and He will always be in the midst of His church as you continue your ministry. And speaking of that ministry, as long as you allow the Holy Spirit to guide you, First Presbyterian Church will always have a vital mission. (I’m amazed at considering the variety of mission and the impact of

your ministry – local and globally – just in the time I’ve been here!) The same passion for our Savior and Lord that has been a blessing will continue to be a blessing going forward.

My prayer is for the process of finding your next pastor to be as smooth and timely as possible. I am certain God already has in mind the person He wants to bless, even as He blesses the family at FPC and our extended community. My prayer is that under a new and invigorated pastoral leadership you all will find ways to connect even better within the neighborhood and are able to invite more folks to join you in the ministry of Jesus. May you always do what is pleasing to Him, and what brings Him glory. Blessings, RevLon

Special Dates

- *Labor Day, September 7, 2020*
- *Patriot Day, September 11, 2020*
- *National Grandparents Day, September 13, 2020*
- *Hispanic Heritage Month, September 15—October 15, 2020*
- *First Day of Autumn, September 22, 2020*

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FPC TIDINGS

“LOVE GOD AND LOVE ONE ANOTHER”

“And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” Romans 12: 1-2

“Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us. And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us.” 1 John 4:7-13

14 years ago I began a new career here at First Presbyterian church. As I have been cleaning out my office, I have been reminded of 14 years plus of memories. I’ve found reminders of how quickly life moves as we get older, or so it seems. Great memories of time spent together loving God, serving God and loving and serving one another. So, after being a member since December 17th, 1995 and serving in a number of roles throughout the church in those almost 25 years I have just a few words to share with you one last time.

Thanks for loving Denise and I like we were part of your family! This church is God’s and it is a place where people find a connection to God and people who love God. And you have been those people to us. Continue to seek ways to live out your special unique one of a kind

gifts that God has blessed you with to bless God and those around you. Don’t stress over what you don’t have but be thankful for what you do have. Romans 12 has some good advice for how to live that out. As well as a number of other scriptures I’m sure you’re all familiar with. We have been through births and deaths, weddings and divorces, amazing successes and life altering failures, times of abundance and times when we thought we were out of resources. Through it all we saw God show up in every situation and circumstance that we have encountered. He has blessed this church tremendously and He will continue to bless this church! And I know that an abundance of blessings will be poured out onto this congregation and God will magnify and multiply His faithful. He will continue to heal, equip, strengthen, provide and reconcile His people. You are called to be peace makers and bridge builders so do that with the best of your ability. God will give you everything you need in Him! He holds nothing back, keep knocking and keep asking and keep seeking to know and love Him more and more!

My prayer is that the family will come together as one under God. That families that are in need of a church will come through the doors of this church and find a place Denise and I found over 25 years ago. A place where people genuinely cared that you were there and wanted to know and love you. A family that was diverse in it’s makeup and unified in it’s purpose, to know Jesus as Savior and Lord and to make Him known.

“Don’t just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. When God’s people are in need, be ready to help

them. Always be eager to practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you. Don’t curse them; pray that God will bless them. Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with each other. Don’t be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don’t think you know it all! Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.” Romans 12: 9-18

So live life to the fullest, love the ones God gives you to love and forgive as you have been forgiven and bless as you have been blessed! We love you all and will miss you! God is good, all the time! And all the time, God is good!

In Christ’s Love,
Rob
Romans 12

LIVE HIS PLAN

For five months, or so, we have been told to fear the unknown. Follow political leaders who tell you to avoid others, wear a mask, don't go to church, hide in your house. Jesus tells us the feed the hungry, give water to those who thirst, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, heal the sick, and visit those in prison (whatever that prison may be). He tells us to make disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey God's commands, and to follow Him. AND, if we do these things, we will never be alone. Many are alone today because you are living in fear. Do you remember: "Yeah thou I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil. For thou art with me." If God is with you why do you fear?

'It is God's purpose and plan for us all to grow old and to go through physical changes. But it is not God's purpose for us to grow old and stop serving Him. Everything changes because our God is a God of change. There is nothing stationary about God. He is always moving and progressing forward and, as Christians, we are part of something God is doing, regardless of our age or physical condition. So regardless of how old you are or how you feel physically, God still has something for you to do for His kingdom. Regardless of age, you have high value to God. God does not want his people to retire from His service. He needs you now more than he has ever needed you in all your life. He needs you during all of your living years. I don't see any place in

God's concept for life that people retire and sit in a rocking chair all the rest of their days. That is not God's plan for your life. Stop living like you are already dead! Be excited about your future regardless of how long your past goes back. The doors ahead of you are open. Be creative and productive all the way up to the time God calls you home. Get involved in your church or community organization. Be a light to the world and shine until your last breath. Don't let your age or physical inabilities ever stop you from doing what God is asking you to do. Grab hold of your eternal vision and God will use you for that ministry He still has planned for you.' **Senior Saints: Stop Living Like You Are Already Dead! Jamie Buckingham**

A couple of newsletters ago I shared this quote: "So live your life that the fear of death can never enter your heart. Trouble no one about their religion; respect others in their view, and demand that they respect yours. Love your life, perfect your life, beautify all things in your life. Seek to make your life long and its purpose in the service of your people. Prepare a noble death song for the day when you go over the great divide. Always give a word or a sign of salute when meeting or passing a friend, even a stranger, when in a lonely place. Show respect to all people and grovel to none. When you arise in the morning give thanks for the food and for the joy of living. If

you see no reason for giving thanks, the fault lies only in yourself. Abuse no one and no thing, for abuse turns the wise ones to fools and robs the spirit of its vision. When it comes your time to die, be not like those whose hearts are filled with the fear of death, so that when their time comes, they weep and pray for a little more time to live their lives over again in a different way. Sing your death song and die like a hero going home." This beautiful passage is attributed to Tecumseh, although it is disputed and also attributed to some of the Wapasha Chiefs, Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse and Wovoka.

I want to challenge you to go out there and live like a believer. Don't hide, live like a disciple of Christ. Don't throw caution to the wind, however, do what you know is right. I believe I follow Him when I sing my song of faith and I'm going to go home like a hero entering the gates of Heaven. Come follow Him, live the life you are promised.

On the outside,
Pastor Pete

FINANCES AT A GLANCE JULY 2020

Income	\$15,486.36	YTD	\$169,605.08
Expense	<u>-\$21,979.91</u>	YTD Expense	<u>-\$156,987.13</u>
Net	-\$6,493.55	YTD Net	\$12,617.95
Undesignated		YTD Undesignated	
Income	\$11,269.50	Income	\$150,507.74
Expense	<u>-\$21,089.92</u>	Expense	<u>-\$145,536.52</u>
Net	-\$9,820.42	Net	\$4,971.22
Designated		YTD Designated	
Income	\$4,216.86	Income	\$19,097.34
Expense	<u>-\$889.99</u>	Expense	<u>-\$11,450.61</u>
Operating Funds			
Beginning Balance	\$91,580.89		
Ending Balance	\$83,543.43		
Investment Account	\$203,741.87		





- 2nd Jim & Ruth Hendrix (A) Susie Jackson
- 3rd Bud & Chrissy Barker (A)
- 4th Ashlee Goodwin
Sierra Walker
- 8th Monty & Angie Crawford (A)
- 11th Carroll Steinfeld
Stella Hoagland
- 18th David & MaryAnn Thomas (A)
- 20th Amy Taylor
- 26th Tom & Judy McLean (A)

SEPTEMBER 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
		1	2	3	4	5	
		<i>6PM Session Mtg</i>					
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	<i>Labor Day</i>						
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
		<i>First Day of Fall</i>					
27	28	29	30				