

MAY 2022

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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40 DAYS AND 20 QUESTIONS

We have records in all the synoptic Gospels of Jesus hanging out with his disciples after his resurrection and before his ascension. Matthew 28 tells of the disciples meeting Jesus in Galilee where they were given the Great Commission. Later manuscripts of Mark's Gospel tell of Jesus walking with two followers on the road to Emmaus and later appearing to the eleven as they were eating. Luke 24 also tells of Jesus walking with Cleopas and a friend on the road to Emmaus, but they did not recognize him until he broke bread with them. They then found the eleven in Jerusalem and were reporting about their encounter with Jesus when he appeared to all of them. He allowed them to touch him and they gave him a piece of fish to eat. Jesus told them to stay in Jerusalem until they had "been clothed with power from on high." He then led them out to the Mount of Olives where he was "taken up into heaven."

John goes into a bit more detail in Chapter 21 where he tells of Jesus meeting

several of the disciples on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. They had been fishing all night with little to show until Jesus told them to cast their net one more time on the right side of the boat. They hauled in 153 large fish but their net did not break. Jesus prepared fish and bread for their breakfast. This was also the morning when Jesus reinstated Peter by asking him three times "Do you love me?" John reports that this was the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after his resurrection.

In Acts 1, Doctor Luke says that Jesus was around for 40 days between his resurrection and ascension. The number 40 is a significant number in the Bible. Bible scholars note that often the number 40 is associated with periods of testing, trial, or probation. Other times it is associated with periods of new life, new growth, and transformation. The final 40 days of Jesus' life on earth were certainly the latter. If you had been around for those 6 weeks, what questions would you have liked to



ask Jesus? How about, "What was the pain like when those spikes were driven in your hands and feet? What was it like when you took your last breath? Did you know you were dead? What did it feel like when you realized you were alive again? Why haven't you spent more time in Jerusalem showing the religious leaders and the Romans you are alive?" Yeah, I sound pretty brave now, but had I really been there I expect I would have been more like Bart Millard who wrote, "Will I be able to speak at all? I can only imagine."

Rick Lee

TAKE TIME TO BREATHE

The following is a compilation from the work of Pastor and Author Doug Batchelor:

The book of Ezekiel was written by the prophet bearing the same name, which means "God will strengthen." A Hebrew from the tribe of Levi, he was among the elite of Judah who were captured by Nebuchadnezzar and carried away to Babylon. Ezekiel prophesied between the years 600 and 570 B.C. and was a contemporary of the prophet Daniel. Some scholars believe that his reference in the very first verse of the book to "the thirtieth year" was probably an indication of his age. If so, that means Ezekiel would have been only 25 years old at the time he was forced to leave his homeland. Thirty was also the age when a priest could begin to minister (Numbers 4:3). It was at age 30 that Jesus began His ministry, Joseph began to rule over Egypt, and David began his reign.

This fascinating prophecy of dry bones in Ezekiel has something for everyone. He was speaking primarily to his fellow captives among the children of Israel. By this time in history, the 10 tribes of Israel had been so widely scattered among the surrounding nations that they seemed all but lost as a people. The tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi had just been conquered and carried away captive to Babylon. It looked as if their national identity was forever gone and they would never again return to their Promised Land. Hence, one purpose of this vision was to inspire them with hope that God would

someday revive them as a nation.

In addition, this prophecy speaks about what God will do for spiritual Israel, which is the church today. An obvious theme of the vision is that God can resurrect dry bones—that He can give literal life to that which is dead and inanimate. It is a message that He can revive His people and turn them into a mighty army.

Last of all, it speaks to us individually. No matter how dried up and worthless we may feel, or how dead in trespasses and sins, God can restore us to life through His Word and Spirit. Ezekiel 37:10 says, "So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army."

God gives them life to fight. They become an army. In the same way, God gives us spiritual life so we can become soldiers in His army. We come to the Lord, He breathes into us the breath of life, then we go for the Lord. Zechariah 4:6 describes the battle plan: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

Ezekiel 37:1-14 is a vision of hope. It's a wonderful message that God's Word and His Spirit can bring life to any situation and to any soul—no matter how utterly dead and hopeless it might be.

As a church, God can revive us and make us an army that will be part of His end-time remnant. Ezekiel 37:12-14 tells us that God's people will be raised up and brought into

the Promised Land. There will be a resurrection of the righteous someday soon, and we will ultimately live in that new earth in the New Jerusalem. But even before that, the Lord wants to raise up an army of Spirit-filled people who will expand His kingdom.

Some of us do a pretty good job of covering up our dry bones. Maybe our marriages are dry and barren. Or maybe there has been a loss of vitality in our family or work relationships. Some of us have bank accounts that are like dry bones. Others have health problems.

Whatever the cause, the message is that God can send new life to your dry bone situation. God can breathe vitality through His Spirit and through His Word into our lives. Pray for that revival today.

Pastor Pete

FIXED HOURS OF PRAYER

As summer approaches, you may look forward to a more relaxed routine. But don't discard all your good habits and commitments! For soul care, try fixed hours of prayer. Simply expand the concept of praying at set times (such as before meals and bed) into praying regularly each morning, midday and evening. Set an alarm on your watch or phone and commit to engaging with God at the specified times. You can do this on your own or with family or friends.

You can pray using Scripture verses, devotional guides, the *Book of Common Prayer* or a resource such as *ExploreFaith.org*. (When I'm tired or overwhelmed, it's helpful to pray someone else's words.) You might want to pray the same prayers morning, noon and evening for a week or a month. This practice isn't meant to replace spontaneous prayers. Instead, use fixed hours of prayer to nurture a consistent habit of conversing with God.

—Janna Firestone

FINANCES AT A GLANCE-MARCH 2022

		YTD	
Income	\$19,919.07	YTD Income	\$96,317.67
Expense	<u>-\$19,342.45</u>	YTD Expense	<u>-\$62,860.58</u>
Net	\$576.62	YTD Net	\$33,457.09

Undesignated		YTD Undesignated	
Income	\$9,318.07	Income	\$79,001.76
Expense	<u>-\$19,312.45</u>	Expense	<u>-\$55,462.76</u>
Net	-\$9,994.38	Net	\$23,539.00

Designated		YTD Designated	
Income	\$10,601.00	Income	\$17,315.91
Expense	<u>-\$30.00</u>	Expense	<u>-\$7,397.82</u>
Net	\$10,571.00	Net	\$9,918.09

Operating Funds

Beginning Balance	\$187,363.88
Ending Balance	\$173,300.36
Investment Account	\$205,921.20



- 2nd Merry Brooks
- 4th Tem Major
- 10th Tim & Angie Lester
- 15th Calvin Griffith
- 16th Emily Fischels
- Rick & Susanna Lee (A)
- Steve Arnold
- 28th Alan Johnson

May 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><i>1</i></p> <p><i>Communion Sunday</i></p>	<p><i>2</i></p>	<p><i>3</i></p> <p><i>1:30 Bible Study & Prayer</i></p> <p><i>6:00 PM Session</i></p>	<p><i>4</i></p> <p><i>5:30 Fellowship Meal</i></p> <p><i>6:00 "The Bible Project"</i></p>	<p><i>5</i></p> 	<p><i>6</i></p>	<p><i>7</i></p>
<p><i>8</i></p> 	<p><i>9</i></p>	<p><i>10</i></p> <p><i>1:30 Bible Study & Prayer</i></p>	<p><i>11</i></p> <p><i>5:30 Fellowship Meal</i></p> <p><i>6:00 "The Bible Project"</i></p>	<p><i>12</i></p>	<p><i>13</i></p>	<p><i>14</i></p>
<p><i>15</i></p>	<p><i>16</i></p>	<p><i>17</i></p> <p><i>1:30 Bible Study & Prayer</i></p>	<p><i>18</i></p> <p><i>5:30 Fellowship Meal</i></p> <p><i>6:00 "The Bible Project"</i></p>	<p><i>19</i></p>	<p><i>20</i></p>	<p><i>21</i></p>
<p><i>22</i></p>	<p><i>23</i></p>	<p><i>24</i></p> <p><i>1:30 Bible Study & Prayer</i></p>	<p><i>25</i></p> <p><i>5:30 Fellowship Meal</i></p> <p><i>6:00 "The Bible Project"</i></p>	<p><i>26</i></p>	<p><i>27</i></p>	<p><i>28</i></p>
<p><i>29</i></p>	<p><i>30</i></p> 	<p><i>31</i></p> <p><i>1:30 Bible Study & Prayer</i></p>				