



The Spire

February 2021



Pastor's Page

As your pastor, I want this coming season of Lent to be the best one ever for you and us. But how does that happen in a pandemic? Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent on Feb. 17, but most of us will not have been vaccinated by then with both doses. Plus, no one knows how these new, highly transmissible variants will affect us. So we will not be lining up in church to come and have ashes imposed on our foreheads and hearing those sobering words, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

For reasons that are deep, and hard to fully understand, there is something both sobering and liberating about hearing those words. We are mortal; we will not live in this life forever; we know that, and it sobers us. No day is trivial. Each day is irreplaceable. Each day is significant. It is somehow liberating to be free of the anxiety of pushing that thought away. One day, I will no longer walk the earth, just as my ancestors before me. That is okay because I live "in God" and will die "in God" as the New Testament says. Maybe that is why it has been reported that many people participate in Ash Wednesday services even though they are not regulars in church.

So how do we make Lent meaningful if we cannot gather to hear those words, receive the ashes, and begin our collective journey towards Easter together? We are all going to need to find ways to make that spiritual journey personally. I have looked for and found a resource that I believe will help us. It is a Lenten devotional that uniquely combines readings and reflections with poetry and artwork, all designed to help us reflect on our lives as we engage the scriptures. Each week of Lent begins with a poem, an original piece of art, and several readings. It is called, "Again and Again: A Lenten Refrain." Written by some very creative and talented Presbyterians, here is how they describe it:

"In the season of Lent, we're reminded that, again and again, suffering and brokenness find us. We doubt again, we lament again, we mess up again. Again and again, the story of Jesus on the cross repeats—every time lives are taken unjustly, every time the powerful choose corruption and violence, every time individuals forget how to love. With exacerbation, we exclaim, "Again?! How long, O God?" And yet, in the midst of the motion blur chaos of our lives, God offers a sacred refrain: "I choose you, I love you, I will lead you to repair." Again and again, God breaks the cycle and offers us a new way forward."

We have the license to print this devotional for all of our people who want one, so please contact the church by phone or email, and tell Pat to put you on the list and we will get a devotional to you. I'm hoping that even in a pandemic, this can be the best Lent you have ever experienced.

Blessings,
Pastor Steven

Deacon's Corner

Our new year has begun. Covid remains in control of our social gatherings. So, we continue to rely on Zoom meetings and are back to recorded church services on line.

For the safety of family and friends continue to wear your mask, wash your hands and social distance. We can keep in touch through phones and e-mails. Call the church office or your Deacon if you have needs we can help with. We are in this together with God!

Praying for our Central Presbyterian Church family and friends. Looking forward to the day we can give physical hugs in place of virtual hugs. Thanking God for all of you and all that you do.

Roberta Elliott



The Care Cart makes its journey down our aisle each week during the offertory. The Care Cart is where we place our NON-Perishable Grocery offerings. These items are given to the Clearinghouse Food Pantry when the storage bin is full. Please no bread or other products which mold or require refrigeration.

Kathya....

Please keep Kathya, her family and her country in your prayers.

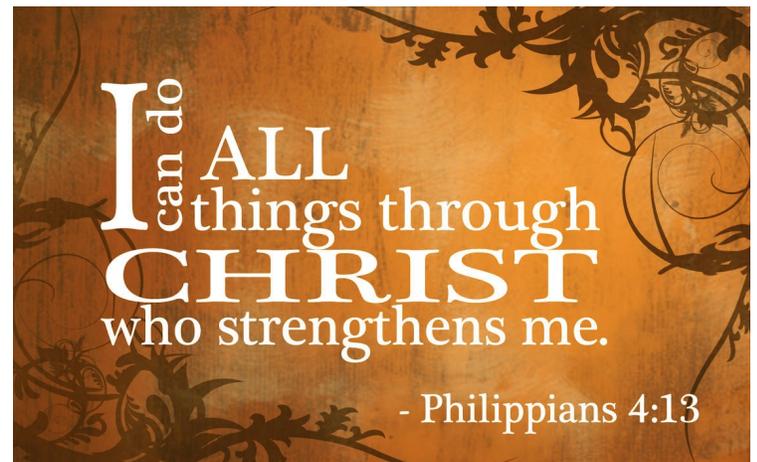
Show Encouragement to Medical Personnel

We have been invited, along with other churches, to join the First United Methodist Church in a public display of encouragement to our local medical personnel by our prayers, and by holding up signs outside the hospitals on Feb. 7. We will gather at Mercy Hospital at 2:00pm and at Baptist Medical Center at 3:00pm to hold up signs of encouragement and literally surround the patients and medical personnel with prayer. Please make a sign if you can, and join us in a socially distanced way, as we support our community.

PW Mission Project for February

Please bring the following items in any quantity for the Interfaith Community Preschool (Fort Smith).

- ◆ Paper towels
- ◆ Tri-fold paper towels
- ◆ Toilet paper
- ◆ Construction paper
- ◆ 8 1/2 x 11 white computer paper
- ◆ Children's washable writing markers and crayons



Mercy				
Day of Week	Week of 2/7	Week of 2/14	Week of 2/21	Week of 2/28
Monday	Galen Hunter	Sandy Barron	Suzanne Bethell	Margaret Sparkman
Tuesday	Gary Simpson	Mike McClure	Cissy Rose	Suzanne Bethell
Wednesday	Charles Cook	John Hale	Galen Hunter	Cissy Rose
Thursday	Sandy Barron	Debi Wilkinson	Gary Simpson	Galen Hunter
Friday	Mike McClure	Margaret Sparkman	Charles Cook	Gary Simpson

Baptist Health				
Day of Week	Week of 2/7	Week of 2/14	Week of 2/21	Week of 2/28
Monday	John Hale	Galen Hunter	Sandy Barron	Charles Cook
Tuesday	Debi Wilkinson	Gary Simpson	Mike McClure	Debi Wilkinson
Wednesday	Margaret Sparkman	Charles Cook	John Hale	Sandy Barron
Thursday	Suzanne Bethell	Debi Wilkinson	Margaret Sparkman	Mike McClure
Friday	Cissy Rose	Cissy Rose	Debi Wilkinson	John Hale

Listing of Staff and Church Leaders 2020-2021:

Session Members:

David Whitt
 Mike McClure (Clerk of Session)
 Cissy Rose
 John Hale
 Debi Wilkinson
 Margaret Sparkman
 Suzanne Bethell
 Galen Hunter
 Gary Simpson
 Charles Cook
 Sandy Barron

Trustees:

Ken Cowan
 Jackie Franklin
 Carl Rose

Treasurer:

Mike McClure

Deacon Members:

Roberta Elliott - Moderator
 Theresa Hardgrave
 Jo Hardy
 Brian Pokornik
 Larry Hall
 Betty McSwain
 Linda Riley
 Chris Hlavin
 Martin Hyatt
 Janis McClure
 Renda Cook

Church Staff:

Pastor - Rev. Steven Kurtz
 Music Director- Sheila Mann
 Organist- Barbara Jetton
 Financial Sec.- Cheryl Sykes
 Custodian- Elvia Reyna
 Secretary- Pat Kent

Blessings on your birthday


February Birthdays

- Ken Cowan 02/01
- Ronnie Sparkman 02/09
- Robert Epperson 02/12
- Matthew Whitt 02/15
- Brenda Moreland 02/16
- Pat Schmidt 02/21
- David Whitt 02/22
- Jennifer Kurtz 02/25
- Julie Oliver 02/27
- Brenda Potts 02/28
- Shirley Haggard 02/28



Central's Meal Share

Remember: if a meal is needed for a church member, contact Linda Riley at lriley@cox.net. If you are unable to reach Linda, you can call Pat at the church office.

STATED SESSION MEETING MINUTES (CYBER)

Central Presbyterian Church, Fort Smith, AR

January 19, 2021

Present: Steven Kurtz, Mike McClure, Charles Cook, Sandra Barron, Cissy Rose, Margaret Sparkman, John Hale, Suzanne Bethell, Galen Hunter, and Gary Simpson.

Absent due to illness: Debi Wilkinson

The stated session meeting on January 19, 2021 was conducted via Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. The prayer and devotional were given by John Hale. The devotional was on Trust and from Proverbs Chapter 3 verses 5-6.

Docket and December session minutes were approved including 2 sets of E-Vote minutes. One for a Gift to Pastor Steven Kurtz and the other for examination and receiving of 3 new members.

Clerk's Report

Since the previous session meeting there were 4 deaths in the congregation all of whom were in assisted living and/or nursing homes. Mary Ann Lyons, Betty Jo Wery, Darrell Baker, and Barbara Clark. A thank you note was sent to First Presbyterian Church and the Moody Trust Fund for the very generous gift of \$2,887 to be designated for building expenses. Pastor Steven Kurtz sent a thank you note to the session for his Christmas gift.

Pastor's Report

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Committee Reports

Building and Grounds- In and effort to divide B&G duties Galen Hunter agreed to be responsible for large system and Mike McClure agreed to be responsible for smaller systems within the church while Pat will be available to let tradesmen enter the building. Galen presented an estimate and made a motion to install the float system for the air handler above the west entrance to the church. The estimate was \$245. The motion to spend the money for the float system was made and passed. Air handlers located in the Connection Room were also discussed.

Christian Education

Sunday School continues to be in session and the Paint the Stars curriculum is being completed. Cissy attended an MLK panel hosted by UAFS.

Outreach

No meeting.

Personnel

Charles Cook made a motion to formulate plans to formalize the position of Parrish Associate after which Pastor Kim would be asked about his interest. The motion passed.

Stewardship

Charles Cook reported information about pledges for 2021 compared to pledges for 2020. In 2020 there were 45 pledges for a total of \$182,467. So far in 2021 there have been 28 pledges for a total of \$115,020 pledged dollars.

Mike presented the Treasurers report with explanation of year end closing numbers. There was also a discussion about protecting assets invested with TPF by converting some portion of those investment to cash until markets settle or a market adjustment has happened.

Worship Committee

A Session E-Vote was done to suspend in-person worship services until it was considered safer to do so. The motion passed. We will be exploring objective criteria to determine when to resume in-person worship.

Other Business

The motion was made and passed to counter the “bus barn” offer with a price of \$48,000 with the buyer assuming all closing costs.

A PowerPoint presentation was discussed for the future of the church and having a presbytery representative revisit the issue with alternatives, mission versus building and information regarding better ways of thinking about the future.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 with prayer by Pastor Steven Kurtz.

Respectfully submitted.

Mike McClure, Clerk of Session.