

First Presbyterian Church

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October

2017

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

10/03 Evelyn Thomas
10/08 Shane Coers
10/10 Faye Nicklaus
10/12 Walt Clevenger

10/16 Paul Katner
10/18 Darlene Montague
10/20 LaVonne Wolf
10/21 Jenny McBride
10/22 Kaylie Hawbaker
10/22 Robert Thomas

10/22 David Spaulding
10/23 Lenae Longtin
10/26 Chuck Beckman

OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

10/27 Don & Darlene Montague

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Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God -- what is good and acceptable and perfect.”
(Rom 12:2 NRSV)

When I preached on this text in September I made some comments about the importance of being biblically literate. Loving God with our minds definitely involves seeking understanding in every sphere of knowledge—as the saying goes “all truth is God’s truth.” But as followers of Jesus, God’s self-revelation through Scripture is foundational for us.

Although we are quick to acknowledge this, our good intentions often fall short of our practice. As I mentioned in that sermon, it came as a bit of a surprise to me when I was in seminary that many of my classmates struggled to pass the Bible Content Examination administered by the PC(USA), which is nothing more than a test of basic biblical literacy. Without an appreciation of the whole of Scripture—the movement of its central storyline, the failures and triumphs of God’s people, the world of thoughts and ideas that lie beneath the New Testament’s message, the diversity of voices and types of literature it contains—it is difficult to align our thinking and living to God’s purposes.

Gaining this literacy can seem like a daunting task. Although the Bible is, in a sense, just a book, it’s a deceptively thick and complex one. It often comes packaged in strange forms – flexible leather covers, gilded edges, thin paper, verse numbers breaking up the text. And it is a collection of 66 documents written over many centuries, with the most recent going back almost 2,000 years. So what can we do to feel more at home with it?

There’s no way to do that apart from the actual practice of reading it. Given that it seems like such a big task, I’d like to suggest that there are two parts to it. The first is to have a plan.

- That might be as simple as deciding to start at page 1 and read the Bible cover to cover. I remember as a teenager, starting completely from scratch with the Bible, picking up a New Testament that had been given to me and starting from the beginning of the gospel of Matthew, which begins with the genealogy of Jesus. I don’t think I made it past the first few verses. It’s possible to read straight through, but when folks do that they usually get bogged down somewhere in Leviticus and give up.

- A second approach is to follow a plan that assigns a certain number of chapters from the Old Testament and from the New Testament every day – usually designed to go through the Bible in a year. Some editions of the Bible include a plan like this in their notes, etc. One can be found online at <https://www.biblica.com/resources/reading-plans/> and there are many others.
- A third approach is to use the daily lectionary. The daily lectionary moves through the Bible on a two-year cycle with daily readings from the Old Testament, Psalms, Gospels, and Epistles. It doesn't include everything, but covers most of the Bible. You can find a printable list at <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/worship/lectionary/>.

For the second and third options, in addition to these lists you can find web sites or apps that include the full texts of the daily readings.

The second part to making a good start is to have an appropriate Bible. Given the overwhelming array of translations and editions out there, I suggest two things.

- In reading for biblical literacy using a modern English translation is best. The most widely used ones are the New Revised Standard Version and the New International Version.
- I recommend using a Bible with some, but not too much, supplemental material. It can be helpful to have access to some background information about the books of the Bible—authors, dates, locations—some maps and timelines, etc. (It's also helpful to remember that there is no universal agreement about much of this background.) On the other hand, in reading for biblical literacy I would recommend staying away from “study Bibles” that provide detailed commentary. These can be great at other times, but too much information can also get in the way of just reading the text. My standby Bible of this sort is *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*. Another similar option is *The HarperCollins Study Bible*. Both of these use the NRSV text. Unfortunately I haven't been able to find anything quite like this using the NIV text.

Reading for biblical literacy isn't the only way to read the Bible. In fact, it's not the way I read it most of the time. We need times of slow, reflective listening, and times of careful study. But everyone should take this cover-to-cover journey just once. Blessed reading to all!

David



Remember Newsletter information to be turned into the office by the 15th of each month.

OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT

As followers of Jesus Christ, we will, by our intentional actions, seek a deeper relationship with God, listen for the Spirit's call to mission in our community, and prayerfully lead others to know the joy of God's love, and to realize God's purpose for life's journey.

2017 Church World Service Kits

The goal to complete 35 Church World Service School kits to be delivered to the November Presbytery meeting continues with the addition of two Emergency Clean-up Buckets. Lists of items needed for the School Kits and the sheets to sign up for the Clean-up Bucket item you choose to donate are both on the narthex table. With the recent storm and floods the clean-up buckets are needed more than ever.

The Mission Witness Committee and Presbyterian Women (PW) appreciate the help our congregation gives each year in filling these kits.

Fall Fest Luncheon

The Dixon Area Christian Women's Fall Luncheon is Friday, October 5, 2017 at the Bethel Church at 11:30 a.m. The tickets are \$6 and may be purchased from Lori McNally. Donations from this luncheon will be given to the Dixon P.A.D.S.

Presbyterian Women

All ladies of the church are already members of PW (Presbyterian Women) and if you are not attending our monthly meetings we invite you to join us the third Monday of each month at 1:30 p.m. in the church Social Hall. We have a business meeting and are beginning the new Horizons Bible Study "Cloud of Witnesses".

October Prayer Guide

Pray for all who help with leading liturgy, by helping with AV, by ushering, by greeting, with the Nursery (especially for Lisa), with providing refreshments.

Pray for all who come faithfully to worship, and those who come occasionally. Pray for those who haven't connected with our church yet that they would. Pray for all those in need in our church, that we would show love and help them.

Pray for Presbyterian Women and for their president, Lori McNally, and other officers.

Pray for Ministries in the Presbyterian Church here and overseas- Jeremy and Luta Garbat-Welch (children-Jathniel and Azul) working with Presbyterian Mission in Malawi, for our support of the Kiangua parishes in Kenya and Rev. Joseph and Mrs. Esther Mburu and their children, for the elders at their church.

Pray for our support of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance through money, compiling two clean-up buckets and many school kits for Church World Service, for Stronghold Camp, and sponsoring a Stronghold Day Camp here at our church in the summer.

Pray for ministries in our community we support — Dixon Area Christian Women, Dixon Area Christian Ministerial Association, The Dixon Community Food Pantry, Dixon Community Garden, Habitat for Humanity, Kreider Services, Leydig Center and Foundation, Meals on Wheels, PADS Homeless Shelters, Red Cross Blood Drive, Sinnissippi Center, Shining Star Children's Advocacy Center, and others.

Stronghold Olde English Faire - October 7th & 8th, 2017

During the first weekend in October, Stronghold transforms itself from a modern retreat and meeting facility to the site of the Olde English Faire. Wandering players perform both onstage and off as crafters and merchants display their wares. Minstrels fill the pathways and stages with melodies while children gather in the Gremlin's Garden for stories and other children's activities. These and many more delights await you at the Olde English Faire! The revelry of the faire shall occur from 9:00am - 5:00pm.

An Update on Lorri

September, thankfully, was an uneventful month. Lorri has continued with chemo, with no major side-effect issues. She has one more treatment scheduled in early October. The latest lab tests show that she has continued to have a positive response, although she is reaching the end of her tolerance for the drug she has been receiving. Her oncologist is trying to qualify her for a newly approved maintenance therapy that could potentially extend the time before another relapse. She has had no new neurological symptoms from the brain lesions, so we're hopeful that she will have an extended break from treatment after mid-October. We've planned a week of vacation to travel east to spend some time with Anne and Christine.

Lorri and Connie Ross received a special blessing on September 24 when a delegation from the group Pink Heals appeared at the church shortly after the service. They're traveling the country in their pink fire trucks bringing a message of encouragement to women who are dealing with cancer. Connie and Lorri got to sign the truck and enjoy a little extra care.

Thank you, as always, for your love, prayer, and practical support as we continue on this journey.

Notes from the Session

The session had its regular monthly meet on September 26. Pastor Spaulding led the members in worship, including reading Luke 10:38-42, and the sharing of personal, congregational, and community joys and concerns which were lifted up in prayer.

The financial reports were received. Treasurer Toni Vella reported that through the end of August we were running a deficit of \$23,949 for the year. Expenses are on target; the shortfall is on the income side with non-pledged giving lagging behind projections.

Three actions taken through email communications were reported:

- Approval of hosting a program for Yucatan Peninsula Mission held on September 25.

- Approval of receiving the September “noisy offering” on September 17 and dedicating the offering to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance for hurricane relief.
- Approval of rescheduling the September session meeting from the 19th to the 26th.

The deaths of church members Dick Mills and Marion Braun were noted.

The committees reported:

Buildings and Grounds – Updates were given on repair projects. A fall work day is scheduled for October 21, 9-noon. The committee members have been asked to submit a list of potential capital improvement projects to help in long-range planning.

Christian Education – The fall Sunday School season has begun. A movie night is being planned in November.

Finance – Session approved adding Phil Devers to the list of members authorized to sign checks. Cathy Anderson has been trained to substitute when needed for Carolyn McBride as AV Tech. Session approved paying her \$25 per Sunday. Session approved updating the position description for the Nursery Attendant.

Innermission – The committee members continue visiting and caring for the church family. Mary Lou Feczko has joined the committee.

Mission and Witness – The committee hosted the Yucatan Peninsula Mission program on September 25. Our work day for Dixon Habitat for Humanity will be October 14 (if the house has not been completed before then). The Peacemaking and Global Witness Offering will be received on World Communion Sunday, October 1. Session discussed priorities in our participation in global mission, how to prioritize our energy and material resources.

Worship – Session approved hosting the Community Thanksgiving Service on November 22.

Pastor Spaulding reported:

- He is working with clerk Cathy Anderson and David Badger on revisions to the by-laws, with the goal of making recommendation to be voted on at the Annual Meeting in January.
- He reported on his service as a member of the search committee for a Dixon City Manager.
- He reported that he officiated at funeral services for Dick Mills (September 12), Steven Oster (September 23), and will officiate at a service for Marion Braun on October 7.
- He recommended, and session adopted, adding a line to the building use form making explicit that smoking is not permitted in the church building.
- He noted that the church office computer has been having problems. Some short-term upgrades are being performed, and a proposal for replacing the unit will be sought.