

# THE CHURCH FAMILY

*Presenting Everyone Complete in Christ*

## FROM YOUR PASTOR'S DESK

There is a line from J.R.R. Tolkien's *"The Return of the King"* where Frodo says to Gandalf: *"There is no real going back. Though I may come to the Shire it will not seem the same; for I shall not be the same."* As I think about the future of our church I cannot help but wonder if this is true for us. Is it possible for us to go back to the way it used to be? Even when things go back to "normal," we will not be the same. The way we greet each other, the way we view social interaction, the frequency with which we wash our hands will never quite be the same.

As Julie and I have been reading through the Bible we have been following the Israelites through the wilderness after their miraculous exodus from Egypt. We have read on more than one occasion that when adversity came, their default mode was to try to go back to "what used to be." In Numbers 14:3 they complain: *"Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?" And they said to one another, 'Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt.'"*

Unfortunately the Israelites had selective memory. Numbers 11:5 says *"We remember the fish we ate in Egypt that cost nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic."* They somehow forgot the fact that they were slaves subjected to toilsome labor under ruthless taskmasters in harsh conditions. They were oppressed and at one point their male babies were brutally slaughtered. Despite the miracles they had witnessed with their own eyes, their trust in God grew thin, and their hope for the future was extinguished by their longing for the past.

We face the same temptation to long for the "golden days" of the past (which probably weren't as golden as we remember). But do we really want to go back to the world pre-COVID-19? A world that was a merry-go-round spinning faster and faster and we were all getting a little dizzy. I hope for a future that is less focused on the fast-paced programs and activities, and more focused on worship of a Holy God, outreach to our neighbors and meaningful relationships within our church family. We must realize that God has a promised land filled with milk and honey awaiting us if we will only trust in Him.

In this time of waiting there is a lot to learn. What are the areas in my life that are not healthy? How is my time being used or wasted? What are my priorities? Where do I find meaning? What is my first focus? There may be things we need to let go. There may be new patterns we need to incorporate into our lives. My prayer for my life and for the life of our church is that we will come through this time of trial with a clear understanding of what is truly important in life and in ministry. Let us place our hope for the future first and foremost in the risen Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep. For He will lead us into green pastures, and beside still waters, He will restore our souls and guide us into paths of righteousness for His name's sake! (See Psalm 23.)

Looking *forward* to all God has for us in Christ Jesus,

*Steve*

**Options**  
for Sunday Worship

*Unite with us for worship during this time of separation.*

**Tune in to our online worship at [www.fpcstanley.org](http://www.fpcstanley.org) or listen in by calling 339-207-7653 Sundays at 10:15 AM.**

## FROM YOUR ASSISTANT PASTOR'S DESK "COVID IN COMMUNITY"

'What does community look like while isolated?' This question, of all those asked in this unique time in history, seems very practical, especially in the long term. From our perspective as believers belonging to a local church, this could be one of the most important aspects of growth during "shared trauma" (Kapic, *Belonging*), and one of the ways that families, friends, and neighbors will see us loving others well, in and through our community (John 13:34-35).

But we seem to land in different places during trials. On one hand we want to re-connect, we want to get over this virus so we can get back together, enjoy meals and games and hiking together, and ultimately worship together, but we're required to distance ourselves. On the other hand, this level of self-isolation might just be insulating us from the challenging relationships that are too easy to ignore with another episode on Netflix, scrolling through Facebook or whatever else has gone viral this week, or glancing across my yard for next week's project. Kapic provides gospel-guidance to both extremes, "the church, at its best, recognizes God's relational design for humans and does not simply promote programs, but promotes shared lives." (Kapic, *Belonging*)

In either direction, this defining moment in each of our lives should grow us toward God and eventually one another. Maybe as God is pruning us and our connections, he wants us to grow in Him, or realize creative ways of connecting with others. This could be a time to mend relationships inside and outside your home, begin daily habits to root your faith in God, and be proactive in reaching up to God and out toward others. Because He is at work in the world and in our lives, He is using this season to increase our reliance on Him and each other as the church, our local community of believers at FPC.

Please read Kapic's article for a further God-glorifying explanation:  
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/belonging-in-isolation/>

If you tend toward people or need to reach out to others, maybe growing toward God is needed. Check out:

- John Piper's book, "Coronavirus and Christ" <https://www.desiringgod.org/books/coronavirus-and-christ>
- Holy Humor with the Holy Post Podcast: <https://www.holypost.com>
- Solid theology with creative articles: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/>
- Or send us your prayer requests, 'Hello' videos, or emails saying Hi!: [thad@fpcstanley.org](mailto:thad@fpcstanley.org) or [tech@fpcstanley.org](mailto:tech@fpcstanley.org)

*Thad*



### REMEMBER THAT YOUR CHURCH FAMILY IS HERE TO HELP YOU.

Please contact the church office, your elder, your deacon or one of the pastors if you have a need. If you are in the Best Years category and need food, medicine, supplies, etc. please do not hesitate to let us know!

## A NOTE FROM OUR PASTORAL CARE PASTOR

Who knew a telephone call could mean so much? Carol and I were pleased to receive a call from one of our elders last week. "Hello, Dan. Just calling to check in and see how you are doing." What followed was just a friendly chat, no longer than ten minutes; but it was very meaningful. We felt special. Pastors who usually give such care, when they receive it, can be surprised how the smallest gesture can become a big blessing.

During the coronavirus shutdown, it's been a pleasure to work with Pastor Steve and Pastor Thad to use the means available – mostly electronic – to try to maintain contact with members. And it is certainly a pleasure when we pastors see members reaching out to one another and even to us.

*Dan*

## A WORD FROM OUR CHRISTIAN ED DIRECTOR

Our hearts were saddened when we realized that the pandemic was going to occupy well past our Easter celebrations. One of the loveliest events in Children's Ministry each year is our Easter Egg Hunt. It's a time to teach the children about Jesus' resurrection and to play with them in a way that reminds them how loved they are by both their God and their First Pres. Community. The Children's Ministry team decided to email the parents of our older children to see if they would like an Egg Hunt delivered to their door. For the parents who emailed an interest back, they had two options: 1) to have a pre-made kit delivered to their door or 2) for a team member to secretly hide eggs in their yard and leave a note with instructions for their child. We had twenty families request to participate: twelve received a kit and eight requested the eggs be hidden. Not only was this an opportunity to tell the children that Jesus loves them, but upon delivery we were able to wave at our families and, in some cases, have a very lovely chat (in the driveway from very far apart) and catch up for a few minutes. Pastor Steve even made a special delivery to one home for us!

We are currently debating the best move for VBS. The original date was set for June 22 – 25 but we doubt restrictions will ease before then. The second option will be to push it back to August 3 - 6. Please keep these two dates in mind as we will need LOTS OF HELP!

*Lauren*

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR SOAR MINISTRY

Where is Church? When are we going to Church? These are all questions many of us are asking and I know are being asked in my household. Well guess what? I've got great news! CHURCH IS COMING to YOU!!! That's right, it's coming to your front porch, in your living room, on your phone, through your computer, over the radio, and even on your daily walks. The FPC staff, officers and ministry teams have been working hard to bring ministry to you. We have prayed over our members and those in the community. We've brainstormed creative ways to bring a ray of light and laughter as well healthy movement for our body and minds for all our church members and community. God didn't design church to be just a building or something you just attend once a week. WE are the church. It's who WE are and who HE designed us to be. CHURCH is never closed and never will be. As you read through this newsletter you will see the church. You will see the hands and feet of Jesus at work. I hope you feel it too...the excitement and energy of the Lord working in you and through you. We love to hear from our church family. So feel free to share your own ideas, videos, and pictures. Fret not...Church at First Presbyterian Stanley is still in service and coming to a neighborhood near YOU! So welcome to CHURCH!

*Lisa and the SOAR Ministry Team*

## GOD IS STILL AT WORK!

- ♥ Youth Groups meet each Sunday Night Online with Zoom for a time of worship, Bible study, discussion and prayer. Thad also started a YouTube channel to help us understand our crazy times (and ourselves when we start going crazy): [https://youtu.be/nLF4FRH\\_Po4](https://youtu.be/nLF4FRH_Po4).
- ♥ Tomato plants were provided for our Best Years.
- ♥ Our Young Adults continue to connect with the Women's Wednesday Bible Study (thanks Annalise!) and our Crash Course for Couples is online as well: <https://youtu.be/FYnWOC2ULvI>. If you're interested in plugging in, contact Thad: [thad@fpstanley.org](mailto:thad@fpstanley.org) or text 704-615-0267.
- ♥ Easter lilies and cards were delivered by Deacons and Elders to our "over 80" and shut-in church family the week before Easter to encourage them during this time of isolation. \*\*We have already received many thank you notes expressing how special this made them feel!!
- ♥ SOAR leaders are doing an #inhomechallenge where you share videos of games or activities you are doing at home during this time. Check out SOAR's videos of balloon volleyball and frying pan tennis.
- ♥ SOAR leaders are posting videos, uplifting scriptures, web links to at home skill drills for your favorite sports and even some sports trivia on SOAR's Facebook and Instagram pages. Check out our posts, laugh a little, move a little, and be uplifted. God loves you right where you are!
- ♥ The Middle School Sunday School teachers put together "Cheer Packets" for their little class and delivered them to their front porches. Several parents expressed their thankfulness for such a thoughtful way to reach the hearts of their middle schoolers. The goodies were much appreciated!
- ♥ One youth leader mailed out handwritten, decorated notes to the middle school girls. Following this delivery, one parent found the verse shared by this leader written in her middle schoolers to-do list to help calm her anxiety.
- ♥ Sunday School teachers and Life Group leaders that find themselves uncomfortable with the technology of Zoom or other meeting apps, have reached out to their students weekly by email and phone calls. Everybody just checking on everybody and making sure they are ok.
- ♥ Image Bearer lessons for the older children continue on our private Children's Ministry Facebook page. We are also reading books to the little ones there and sharing fun ideas to keep the children engaged.

## FPC SPECIAL THANKS ARE EXTENDED TO:

- Anne Abernathy for decorating our sanctuary so beautifully for our on-line Easter worship service.
- Our worship team that continues to bless us with meaningful music.
- Luke Bynum and Phyllis Withers who have worked many long hours to film and produce our on-line worship services.
- Matt Ormsby, Kevin Rhyne, and Phyllis Withers for representing us faithfully as our corporation officers during the land purchase process.
- The Stanley Total Living Center for loaning FPC funds to pay for the balance of the purchase price of the property.
- Vicki Murphy along with Leon and Kathy Lineberger for coordinating the purchase and distribution of the Best Years' tomato plant give away.
- Trell Brooks and the Harper family for cleaning up the yard of our new property.
- Billy Puckett for making good use of this time to wax the floors at the church. They look awesome and we can't wait for you to be back and see them!



## COLLEGE GIFT COLLECTION CONTINUES

Although life is different for our college students as this school year comes to an end, we would still like to present them with a small year end treat. We have **extended our collection deadline to April 30** in hopes of receiving enough funds to do this. If you are able to help, all you have to do is make a donation (check or cash) and we'll do the rest!

Although we are not currently meeting on Sundays, you have several options for contributing:

- ⇒ Mail in your check with "College Gift" referenced on the memo line.
- ⇒ Stop by the church office and give your donation to Sandra.
- ⇒ Place your donation in the black lock box in the window of the SOAR office.

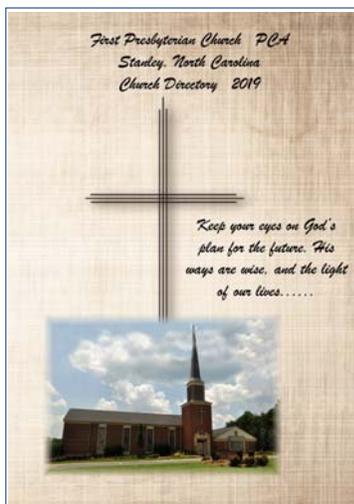
## FPC LIBRARY IS STILL OPEN

We want you to know that our church library is still open during this time of so many closings. In our best effort to keep the library a clean and safe environment, we ask that you do the following:



- Only visit Mondays - Thursdays, 10:00 am - 1:30 pm so you can check in with a staff member.
- Wash hands for 20 seconds immediately before and after your visit.
- One family in the library at a time.

After anyone visits the library, a staff member will sanitize the desk and keyboard. We hope you will take time to browse through the books and valuable resources we have available.



## DIRECTORY UPDATES REQUESTED

So many of us depend on the contact information listed in our Church Directory. Please take a minute to verify we have your information correct. If you would like to add any details such as an email address or cell phone number, please also provide that along with any changes or corrections to information already listed.

Please check your information and respond with any changes, corrections and/or additions no later than April 30. You can email this information to Sandra at [info@fpcstanley.org](mailto:info@fpcstanley.org). If you cannot send an email, you may call the church office and give it to Sandra or any staff member if she is not available. Updates will be made and new copies printed by mid-May.

## WITH LOVING THANKS

*Thank you for all the calls, cards, visits and especially your prayers following Garry's knee replacement surgery. We appreciate all the love that we felt during that time. Our church family is a blessing from God.*

*Garry and Judy Lucas*

*I have never been in jail but I have been locked in the "old folks home" for a while and I really miss all of you. I thank you for all the nice things you have done for me during my back surgeries and recovery time. I appreciate all the pretty cards you have sent me and the words of encouragement. Thank you most of all for your prayers. Please continue to pray for me to gain my strength back and be able to walk better. I am going to be really good because I don't want to be locked up again!*

*Much love,  
Ellen Beam*

*We cannot thank you enough for all you did to help us celebrate the 100th birthday of lifetime member Helen Lieurance. Though not as planned, it turned out to be a beautiful and memorable day! Having the "tech crew" plus "choir" come out along with Pastor Steve to produce the video was such fun as Mama still truly enjoys entertaining on her back patio. The 162 cards are displayed throughout her house and she cherishes every picture drawn by children, words of encouragement from newer members she has never met and fond memories shared by dear longtime friends. She remarked more than once that it was "remarkable" that so many people remembered her and that she feels very "blessed". You are part of what keeps her going and for that we are most grateful.*

*Thanks to everyone,  
Helen Lieurance and Family*

*I first want to thank the good Lord for all He has done for me. I also want to thank my pastors and church family for all the love and care you have shown to me, especially during my ongoing back problems. Wayne and Debbie [son and daughter-in-law] have been a huge help day and night and I couldn't have made it without them. The calls, cards, and prayers from my church have been an added blessing. My word to you church family is to always count on the Lord to handle your concerns!*

*Love,  
Ailene Friday*



We are still collecting information on all of the veterans in our FPC church family who are veterans. This information is being gathered for a special Stanley community Veteran's Day event being planned. If you are a veteran, active or inactive, please contact Sandra in the church office. You can call her at 704-263-4275 or email her at [info@fpcstanley.org](mailto:info@fpcstanley.org) and she can respond back with details of the information needed.

## WITH OUR CHURCH FAMILY

**Lynn Burrell** had decompression back surgery on April 3. He is already feeling some much needed relief and continued improvement is expected over the next few months.

We are excited that **Ellen Beam** has returned home following back surgery and rehabilitation stay at the TLC. She is still undergoing rehab but is THRILLED to be back at home!

**Helen Lieurance** spent one night in the hospital last week for observation and testing due to some breathing problems. She was cleared of any serious concerns, including Coronavirus.

Be in prayer for Diane Yodice's mother **Monica Fahy** who is hospitalized at Caromont with several health concerns.

## WITH OUR MISSIONARY FAMILY

As we hear from our missionaries, they tell us that they are experiencing many challenges and changes during this unusual time. They ask that we pray for them to see how God is moving and that they might find fresh ways to join Him in ministry.

**Kevin and Alisa Bentley** ask that we pray for wisdom for their son Luke and his fiancée Madi who were planning a May 17 wedding in Raleigh. They hope to at least have a small family wedding if the stay in place ban is lifted.

**Pastor Ricardo Santana** in Merida, Mexico says they have 140 cases of Covid-19 there and 14 deaths. They are expecting many, many more. Pray for our brothers and sisters there.

**Michael and Laura Cochran** are not able to have their Kids Club ministry in the UK in person, but are finding ways to continue it by making videos.

**Guercy Meme** says that so far the orphans/children in Haiti are fine. He asks for continued prayer for them and those who take care of them.

### Happy Birthday in May

02 – Ellis Comer (2014)	12 – Suzanne Dye (2003)	17 – Jake Hunt
04 – Clyde Comer	15 – Phineas Dirks (2013)	Hernando Saenz
06 – Michael Wadhams	Sam Hunt (2007)	22 – Harold Bracken Bonita Davidson

## MARCH FINANCIAL REPORT

Needed monthly for budget .....	60,967.16
Received in March for budget .....	49,352.38
Needed to date for budget .....	182,901.48
Received to date for budget .....	157,143.11
Needed monthly for Faith Promise .....	13,750.00
Received in March for Faith Promise .....	12,487.27
Needed to date for Faith Promise .....	41,250.00
Received to date for Faith Promise .....	68,431.52

# *Birthdays to Celebrate in May*

3 Jessica Rhyne	11 Danielle Abernathy Ed Kasper Kindyll Killian	18 Jane Black Houston Rust	25 Evie Abernathy Chris Boggess Becky Foster Robert Rhyne
4 Cody Bingham		19 Clint Gamage	
5 Heather Rumfelt	13 James Teague		
6 Paul Abernathy Rockie Boggess Ashlyn Jurina Britney Ludeman	14 Joyce Burt Nancy Cozart Anna-Kathryn Lamb Callan Saine	21 Abigail Ludeman Doug Tadlock	27 Madison Abernathy SaDara Tilley
7 Zac Rust	16 Jodie Graham	22 Lauren Henderson	29 Natalie Helms
8 Avery Abernathy	17 Linda Abernathy Ashlyn Treat Tricia Vandepoll	23 Evelyn Accipiter Eric Beam	31 Josh Clevenger Maelin Huss
		24 Jackie Robinson	

**The Church Family is a monthly publication of First Presbyterian Church**  
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Temporary Office Hours: 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM, Monday - Thursday  
Senior Pastor, Steve Jessen ♦ Assistant Pastor, Thad Davis ♦ Pastoral Care, Dan King  
Sunday Online Worship 10:00 AM



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# **ARMORBEARER**

**Prayer Calendar – May 2020**

*First Presbyterian Church • Stanley, NC*

Armorbearers were personal attendants of a warrior chieftain who accompanied him in dangerous missions; they held huge shields sometimes surrounding their leader to protect him. **Intercessory prayers** by church members can **protect** their leaders from “the flaming arrows of the evil one” and uphold them “that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to **proclaim** the mystery of the gospel.”(Eph 6:16, 19)

## **Prayer Prompt for May – Psalm 57**

Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge; In the shadow of your wings I will take refuge till the storms of destruction pass by. <sup>2</sup>I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me. <sup>3</sup> He will send from heaven and save me; he will put to shame him who tramples on me. God will send out his steadfast love and his faithfulness! <sup>5</sup> *Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth! ...* <sup>7</sup> My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast! I will sing and make melody! <sup>8</sup> Awake, my glory...I will awake the dawn! <sup>9</sup> I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations. <sup>10</sup> For your steadfast love is great to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds<sup>11</sup> *Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth!*

## **Pray for Pastors Steve Jessen, Thad Davis, Dan King, Chaplain Ivan Davis (TLC)**

Pray as the Holy Spirit guides you in thinking about, and praying for our pastors. Some suggestions for prayer are included, but pray also as you are aware of other particular needs and concerns they may have.

**Mon.:** To love God with all their heart, and to love others as themselves. (Matt. 27:37-39)

**Tues:** To trust the Lord completely for their wisdom, so that he will direct their daily path. (Prov. 3:5,6)

**Wed.:** To pray always, putting on the armor of the Lord to stand against the wiles of the Devil. (Eph. 6:11ff)

**Thurs.:** To love their wives and manage their family in ways that honor Christ. (Eph. 5:25, I Tim. 3:4,5)

**Fri.:** That God’s word will be their reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. (II Tim 3:16)

**Sat.:** To care faithfully for the flock and have compassion for lost sheep. (John 10:16, Lk. 15:4)

**Sun.:** To empower them to preach and teach the Gospel in the power of the Spirit. (Matt. 4:23, Rom. 10:15).

## **Prayer for Our Ministry Leaders and Staff**

Pray daily as the Holy Spirit guides you in thinking about, and praying for, our ministry leaders and staff:

**Monday:** Debbie Smith, Director, Child Development Center

**Tuesday:** Jimmie & Martha Sue Mitchell, Global Outreach

**Wednesday:** Lauren Henderson, Director of Christian Education and Children’s Ministry

**Thursday:** Lisa Revels, SOAR Director

**Friday:** Sandra Taylor, Administrative Assistant

## Prayer for Our Elders and Deacons

- 1 **Mike Gamage:** Pray for our SOAR ministry as we plan for the future in light of the Covid 19 crisis.
- 2 **Chris Graham:** For the Elders to have wisdom navigating the next weeks in overseeing our church.
- 3 **Mark Harper:** Pray for our youth, especially those missing out on senior experiences that define certain aspects of their lives, create lasting friendships and memories they take with them the rest of their lives.
- 4 **Don Hensley:** Pray that in this time of separation that our hearts will remain in one accord.
- 5 **Dillon Lamb:** Pray that everything will get back to normal soon.
- 6 **Dan Ormsby:** Please pray that I will have work to do at my business.
- 7 **Matt Ormsby:** Pray that Coronavirus restrictions will end and we will be able to have VBS this year.
- 8 **Grady Rhyne:** Pray for my grandson Nathan and all students who are anxious about school right now.
- 9 **Kevin Rhyne:** Pray for revelation of the Lord's will to the officers on how the church may best use the next door property for His kingdom building.
- 10 **Will Robinson:** Pray for our family with our new arrival still expected (or arrived).
- 11 **Ronnie Smith:** Pray for Debbie as she was scheduled to finish her final dental procedure and appointment was cancelled due to Coronavirus...it is 22 months and counting at this point.
- 12 **Tracy Withers:** Pray that after this virus is over, my family will realize the importance of the time that we have to spend with each other.
- 13 **Ryan Abernathy:** Please pray for our CDC staff that God continues to protect and provide for them and their families.
- 14 **Jeremy Abernathy:** Pray for all the shut ins and seniors and their families who aren't able to visit them during this time.
- 15 **Chris Baker:** Pray for me and other parents to have added patience and understanding dealing with working at home and homeschooling our children.
- 16 **Chip Beatty:** Pray for the ongoing work of the music team and our Deacons as we try to serve where we are needed.
- 17 **Lynn Burrell:** Pray for continued recovery from the spine surgery I had in April.
- 18 **Ken Dake:** Please pray for our youth ministry as we try to stay on track with all the Covid 19 chaos.
- 19 **Ron Ensley:** Pray protection from the Covid 19 virus for the Stanley Total Living Center, and to sustain and bless staff caring for the residents and communicating with families at this difficult time.
- 20 **Mason Friesenhahn:** Pray for wise use of time to serve faithfully at home, with my family, and in our deacons' work at church.
- 21 **Mike Gamage:** Pray for those who have or will lose jobs and income because of Covid 19 virus layoffs.
- 22 **Chris Graham:** For those who are caring for older parents during this unusual time of their quarantine.
- 23 **Mark Harper:** Praise and prayer for our technology team who allows us to function as one-body with online services. Also for those working to bring the message at church and to our homes.
- 24 **Don Hensley:** Pray for direction for Daniel (son-in-law) in his job situation.
- 25 **Dillon Lamb:** Pray for everyone whose jobs have been affected by the shutdown.
- 26 **Dan Ormsby:** Pray that our church family will be unified and stay close to each other during this time of separation.
- 27 **Matt Ormsby:** Pray that Sam and all the children of our church to learn about Jesus and trust Him.
- 28 **Grady Rhyne:** Pray for those who are caregivers for the homebound or those caregivers at TLC.
- 29 **Kevin Rhyne:** Pray for a full recovery and ongoing good health for those who contracted Coronavirus.
- 30 **Will Robinson:** Pray for our worship music team as we assist in worship recorded for online or live.
- 31 **Ronnie Smith:** Pray for local ministries we support, especially King's Daughters as they try to get their new Penny Thrift shop up and running.

### Praise and Thanksgivings

- Praise for our IT folks and the good work that they are doing on livestreaming our services.  
Don Hensley
- Praise for "virtual worship": for our musicians, tech team, and pastors who have enabled us to be joined in united and uplifting worship.
- Praise and thanks for our Elders and Deacons as they have provided help and support to our congregation.