

The Main Thing

A Publication of
Main Street Presbyterian Church
April 2020

Thoughts on Corona virus from an At-Risk Christian

Dear Christian Brothers and Sisters,

Last week, our Session saw fit to cancel all church activities except Sunday morning worship. We did so in the face of irrational panic-like actions taking place in so much of the world, and we did so wondering if we were being worldly sheep or wise Christian leaders. In the end, we followed the old maxim that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Caution seemed prudent even as others raid the stores for toilet paper and beer.

As an older man, immunosuppressed with serious underlying health issues, I fit all the boxes of those most at risk. I am supposed to be fearful and the perfect victim. I'm also an Elder shouldering some of the responsibility of shepherding the flock, so let me share with you what I will be doing next Sunday morning and over the next few weeks. Let me also share something I have been blessed to learn through my health issues and something you can do to help those of us at risk.

If God allows me to wake up next Sunday, I will thank Him that I woke up. I will pray for a happy day, enjoy my breakfast and then meet with our Session (being a small group) to discuss routine issues and pray for our morning worship service just as we do every Sunday. I won't be at Sunday worship or participate in any other large group. I will be washing my hands, carefully avoiding doorknobs and other things that are commonly touched by many people. I won't be shaking hands. Being immunosuppressed, these are things I do out of habit and are part of my normal routine.

I plan to watch our worship service over the internet. I'll probably even check out a few other church services on TV just out of Christian curiosity. Not being at our regular Sunday service gives me an opportunity to see something new and maybe even learn something.

I will enjoy my Sunday afternoon and probably take a nap. If it's warm and sunny, I may take my wife and grandchildren on a picnic and fly kites. Sunday evening, I'm hoping the whole family comes for supper, and I will be irritated if they don't help with the dishes. That's all pretty much like every Sunday for me.

Next week, and every day after that, I will try to do the same things I did last week and the week before. I will savor the small moments as I enjoy my boring routine. I'll read all about corona virus and watch the news while I will wonder why so many people do so many foolish things. And, like every other day, if I sneeze or feel tired or have a pain, I will wonder, "Is this it? Is today the day something bursts, something fails, is today my day to die and go to heaven?"

Three years ago, I suffered liver and kidney failure and at one point was not expected to live more than a few days. Having recovered from a serious health crisis and now living day by day in fragile health, I know one thing for certain. God numbered our days before we were born, and we must be ready for this life to end. The apostle James tells us, "we are like vapor, here today and gone tomorrow." This worldwide, foolish, manmade crisis should remind us that any moment could be our last one on this earth.

So, what is the Christian response? How are we to respond to cancelled church services, travel bans, stock market crashes, wedding cancellations, no basketball, and no toilet paper? What are we to think when thousands die and deep in our hearts, we worry, "will it get me?"

We live! We enjoy! We sing and we dance when the music moves us. We thank Him for our Savior and think long and hard about the love that pinned Him to the cross. We hug the ones most precious to us and tell them we love them. We listen to the birds sing, feel the warmth of the sunshine and marvel at the flowers bursting from the winter ground. We read a good book, play golf with friends, do things we enjoy, and work, planning for tomorrow. Most importantly, we live in peace with God no matter how dark and stained our sinful past has been.



Happy Hearts

Bess Swedenburg

It's just that simple and we can do it because we are His beloved children and nothing, especially corona virus, can separate us from the hand that made us to be with Him forever.

In reading my words you might think, "what a strong believer, what a godly Elder," and you would be wrong. Like all of us, though I am not of this world, I do live in this world. The Apostle Paul urges us to fight the good fight of faith, to war against the flesh, and to live in the Spirit. Like most of us, I wonder why God allows corona virus or cancer. Why are there wars and sufferings that never seems to end. Where are you God, I sometimes ask. Did Jesus really walk out of that tomb, does He really sit at the right hand of a God Almighty? Daily, my faith is shaken and daily it must be renewed.

I've read several recent articles discussing how to help those at risk and I do need help. I need to see my friends, people I respect and love sitting beside me in worship. I need to hear the prayers of good men as they humbly cry out to the Lord. I need to hear scripture read and preached. I need to hear people confess remarkable, miraculous things not of this ordinary world. Things like the Son of God rising from the dead and old dry bones leaping from the grave. I need to hear about trumpets shouting, angels singing, and that one day soon, that same Son of God will come roaring to reclaim this lost world. I need to remind others and be reminded over and over, that the grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of the Lord is forever. That's the kind of help I need.

Three nights before I received the liver transplant that saved my life, I struggled to be conscious for more than a few moments at a time. It was hard to focus my thoughts or even to speak, but I was keenly aware I was on the verge of death and begged Him to take me. Through the fog of suffering, I became aware of a dear, lifelong friend standing by my hospital bed and I believed with all my heart, if I could just speak the words, if I could just make my voice work, it would be the last words I ever said to him.

Today, I remember well those words I struggled to speak that night and I say them to myself often. I say them every time I feel bad or have an ache or a pain, every time my borrowed liver twinges or moves within me, every time I think, "could this be it?"

So, I say them to you now. "I'm ready to go. I'm at peace with God and I pray you are too."

Your Brother in Christ,
Dan Williams

One of our faithful charter members began every single day with one of my favorite verses, Psalm 119:24, "This is the day the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it." What a good practice to begin each day rejoicing, regardless of our situations, circumstances, or relationships. Why can we always rejoice each morning? Because God is so absolutely in control that he has given us another day and we have his many promises to rest upon and celebrate. Life isn't about being comfortable, having all the things we want or need and have become accustomed to enjoying! Life is about knowing Jesus as our Savior and trusting Him in all things. This is why we rejoice every day and especially today! Do you know the person who quoted this verse every day? Mrs. Amy Stepp and she is the person who introduced me to this verse decades ago when I was a child.

Another Happy Hearts member, who is also rejoicing in glory, frequently advised her grandchildren and others to "live like you are a child of the King". She said it often to me during those years she was longing to be in glory with her loved ones and her Lord. It was great advice and I think it is so appropriate for today. What was she implying? She was encouraging us to live knowing that our God is sovereign over all things, that the Sovereign Creator loves us more deeply and purely than we are able to fully comprehend - to the extent that He sent His Son to die for our sins, and that in His amazing and awesome grace He has adopted us as his children because of Jesus and His act of redemption! She taught so much in so few words. Do you know who this saintly woman was? Mrs. Sadie Brewer who was a precious mentor to me for many years just as Miss Amy was. There are many others but not enough space and time to share all! Maybe another time?

As we cope with the corona virus, their words are good advice for us to practice. We now have time to reflect on many things that in our normal routines would not have crossed our minds. We certainly have adequate time for more devotions and Bible studies - more prayer times.

In order to keep us connected, I suggest we text, call, or write a note to others in our group. Like the Brewers did, we can ask each other if there are special prayer requests. When the sun shines, the birds sing, the leaves turn that new green we only see in spring, wild flowers pop up, and the weeds grow abundantly, the dogwood trees bloom before Easter, we hear the thunder and wind, the rain falls, we can rejoice knowing that God is in control of all these things and even the corona virus. Read Romans 8:28 thru 39 and praise the God of the universe for his loving kindness to his children, joint heirs with Christ Jesus.

I miss seeing each of you and I look forward to the day when we can be together! But until then remember why your heart is happy! "Because He lives, I can face tomorrow" and "today" I might add. He has promised to never forsake us, and He is true to his promises, so relax and praise Him!!! Take the necessary precautions to remain healthy, both physically and spiritually. Remember "He's got the whole world in His hands!"

Much love to each of you and prayers for your well-being.



Women in the Church

I am so grateful I have my WIC ladies to write to during this quarantine! I feel connected to y'all even though I don't see everybody. Please remember our God is in control of all things!

Our Wednesday night group is meeting over zoom and continuing our study. Please join us if you can. This has been a wonderful time of much needed study of God's word.

The link has been sent out in an email and it is easy to figure out the technical aspect -- if I can do it, I think you can too.

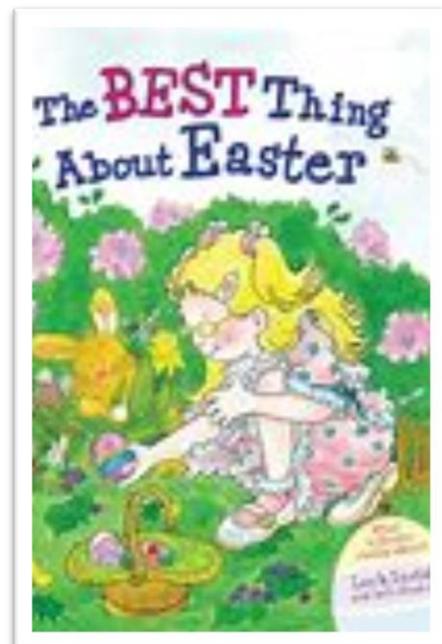
Easter may be very different for all of us this year. I remember reading a book to my kids called The Best Thing About Easter. In the book it tells that the chocolate, the egg hunts, the pretty clothes and food are not the reason for Easter! The best thing is Jesus rose from the grave! Hallelujah! If we are still at home watching on our phones, we still will say "Hallelujah"!

Stay safe and healthy,

Janie Williams

A Note for our Nursery Volunteers

A new schedule will be posted as soon as we are allowed to gather again as a church family. It will be exciting to see the names of the new volunteers on the roster. If you signed up to work in the nurseries, but have not completed your paperwork, please do so soon. Our infants and toddlers need you!



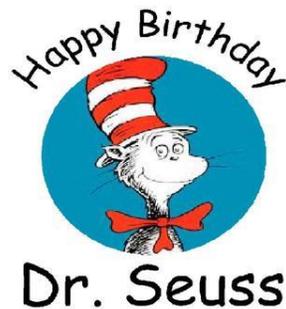


March 2nd was Dr. Seuss' birthday! We celebrated him all week long and even had a special visit from the Cat in the Hat. The kids had so much fun!

March was cut short due to COVID-19. The teachers are missing our little friends so much. We are trying to stay in touch with our families through our social media pages. We are posting videos, pictures, and activities to do at home with their children. Teachers are even putting packets together for the parents to pick up and continue where we left off before spring break. We are praying to be able to finish out our year, but M^SC^S will remain closed until it is safe for our students to return. I pray everyone is staying well!



In His Love,
"Miss" Anna Gaines



A Note from Our Video-Tech Team

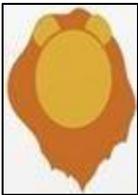


Toto, I've a Feeling We're Not in Kansas Anymore

by Ron Simpson

The older I get and the more bizarre and macabre the world becomes, the more I identify with that quote from the monochromatic born young lady in the Wizard of Oz. Sometimes this world feels like a dream where we woke up in an odd place and can't figure out how we got there. COVID-19 has had a genuinely surrealistic effect on our world. We may feel like we lack the courage, the skills, or the heart to face the new challenges it has brought to us. We may, however, be encouraged as we face new challenges.

Courage



Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you. Deuteronomy 31:6

Our church has a long history of courageously facing changing circumstances. Looking back, we may take those past challenges for granted. We know that our church was born out of a ministry to reach native Americans in the region. That took courage! Our buildings testify to several stages of architecture style and building practices that have changed over the decades. No doubt, the decisions necessary to make all those styles and methods work together were challenging in the least. Our church has faced, shared, and endured the historical struggles of our society for almost two centuries. Social distancing due to COVID-19 is just another one of those challenges on our timeline. One of the ways we are dealing with that challenge is through developing our version of virtual worship.

Skills



And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought. - 1 Chronicles 28:9

In just a few years, we moved from audio-only recordings of sermons to live video streaming our entire worship service. Initially, streaming was done as an experiment to see if it would benefit the homebound. From there, streaming became an opportunity for members of our church to stay plugged into church life while traveling. Family members who could not be present for funerals then began requesting recordings or streaming of the service. International viewers have expanded our presence, as have members who have moved away and check in with us on occasion. As recording and streaming have become a regular ministry offered by the church, we have gone from a one-man operation using a cell phone to a team of audio and video technicians. Who would have ever imagined that all this work was preparation for us to use pre-recorded corporate worship as a response to COVID-19? The scarecrow complained he needed a brain. Yet throughout the movie, he is the one who willingly faces each challenge and thinks up a plan of action. Rather than complain, "We don't know how to do this.," with willing minds, the audio-video volunteers have brought us to where we are today. Their efforts prepared us to make a smooth transition into pre-recording our worship services so that our congregation can have a shared worship experience each week.

On Thursday, March 19, 2020, 10 members of the congregation came together to record a worship experience that was posted on YouTube on March 22. In the first 24 hours of posting that video, we had 181 clicks on the link. Out of those 181 links, over 40 hours of viewing time took place. Reportedly, many of you used this as a family worship experience. I hope you took advantage of the chance to read scripture together, read a confession of faith as part of the church, sing the hymns and spiritual songs, and hear a timely, comforting message from our pastor.

Heart!



And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. - Matthew 22:37

Worshiping, in this way, is not the same as congregational worship. It should never be used as a replacement for the real thing unless there are no other options. We are getting a taste of what it is to be a homebound member of the congregation. The most significant element I noticed missing from the experience was the chance to see or hear from each

other. In this, virtual worship indeed lacks heart. You probably noticed that too. The interaction between fellow believers was sorely missing. Like Dorothy, the feeling that "...we're not in Kansas anymore." hit hard. The longing to "be home" with our church family was powerful. I want to give some suggestions to consider making this experience a bit richer and more heartfelt. Hopefully, we can connect a little while we are apart.

1. When you watch the video, sign in in the comments section of the video. Drop a greeting message. Let us know you were there and had a chance to take part in the presentation. Tell us about your family worship experience. Who was there? Who led the singing? How about taking a picture of your family gathered for worship and share it with us on social media? I think that would be encouraging to all of us.
2. Use the "Like" button. I don't think I am the only one who occasionally mumbles a Presbyterian "Amen!" during the preaching of God's Word. Click on "Like" and let us know you were there and enjoyed hearing God's Word preached.
3. If you have not subscribed to our YouTube channel, then be sure to click on that option the next time you watch one of the videos. That way, every time we post a new video, you will have a notification and can locate it more easily.
4. Lastly, share the worship experience with others. Right now, it may be one of the best times in history to evangelize. I am sure you have friends and neighbors who are looking for answers in this odd time. Share the links so they can also have an opportunity to worship in their home.

Hopefully, this time will soon pass, and we can resume regular corporate worship. I look forward to the time that the church family can be together here at 701 Main Street. There is nothing else like worshipping together.

There is no place like home!



I was in hopes of sharing the upcoming April luncheon with you, however, we have had to cancel plans. This also means that we will close our 2019-2020 meals until September.

The times that we've enjoyed this year have seen attendance averaging over 100 people. The food was wonderful, and I saw a lot more fellowship this year. We seem to "rush" most of the time and don't get to visit with others for very long. I was glad to see this change.

My thanks to so many who worked and volunteered this year. Our next luncheon will be held in **September**.

Have a wonderful spring and summer. I look forward to September when we can gather for our 4 F's...Fellowship, Family, Fun...without the Fuss!

Lynda



In accordance with the recommendations of the Session regarding group gatherings, the Men's Prayer Breakfast planned for April has been postponed until September. At that time, we will start a new semester of monthly breakfasts.

The Men's Prayer Breakfast is a great ministry for the men and boys of the church. It is a time of fellowship and corporate prayer. Though the physical event has been temporarily interrupted, the significance has not. Please continue to pray as if we were together and reach out to each other for mutual assurance and friendship.

See you in September,

Mike

Hi from “Miss” Colleen

I have to start by saying, “BOY! I MISS YOU!” With the doors of our churches, and our homes being somewhat closed to keep everyone healthy it sure is quiet here at Main Street! I always look so forward to our church family meeting on Wednesday evenings, on Sunday mornings for Sunday School and Morning Worship, and at other times during the week when people come by the church and we are able to connect even briefly. 😊

One thing we know for sure today, is that our Holy Week celebrations are going to look different this year. I know I’ll miss parading with all the children in our church on Palm Sunday, singing “Hosanna to God in the highest,” I’ll miss participating in the Lord’s Supper on Maundy Thursday, and worshiping together during the joy-filled resurrection service on Easter Sunday. What a stark reminder at this time that God means for us to live in community with one another – “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” Hebrews 10:24-25

But here’s the good news: The Good News remains the same, regardless of our circumstances! The Word that brings us hope for our eternal future hasn’t changed. As parents we are to teach and remind our children of these glorious truths -

God is Patient—He is slow to anger and slow to punish.

God is Merciful—He is kind to undeserving sinners.

God is our Deliverer—God saves His sinful people from the punishment they deserve.
(Jesus’ death on the cross)

God is Victorious—God always wins, even over Satan, sin, and death. (Jesus’ resurrection)

God is King—God rules over everyone. (Jesus is reigning now as King of kings!)

**“LET MY TEACHING FALL LIKE RAIN AND MY WORDS DESCEND
LIKE DEW, LIKE SHOWERS ON NEW GRASS, LIKE ABUNDANT RAIN
ON TENDER PLANTS.”**

Deuteronomy 32:2



FAITH PROMISE

Our Shut-Ins:

Louise Armstrong
Betty Weaver

Keith Cole
Phillip Goodwin
Debbie Jenkins
John Mark Russell
Brad Talley
Faith Whitlock

Mom to be:

Katie Singletary

President Donald Trump
Officials in Washington
Governor Tate Reeves
Mayor Robert Smith
Police Chief Fred Shelton
Sheriff Eddie Hawkins
State, City, and County Officials

Helping Hands
Life Choices Pregnancy Center
Palmer Home

All Churches and Pastors in Columbus

All Medical Personnel

Please be in faithful prayer concerning your part in Faith Promise giving for Main Street's missions programs. Faith Promise is the tool we use to support our missionaries, above the tithe, not as a part of it. Pledges enable Main Street to give as a body to spread the Gospel.

The pledges are totaled and only that total is shared with the Missions Committee. It is then used to set a budget for the support payments to our missionaries for the coming year. Those we support are listed in the bulletin each week.

There are pledge cards and envelopes to hold them in the pew pockets. If you fill out a card, return it to Russ Russell or place it in the offering plate. Online pledges and giving is another option now available. To make a pledge or donation, the Main Street website link is <https://www.mainstreetpres.org/online-giving>.

The pledges are confidential. While no one will come to press you for payment, they are used to make a specific pledge to our missionaries of an amount that we expect to share with them. **Please be mindful that the Missions Committee will be setting the new budget in June, so all pledges need to be returned on or before Sunday, May 31.**

Faith Promise giving is a way of passing on the blessings God has poured out on you.

-Howard Eyrich

Budget Report

March

Offerings this Month

\$ 40,534

Be joyful in hope,
Patient in affliction,
faithful in prayer.

Romans 12:12 NIV

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Matthew 11:28-30 ESV

Oh come, let us worship
and bow down;
let us kneel before
the LORD, our Maker!
For He is our God,
and we are the people
of His pasture,
and the sheep of His hand.
Psalm 95:6-7 ESV

Have you not known?
Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God,
The Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
His understanding is unsearchable.
He gives power to the faint,
and to him who has no might He
increases his strength.
Even youths shall faint and be weary,
and young men shall fall exhausted;
but they who wait for the LORD shall
renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like
eagles;
they shall run and not be weary;
they shall walk and not faint.

Isaiah 40:28-31 ESV

I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From where does my help come?
My help comes from the LORD,
Who made heaven and earth.

Psalm 121:1-2 ESV

“Be still, and know that I am God.
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!”

Psalm 46:10 ESV



April 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3 <i>Bill & Jami Laws</i>	4
5 <i>Palm Sunday</i>	6 <i>Sandra Pilkinton</i>	7	8 <i>Beth Ferguson</i>	9 <i>Maundy Thursday</i> <i>Richard Fleming</i>	10 <i>Good Friday</i>	11
12 <i>Easter</i> <i>Gee & Becca Allgood</i>	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23 <i>Paige Pilkinton</i>	24 <i>Tom & Robin Tait</i>	25
26 <i>Jennifer White</i>	27 <i>Brinton & Meryl Fisackerly</i>	28 <i>Austin Krohn</i>	29	30		

