

## A NOTE FROM THE PASTORS' OFFICE

### The Power of Testimonies

If you have been watching any of the political conventions lately you have seen many people give testimonies of their life and connections to a political candidate or party. Testimonies are powerful! They have weight, credence, and persuasion to them that mere talking points do not possess. We need to hear testimonies – especially within the church. Powerful stories of how God has worked in each other's lives in spite of hardship brought on by a fallen world or sinful deeds done by us. His grace and salvation are still at work in us and others.

If you are at all familiar with my family, then you know the challenges that we have faced regarding my wife Stefanie's illness. It has not been easy. Yet, God has indeed been faithful, and we have seen His hand upon us. He has given us what we need when we have needed it. We continue to look to him to provide for us all that we lack. But instead of hearing from me, it would be best (and much more beautifully!) said by my dear wife.

*The following is a testimony and update from Stefanie Smit...*

I hope this letter finds you all doing well and even thriving in the midst of these challenging times. Unprecedented for sure but already foreseen and held within the grasp of an all-knowing and all-caring Creator. The purpose of my letter is to give you all an update on my health and share some of what's on my heart and ways you can continue to be in prayer for me and our family. We haven't always been the best about updates in the past...in many ways the past two years we've been hanging in the midst of rocky terrain regarding my health and uncertainty regarding my future and were treading water and trying not to drown with the overwhelming flood of symptoms, protocols, financial strain, and the disappointment of it all. The emotional toll has been great and at times when our hearts are yet still tender it's not always easy to communicate that which is still hard. Yet we pray daily for peace, healing, and contentment in the midst of our trials.

I'll begin this letter with the praises I am able to share because it's so important to always acknowledge the good...even in the hard! As of today, I am completely off all prescription medication and am slowly healing using all-natural treatments and modalities. This is a substantial praise considering how dependent I was on high dose antibiotic therapy this time last year. My energy levels are higher than they've been in 3 years and I'm able to keep up with the daily tasks around the house that I haven't in a while. Most of you know Joel's a great preacher but you may be surprised to know what a good housekeeper and cook he can also be! :) I'm incredibly grateful for the support of my family who has pitched in tremendously and supported me as I've been weak. My sensitivities to my environment continue to slowly decrease over time as my Lyme and CIRS heal and inflammation decreases. I continue my protocols daily and diligently work through my treatments, supplements, and detoxing (sometimes it feels like a part-time job!) but find great relief and improvement through them.

We recently had a bump in the road and a setback in my progress about 4 weeks ago that will have to be worked through. I'm already beginning to turn a corner and again making strides, but it put an unanticipated detour in our path that was a bit of disappointment.

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My body is yet very sensitive and over-reactive and it's imperative that we prioritize the environment so that it's conducive to healing so I continue making improvement. It's a fine balance of seeking to get out and about and wanting to enjoy the strides in my health yet also respecting that my body isn't quite where I want it to be and that healing takes time! That time has felt like an eternity for us in many ways, yet I know it's a drop in the bucket in the grand scheme of things.

We've wrestled greatly over the past years with so many questions like so many of you when life doesn't go the ways you envision and the way you hoped and dreamed it would. Dreams sometimes don't come true, plans often don't come to fruition, and darkness and clouds loom overhead for days, hours, weeks and even years for many of us. It's been these moments and this ongoing seasons in our life that we've had to rely on what we know in our mind rather than the grief and disappointment we have felt in our hearts. The truth of the gospel spoken in and over us for years is tucked away into the recesses of our hearts has been the bedrock foundation of truth that has given us hope in the midst of this severe trial. It's doesn't take it away per se but rather has sustained us and given us hope that even in our pain, our great weakness, and our confusion that we don't have to fully understand or comprehend it all to have simple childlike faith that our Father knows best and does all things for our good and His glory. Our perceptions of what is good for us and His wise providence are two different realities. We only see in part now...but soon face to face. This mysterious cloud that fogs our vision and understanding will soon be made clear to us in glory.

We've appreciated every card, call, email, gift, kind word, encouragement and support...none has been lost on us and has ministered to our weary hearts. From the bottom of our heart and with deep gratitude...thank you! Most of all we appreciate your prayers and humbly ask that you would continue them on our behalf. We do see the light at the end of the tunnel. Healing takes time (especially with Lyme!) and we are yet still learning daily to practice contentment with where I am in that journey. I eagerly anticipate the day when I can sit beside you all singing to our God, receiving the word and communing together. It is a day I think about a lot and quite often...and that brings my heart great joy just thinking about.

So many of you ask regularly how to pray for us. I wanted to include prayer requests in this update until I'm able to be back with you all in person again so that you can support us in the greatest way possible. Please be in prayer for the following:

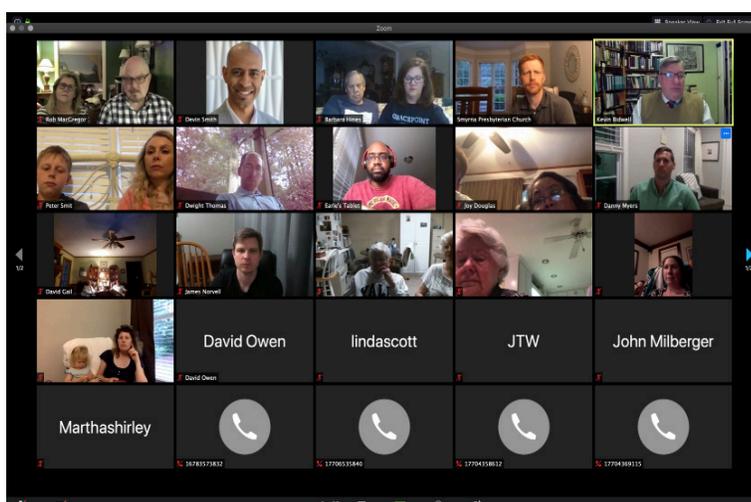
- Prayer that I would continue to turn a corner and make big steady strides after my recent set back.
- Prayer for my sensitivities to decrease significantly allowing me to get out more without any negative repercussions.
- Prayer that my physician would be able to begin the next part of my protocol soon.
- Prayer that we would continue to be joyful, contentment, and possess hope even in the midst of great loss and trials.
- Prayer that we would better be able to minister to you, our church body, through our own sorrow and grief with greater compassion and empathy.

Now that I'm am over the worst of my illness and don't battle pain and fatigue to the same severity as I did last year, I am able to think a bit more clearly these days and to function a bit more normal too. It is my hope that until I am able to join you all, I can sit down occasionally and give you current updates on our situation and ways you can be in prayer for us!

## Wednesday Night Online Devotion & Prayer

Smyrna Pres is continuing taking its Wednesday Night Devotion & Prayer Time on line. Pastor Joel is hosting weekly Zoom calls in an effort to connect the church body while we are apart.

Details and reminders for the meeting are sent by email. If you know anyone who would like to be added to that list, they should let us know at [info@smyrnapres.org](mailto:info@smyrnapres.org).



# CHURCH NEWS

## Lord's Day Service

Smyrna Pres continues to offer in person and virtual worship on the Lord's day at 11:00a.m. Please remember there are measures in place to limit person-to-person contact. You can find more in-depth information on our web-site. If you plan to worship by watching the live-stream or through the Listen Line (712-432-3410, church code 04410). You can also find the service on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Sermon Audio. Links to all of them can be found on our website's Live-stream Page <https://www.smyrnapres.org/live-stream>.

## Women Of The Word

Women of the Word will be starting back up on September 8th! We will be studying foundational Gospel truths through the book of Galatians. There will be an in-person discussion group (with social distancing and other practices in place) on Tuesday mornings (10-11:30am) at the church. There will also be a virtual discussion group option (via Zoom) on Tuesday evenings (7-8pm). Limited childcare will be provided on Tuesday mornings. Visit the church website to sign-up. If you have any questions, please contact Britta Lee ([JordanandBritta@gmail.com](mailto:JordanandBritta@gmail.com)).

## Men's Fall Fellowship

The tentative dates for the Men's Fall Fellowship are Monday, September 21st; Friday, October 23rd; and Monday day, November 16th. Venue and details to follow.

## Fellowship Kick Off For Youth & Childrens' Ministry

Fall Kick Off For Youth And children's Ministry will begin Wednesday, September 9th with details to follow. Children's Church will begin on Sunday, September 13th.

## Grocery Shopping Help

If you or a member of our church community that you know is more at risk of sickness and needs someone to shop & deliver groceries for them we'd like to help. We can connect you with a volunteer shopper. Call Caroline Wesley at 205-601-8818 or email [caroline.n.wesley@gmail.com](mailto:caroline.n.wesley@gmail.com). Please have cash or check available to reimburse your volunteer shopper.

## Rev. Jean Jacob Paul

Thank you Smyrna Pres for partnering with Reformation Hope to assist Rev. Jean Jacob Paul's family. Your support of \$5,140 enabled Reformation Hope to assume the costs of all funeral expenses in Haiti and in United States, repatriation of Jean's remains, and ongoing support for Jean's widow, Jocelyne.

## Infant Baptisms



*Ginny Johnston March 2020  
Daughter of Hill & Virginia Johnston*



*Piper Grace Thelen - August 2020  
Daughter of Max & Allie Thelen*

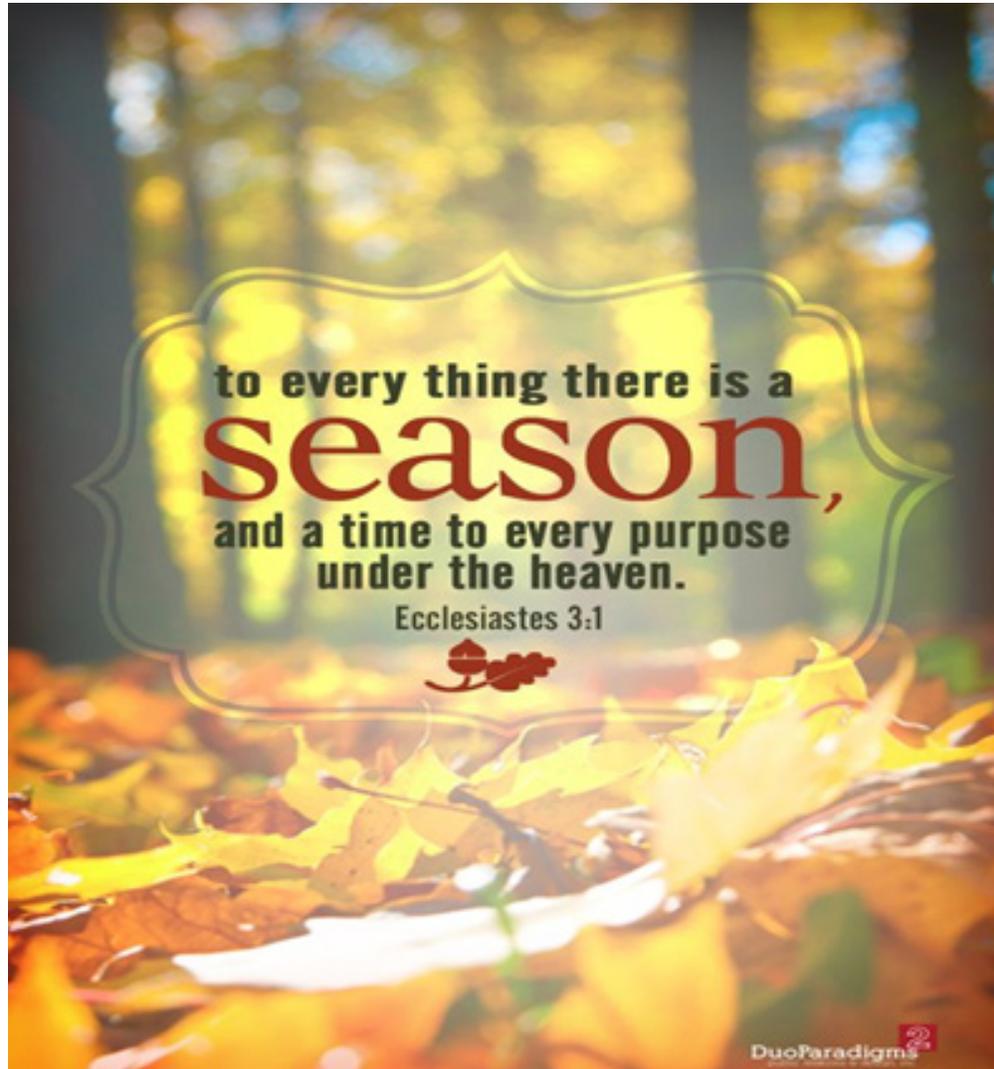
# September 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6 11:00 a.m. In Person & Livestream Worship Service	7 	8 Women of the Word In Person 10 to 11:30 am & Zoom Virtual 7 to 8:00 p.m.	9 In Person Youth & Children's Ministry 6:15pm  7 p.m. On-Line Devotion & Prayer	10	11	12
13 11:00 a.m. In Person & Livestream Worship Service	14	15 Women of the Word In Person 10 to 11:30 am & Zoom Virtual 7 to 8:00 p.m.	16 In Person Youth & Children's Ministry 6:15pm  7 p.m. On-Line Devotion &	17	18	19
20 11:00 a.m. In Person & Livestream Worship Service	21 Men's Night Gathering 7:30 p.m.	22 Women of the Word In Person 10:00 to 11:30 am & Zoom Virtual 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. 	23 In Person Youth & Children's Ministry 6:15pm  7 p.m. On-Line Devotion & Prayer	24	25	26
27 11:00 a.m. In Person & Livestream Worship	28	29 Women of the Word In Person 10 to 11:30 am & Zoom Virtual 7 to 8:00 p.m.	30 In Person Youth & Children's Ministry 6:15pm  7 p.m. On-Line Devotion & Prayer			
					<b>NOTE: Many events &amp; activities outside of the 11 a.m. worship will be canceled/postponed until further notice. Some may be offered virtually.</b>	

# SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Daniel Newland
- 4 Benjamin Lee
- 5 Britta Lee
- 8 Olen "Gene" Hall
- 8 Randy Whitfield
- 8 Marsha Gleason
- 12 Mike Becker
- 13 Virginia Ann Soileau
- 15 Sarah Kee
- 15 Davina-Eya Bediam
- 15 Myrtle Burch
- 19 Crystal Katrek
- 19 Ella Becker
- 21 Arnold Hamby
- 22 Mick Anderson
- 23 Madison Zang
- 25 Caleb Houck
- 26 Matthew "Matty"  
Merchant
- 28 Audrea Bediam

# Welcome Autumn September 22nd



Ecclesiastes 3:1  
Scripture of the Month

# Bible

O	L	A	S	H	M	O	S	E	S	M	G	M	S
A	S	S	T	S	I	M	O	N	T	L	A	T	E
E	W	N	C	N	G	E	N	E	S	I	S	N	B
R	E	E	A	O	H	I	M	H	N	O	H	A	A
D	H	N	E	D	M	T	H	O	M	A	S	N	R
J	T	O	P	E	T	E	R	N	N	A	T	E	T
E	T	R	E	V	E	L	A	T	I	O	N	V	H
R	A	L	G	O	D	U	A	D	A	M	U	O	O
U	M	H	A	I	M	E	R	E	J	O	G	C	L
S	T	H	A	D	D	A	E	U	S	A	N	W	O
A	L	L	A	E	E	D	E	N	H	D	D	R	M
L	L	T	B	E	T	H	L	E	H	A	M	V	E
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M	H	N	H	O	J	H	J	P	H	I	L	I	P

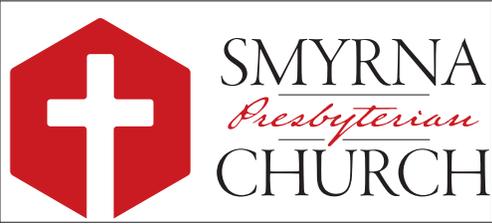
COVENANT  
SIMON  
PHILIP  
REVELATION  
GOD  
JAMES  
JERUSALEM  
GENESIS  
ACTS  
THADDAEUS  
BETHLEHAM  
PETER  
BARTHOLOMEW  
THOMAS  
JOHN  
MATTHEW  
EDEN  
ADAM  
MOSES  
JEREMIAH

Play this puzzle online at : <http://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/662/>

Smyrna Presbyterian Church  
3130 Atlanta Road SE  
Smyrna, GA 30080  
770.435.2251 | [info@smyrnapres.org](mailto:info@smyrnapres.org)

Find us on social media!





3130 Atlanta Road SE  
Smyrna, GA 30080

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**