



"The Grapevine"

April 2020

F.P.C is praying for all of you! We hope you all are staying healthy while "sheltering in place" until this pandemic subsides. If you need anything, please call the Church Office @ 835-3247.

Class of 2020 Graduates - Scholarship Opportunity

Through designated Memorial Funds, First Presbyterian Church of Tracy, provides scholarships to all High School graduating seniors who plan to attend college or other post-secondary education and who are members or are active in the life of our church. To apply for this lifetime opportunity, please call the Church Office to have an application mailed to you. Please turn your scholarship applications in by May 1, 2020.

Happy Birthday:

- 2- Liz Hanson
- 3- Bernice White
- 4- Greg McCreary
- 6- Ina Brekke-Danforth
- 10- Rowena Donaldson
- 11 Raj Ambrose
- 12- Carol Gutierrez
- 15- Andre deVos
- 17- Marietta McLellan
Sharon Little
- 20- Tracy Thomsen
- 21- Kayla McGuinness
- 22- Harold Reich
Yvonne Clinton
- 28- Saro Ambrose
- 30- Sunday Borges
Cole Link
Kathy Juarez

Happy Anniversary:

12 – Roy & Marie Patterson



The Church Office is still keeping our regular office hours, but ask that all business be conducted through email or phone, only. If you are inquiring about how to send your offerings, you may drop off in the mail slot of my office door, send by mail, or place in our locked mailbox across the street.

Thank you, and God Bless You!

“PD’s Pickings”

So, *how have you been lately?* Just fine? Nothing unusual going on? Steady as she goes? Business as usual? Keeping busy? Travel plans?

Yeah, me neither.

I have been joking with people that I was not expecting to give up church for Lent!

The current situation we find ourselves in as a community and a country is starting to be compared to WW2, and the comparison is apt. Although we’ve had disruptive moments more recently than that which have affected the whole country, not since WW2 has something so comprehensively *involved* the whole country. Every household, every business, every organization, every state and local government has had to adjust to a very different “new normal,” and quickly. Every one of us is being asked to do our part.

All of us have been called upon to put the “we” before the “me” in a radical way.

In doing so, we are unexpectedly tapping into a core theme of the Church of Jesus Christ as a community of Jesus-followers and expression of God’s love here on planet earth. “We over me” is why Christ endured the events of Holy Week beginning on Palm Sunday.

When Christ came and walked among us, suffered for us, died for us, and rose from the grave for us, he was all about the “we,” not the “him.” He identified with us and even took upon himself the disease of sin “we” have carried, spread, and suffered from. This has infected not only our own selves but the very world we live in. Jesus gave his life to cure us from it, and rose from the grave to prove he had conquered it, so that we would have real, living hope.

It may seem convenient to apply a “virus” or “disease” analogy to what our faith teaches right now, but it’s actually an analogy that has long been understood among pastors, theologians, and teachers in the church. Sin has never been just about how long my “naughty list” has gotten since last Christmas. It’s a condition we all share, and have no power to cure ourselves of. On our own, we can at best only manage the symptoms and limit our contribution to spreading it. But Christ came to *cure* us of all that. We still feel its effects and consequences in this “time between the times,” and struggle with ourselves and others because of this. But we have the full assurance that this virus *has been* (past tense) conquered by Jesus Christ. That’s why, despite the terrible events of the cross, we call that day *Good Friday*.

When we someday join the Church triumphant, sin is out of our system completely, and we are with God fully redeemed and made new, this virus nor any other will ever threaten us again. It will be eradicated, along with the death and suffering it brings. That means spirit, mind, and body. That’s what we celebrate this Easter: God has done it. It is accomplished. Christ has conquered sin and death, and reigns in glory. The coronavirus has not changed that one bit.

Come what may, dear friends, we are safe in God’s hands. That doesn’t mean things will be easy or painless, but it does mean that Christ is in it with us and that *resurrection* has the last word. We will come through this together, and our hope in Christ is sure—future fact. Whatever the future holds, Christ is already there.

May that give you peace that surpasses understanding and living hope in these strange times.

In it with you, praying for you...

Pastor Doug

