



"The Grapevine"

March 2021

Daylight Saving Time Begins:

Sunday, March 14



Happy Birthday To:

- 1- ONALEE KOSTER
- 2- DAVID EDWARDS
- 6- DAISY HAMILTON
LYNDA MENDOZA
- 16- ROBERT OPIE
CHERI HARRIES
- 18- RICK HANSON
ANDREW BRANDES
- 21- TRICIA WINKLER
- 23- SHIRLEY GAHM
- 28- STEVEN PAYNE
- 30- CHAR BISBEE
JUSTIN PATTERSON

Happy Anniversary



- 9- ANDRE & SANDRA DEVOS

2021 "PER CAPITA"

\$25.90/ Per Member

March Dates/Events:

Pastor Doug's Wednesday Devotionals
Wednesday's @ 7pm (online)

Communion Sunday/ Deacons Offering
1st Sundays of the month
March 7

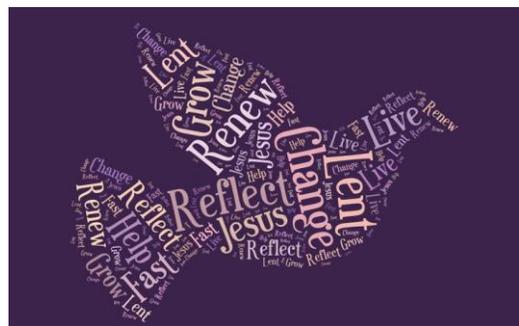
Daylight Saving Time Begins
March 14

Palm Sunday
March 28

SAVE THE DATE:

Zephyr Point Family Camp

July 11-16, 2021



“PD’s Pickings”

Dear Siblings in Christ:

Our strange times continue. We’ve been beaten and battered by the relentless waves of his storm and have lots to repair or rebuild on our ship. But the waves are relenting. The storm is passing. The clouds are breaking. The sun is peeking. There is optimism now like perhaps we’ve not felt in a long time.

Soon we will trade our former “new” normal (which has not been new for a long time now) for a NEW “old normal.” As we do so, we can begin turning attention toward the “what next”... in our lives, and in our congregation.

Short term, it is my hope and expectation that our (re)reopening date is a matter of weeks away, and permanent. We will continue to respect the legal limits we are under and practice safety measures appropriate for our circumstances. But it’s coming soon.

Longer term, as society fully reopens around us we will too. We will be able to relax restrictions and eventually function on Sunday mornings largely as we once did. Services will return to a familiar form. Fellowship hour will return. Full use of building and offices will be possible again.

We have learned a lot. We know things experientially now that before we took for granted or only knew intellectually, like the importance of gathered, intentional worship together. We’ll not soon take it for granted again.

We’ve learned new ways to communicate and supplement, though hardly replace, gathered connection. These tools will continue to be useful, especially since they’re more familiar to us now.

We’ve learned that even though it may be less tangible to us, we can actually reach many more through our worship than we realized if we take online ministry seriously. While live “attendance” numbers of online worship has consistently averaged in the mid-upper teens or maybe low 20’s, there is often more than one person each per “attendee:” one computer or device represents two or more watching $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the time. More importantly, many, many more are accessing the services non-live, all week long. We’re consistently reaching over 120 by end of every week, some cresting 140 or 150. Most are from our locale but about 25% are not. The number of people who “Like” our page is at 256; almost twice our membership. These are people who want to make sure they know when we drop a service or devo or announcement. More are nonmembers than members. Our page’s “reach” has doubled since last year.

As we return to gathered worship we will not want to lose this important avenue of ministry so many have needed even before lockdown—we’ll want to invest in it.

We learned that ministry need not and did not stop because of not having a building to gather in, and that was evident in the reports from several session committees you received. Our church has been integral to the launch or development of some new initiatives, through both man/womanpower and through helping secure generous grants through Synod. We’re still meeting the needs of the hungry. We’re still reaching out in many ways, even if not as easy to see in lockdown.

We learned we can still grow too. That was evident in the response of the 10 new members who joined us in 2020. Their journey began before lockdown but their hearts and efforts remained throughout lockdown. Here’s some perspective: The remainder of *all* other Stockton presbytery churches combined received 14 new members in 2020 between them. That means our 10 represent 42% of all new members received in Stockton presbytery. And they have been joyfully stepping in to the ministry of our church according to their gifts. I’m also heartened that there are already a few inquiries reaching me of more interested in joining. I am praying for *another* 10 for 2021.

The challenges we face remain steep, especially our financial challenges. But the finances don't tell the whole story. I have always believed in being honest about one's circumstances, good or bad. I believe that facing reality is the first essential to having faith. Otherwise it's not "faith", just magical thinking. Like Abraham and Sarah before us, our faith looks reality square in the face, fully comprehends it, and trusts God anyway.

Our reality is changing once again. This time its pretty good news. We naturally welcome it and thank God for it. But our walk of faith remains unchanged: whether facing these new realities, our current ones, or realities yet unknown, our task is to stare it in the face, fully comprehend it, and trust God anyway. Our new reality will still call for faith and wisdom: maybe even more than before. It won't be exactly like our pre-lockdown reality. That reality is gone, and is never returning. But God was in that reality then, God has been in this reality now, and God is already waiting for us in the reality of a future yet unknown.

As the storm abates, we assess the condition of our ship, make repairs or upgrades, and plot our next course, let us face the open sea, fully comprehend its power, and trust our Captain anyway. The consequences of the storm are not yet fully known. But the Man who walked on water and calmed the sea is our Captain. We can trust him.

Get ready... He may soon call "All hands make sail."

Shalom,

Pastor Doug

Treasurer's Report

General Fund:	<u>MONTHLY</u>	<u>TO DATE</u>	<u>BALANCE</u>
Matching Challenge		\$ 49,600.00	
Balance Forward		\$ 14,541.23	
Monthly Income	\$ 7,592.84	\$ 71,734.07	
Monthly Expenditures	\$ 16,521.89	<u>\$ 55,212.18</u>	
Balance: (including Matching Challenge)			\$ 80,663.12
Special Fund Balance:			\$ 21,253.04
In-and-Out Fund Balance:			\$ 7,329.95
Memorial Fund:			
Undesignated:		\$ 5,775.00	
Designated:		<u>\$ 13,029.20</u>	
Balance:			\$ 18,804.20
New Site Fund:			
Balance:			\$ 0.00
Synod Savings Account			
Matching Challenge		\$ 49,702.95	
Youth Reserve		\$ 1,086.41	
Manse Fund		\$ 62.43	
Julia Sturtevant Fund		<u>\$ 5,447.12</u>	
Balance:			\$ 56,298.91

