



Thyatira Presbyterian Church at Mill Bridge

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April 2020 Newsletter

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PASTOR'S REFLECTIONS

Don't Just Do Something! Stand There!

What a time to BE the Church!

Thyatira has often prided itself in always remaining open even in situations of severe weather. In the last five years, we have only closed once due to snow, and have frequently been able to offer worship to members of other churches when their own services were cancelled.

This time, however, we are all in the same boat sailing on virus-infested seas. Like an ocean voyage in olden days, we can only wait until we see signs of dry land. Until then, we are at the mercy of uncertain winds and waves.

So far, we have been spared any infection of our Thyatira community, even as numbers grow around us. We have made the decision to remain closed indefinitely, hoping that by doing so, we are contributing to the common good and a quicker return to normalcy.

There is a lot being written about the impact and opportunities for churches during this pandemic and I'm sure historians will produce quite a bit about the way we are faced Lent, 2020. For my part, I am intrigued by this quarantine as an extraordinary opportunity to give witness to the oft-quoted truism that "The Church is not the building."

We say that a lot, and we probably mean it, but I wonder sometimes how much we embrace it. As I have spoken about before, there is distinct difference between "being" and "doing," between "identity" and "function." In our culture, much of our identity is tied up how we function, in what we can accomplish, produce, and accumulate, classic ways to "do something."

Yet in this time when we can't do much as we'd like we might be able to find that we don't have to do as much as we thought. Perhaps we can simply just "be something" for a change.

The grace shown to us in Jesus Christ can be our guide in coming to terms with just being. Our Reformed heritage reminds us again and again that it was God's agency to save us, and that there is nothing we can do to earn God's favor. Just as infants are loved despite their inability to do anything, we too are the objects of God's love simply for who we are.

As we approach Holy Week, let me encourage you to embrace the opportunity to reflect more on what Christ did for us than on what we can (or cannot) do. When this is all over, there will indeed come a time for doing. But this Holy Week is a time for being.

Your partner in being,

Stacy

Prayer Concerns

Please keep in your prayers the Session, Deacons, and Staff of the Church, as well as all who faithfully serve one another and our community through the ministries of the church.

Mocksville Senior Living: Mary Moon

Trinity Oaks: Ruth Albright

Veterans Home: OC Shoaf

At Home: JoAnn Kerr

- Families affected by the COVID-19 crisis
- Kitty Harris, being treated for several health issues
- Randall Patterson, being treated for cancer
- Pamela Reeves, Sandra Swanson's sister-in-law, being treated for cancer
- Kaye Hawkins' family members, Cindy, diagnosed with cancer, and Mitchell
- Ernestine Hoffner
- Tony Albright
- Bill and Carolyn Haggerty, as Bill is being treated for cancer
- Barbara Karriker, Joyce Caldwell's cousin, diagnosed with cancer
- Whitaker Raymer, being treated for leukemia
- Mike Hawkins, ongoing health issues
- Drema Clemens' brother, Arthur Warden
- Edna Stamper
- Julie, a co-worker of Jada, diagnosed with cancer
- Mike Hawkins' mother, Elizabeth, at Genesis
- Linda Gaylor's mother, Barbara
- Millicent Hoffner's brother, Joe Kerr



PHONE PRAYER CHAIN



If you, a family member, or friend would like to be added to our Phone Prayer Chain, please call Jim Albright at 704-279-3317. Whatever your prayer need is, finding peace of mind provides a foundation of strength to face any situation. Your request is a sacred trust and is kept confidential among our prayer list members.



To: Stacey and members of Thyatira Presbyterian Church

Thank you all for the thoughts and prayers for mom over the past few months and in her recent passing. Your kind words, visits, and prayers have meant a lot to our family. Mom loved her church family, and the love has been given back to our mom. Many blessings to all of you. ~ The family of Joyce Caldwell



April Birthdays

5	Albert Gaylor	18	Ron Mercer
	O.C. Shoaf	20	Dana Milam
6	Brandon Hoffner	21	Cynthia Hampton
9	Addalie Beard	22	Britany Stamper
10	Brandon White	24	Tucker Richmond
13	Jessica Swanson	25	Ian Lambert
14	Crystal Hobbs	26	Beth McCorkle
15	Nick King	27	Mary Deal
16	Mary McCachren	28	Kate Richmond
17	Andrea Raymond		

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

We received 76% of our anticipated offerings for the month of March.

Giving During the Crisis

Earlier this week, you received your regular quarterly giving statement during this irregular season of the life of the church. The Session of Thyatira would like to express its gratitude to you for your generosity so far this year. You have made much ministry possible.

In addition, please be reminded that should you find yourself economically affected by the COVID-19 measures, you should in no way feel obligated to give as usual.

With that in mind, please accept this gentle reminder that although we are not meeting together on Sunday mornings for a little while, the church still carries on and continues to have both obligations and opportunities to meet. If you are able, please share your regular offerings by mailing them to the church, using our website's online giving page (thyatirapresbyterian.org/giving), or taking advantage of the convenience of the GivePlus+ mobile app which you can easily download.

Thank you again for all the ways you express God's generosity!

Parish Nurse Ministry

It Was the Best of Times, It Was the Worst of Times

National Public Health Week is the first week in April and is a time to highlight important health issues. April 7 is designated World Health Day when a specific health topic of concern to people all over the world is to be discussed. The topic this year will surely be the coronavirus labeled COVID-19.

Never have I heard and read so much about a health topic and found myself feeling that I know so little. In this newsletter article I do not plan to quote President Donald Trump, Dr. Anthony Fauci, or the Center for Disease Control. If I've seen and heard it, I'm sure you have also (probably many times). Even with news conferences every day and almost 24-hour coverage of the pandemic, no one has a complete clinical picture with regard to COVID-19.

Although there may not be absolute answers to immediately solve the medical and economic issues which concern us, we have the greatest opportunity for authorities throughout the world to seek answers for the good of all.

Social Isolation

This new coronavirus has swept the globe at a time when more people are living alone than ever before in history. According to a research study in 1919, twenty-eight percent of households in the US were single person. Although it is an accepted fact that many people live alone, psychologists are quick to point out that there is a difference between living alone and loneliness. What we are experiencing with required distancing is a new kind of social isolation. Recently, after only one week of social isolation, one person is quoted as commenting, "Last week was the longest month, I've ever experienced."

We are experiencing a disruption in our usual pattern of behavior, but it is temporary. Although we are finding it difficult, it should not result in the same issues as chronic isolation. Be ready to embrace life as you knew it before the enforced social distancing. Julianne Holt-Lunstad, a neuroscientist and psychologist, cautioned, "When we get out of a habit, it's hard to get back in. Just as we're worried about an economic recession, we should worry about a social recession—a continued pattern of social distancing beyond the immediate pandemic."

Don't Just Cope, Thrive

1. Stay informed, but don't let yourself become obsessed. Limit media consumption so that you do not feed your fear and anxiety. Some knowledge of the latest advice and health information will give you an edge when it comes to protecting both your mental and physical health. Since no one's life is improved by hearing negative information over and over again, be logical when deciding on how much time you devote to what is happening with the COVID-19.

2. Keep to a Schedule. While loneliness can feel as if it will never end, trying to keep these days as normal as possible will help. Start each day with a plan of a few things which you will accomplish. Now might be the time to keep a daily diary. You or someone else might enjoy reading your diary later. Some form of tracking system keeps you feeling in control in a difficult situation.

3. Live life, do not stay in a waiting pattern. If you have ever had an MRI, then you know that feeling of waiting for time to pass when you are aware of each slow second as it passes. It is easy to become so consumed by news of the virus and its effects that we forget about the life going on around us. Keep up with what is happening in the lives of those you love, and celebrate or console, whichever is appropriate.

4. Do something meaningful. Send a card, write a letter or if you are not a letter writer, send a post card. Reaching out to others, often gives extra meaning to our life as well as theirs. Social isolation has provided more time for some things we used to do before we got so busy. "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interest of the others." Philippians 2:34

5. Find a source of comfort. These are the times to seek spiritual and physical comfort. Whether its spending extra time in prayer, reading your favorite scripture or taking part in some other activity which gives you a sense of comfort and renewal, you can gain peace in the midst of stress.

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Holy Week at Thyatira



Join us on Facebook Live for our Holy Week Services, as described below. On Palm Sunday and Maundy Thursday, we will be celebrating the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper virtually, as the Office of the General Assembly of the PCUSA has authorized this practice in light of our inability to meet together.

In preparation for sharing Communion virtually, if you have bread and grape juice at home, or will be able to procure them on your own, please do so. In addition, the Church will have a supply of grape juice available on the front porch for anyone who prefers not to go shopping. Simply swing by and pick one up, or contact the church office or Pastor Stacey to have it delivered.

- **Sunday, April 5, Palm Sunday**
We celebrate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.
- **Maundy Thursday, April 9 at 7:00 p.m.**
On the night of Jesus' last supper with his disciples, join us for an online Tenebrae Service.
- **Good Friday, April 10 at Noon**
We remember Jesus' final hours as we read the Passion story from the Gospel of John and hear the Solemn Reproaches of the Cross.
- **Easter Sunday, April 12**
Celebration of the resurrection at 11:00 a.m.
- **Holy Humor Sunday, April 19**
We have the last laugh on the Devil!

Worship on Facebook Live

During these weeks we are unable to meet together, we will be "broadcasting" on Facebook Live each week at 11:00 a.m., as well as during Holy Week. We know there are many platforms for virtual worship, but Facebook is currently the easiest for us to manage.

At the same time, we know that not everyone uses Facebook, and so we hope to be able to make the following accommodations:

1. We plan to upload the Facebook broadcasts to the Church's YouTube account and to our website. This is a work in progress, so you'll need to check in from time to time.
2. If you do not have a Facebook account, you cannot watch live. However, you can watch an archived version of the broadcast by going to Thyatira's Facebook page. Simply ignore the window that asks you to login or open an account and click on the video to watch.
3. If you would like to open a Facebook account but are unsure about how to do it, please contact Pastor Stacey and he can walk you through the process.