

First Presbyterian Church *tidings*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER - LIVINGSTON, TEXAS - FEBRUARY 2017



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Take Care

In Jimmy Fallon's first monologue as host of NBC's *The Tonight Show*, he expressed thanks to all past hosts. On an occasion when he might have said, "And now this stage is mine!" or "I'm delighted to be counted among such greats," instead he stated with deep humility, "I just want to do the best I can and take care of this show for a while."

Take care of. That's language not of ownership but of stewardship. That's the language of Genesis 2:15 (NIV) — "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and *take care of it.*"

You Are Cherished

We must understand that God does not "love" us without liking us — through gritted teeth — as "Christian" love is sometimes thought to do. Rather, out of the eternal freshness of his perpetually self-renewed being, the heavenly Father cherishes the earth and each human being upon it. The fondness, the endearment, the unstintingly affectionate regard of God toward all his creatures is the natural outflow of what he is to the core — which we vainly try to capture with our tired but indispensable old word "love."

—Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*

What have we been called to "take care of for a little while"? The earth, surely. Perhaps a congregation, a business, a neighbor in need, a volunteer or an employee. A child, who may need less care — or different forms of it — as time goes on. We don't own these people and things. God invites us to be stewards of them, to care for them, to use wisely and value these precious gifts...and someday, to pass them on to others.



Church Events

- Feb 1st - Worship Committee Meeting 10am
- Feb 5th - Communion Sunday Worship Service
- Feb 6th - Mission Committee Meeting 11am
- Feb 9th – Session Meeting 5:30pm
- Feb 13th – Presbyterian Women Meeting at Mary Lou Anderson's Home 1:30pm
- Feb 25th – Men with a Heart for God Breakfast Meeting 8:15am
- There will be NO Luncheon this month



PROPERTY

"No teacher can make scholars out of truants; no army can win a war with deserters; the church is both a school and an army, and cannot do its work with those who never attend."-Lunn

At the request of several people, there has been a lectern placed in front of the organ for those who do not want to climb the steps with/without a handrail. We are also in the process of preparing a way to install a handrail to the platform.

We are also looking forward to doing projects that have been requested and already in process by Gary Stephens.

"The duty of the whole congregation should not be the task of just a few."

Glenn Drumm,
Incoming Property Chair



"Love is taking a few steps backward, maybe even more ... to give way to the happiness of the person you love."

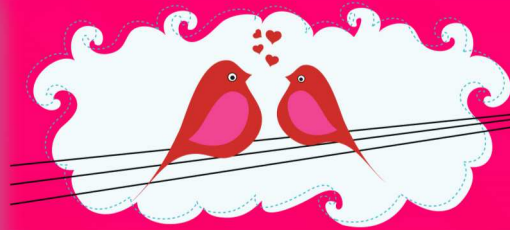
—A.A. Milne

"We cannot pray in love and live in hate and still think we are worshiping God."

—A.W. Tozer

"Patience with others is love, patience with self is hope, patience with God is faith."

—Adel Bestavros



Love ever gives, forgives, outlives and ever stands with open hands.

And while it lives, it gives.

For this is love's prerogative — to give, and give, and give.

—John Oxenham



LENTEN *Schedule*

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on March 1. Lenten services will be March 8, 15, 22, 29 and April 5. There will not be a service on April 12 but on April 13, Maundy Thursday, with Communion. No Service on Good Friday, April 14. All Lenten Services will be at 5pm. There will be a Sunrise Service, with the time and place to be announced later. There will be Communion during the Easter Sunday service.

Due to poor attendance and it being a lot of work to prepare for a small group, it has been decided not to have Soup and Sandwich Devotional services this year. Instead, there will be a Lenten Devotional service held in the Sanctuary each night. This year we are making our focus on Worship of the Lenten season.

Glenn Drumm,
Outgoing
Worship Chair





Never, Never, Never Give Up

"Therefore we do not lose heart---"II Corinthians 4:16

Stories abound about people who have never given up when all the circumstances have indicated that all hope is lost. One of the greatest speeches in history was delivered by Prime Minister Winston Churchill on October 29, 1941. It was delivered at Harrow school (from which he nearly flunked out). There are two versions of the speech which he delivered. When the fanfare and introductions died down, one of the versions stated that Churchill stood and simply said, " Never, never, never, never give up," and then he sat down. Another version stated that he said "never, never, never, never give in." In either case that brief statement (hardly considered to be a speech) propelled and sustained the morale and spirit of England through the great conflagration of WWII. Much earlier in history, another Englishman was considered the leader of the banishment of slavery in that country. The following excerpt reveals the impetus that sustained him in the tiring battle against slavery in England.

Young William Wilberforce was discouraged one night in the early 1790s after another defeat in his 10 year battle against the slave trade in England. Tired and frustrated, he opened his Bible and began to leaf through it. A small piece of paper fell out and fluttered to the floor. It was a letter written by John Wesley shortly before his death. Wilberforce read it again: "Unless the divine power has raised you up... I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise in opposing that (abominable practice of slavery), which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But if God be for you, who can be against you? Are all of them together stronger than God? Oh, be not weary of well-doing. Go on in the name of God, and in the power of His might."

Is there something in your life for which you have been striving or waiting for such a long time that you are ready to give up? Are you tired of continuing the battle? Consider this: is what you have been striving or waiting for worth it? Is it really a significantly important goal for you, your family, your church and/or your community? Will it make a difference in the future? God loves to reward perseverance, but if we give up we will never know how much he wants to honor our "hanging in there."

Blessings, Pastor Joe

OFFICIAL PROTEST

As a member of the IAOCBR Union, (that's International Association of Church Bell Ringers), not once in my many years of service to 1st Presbyterian Church have I received a raise. Not one penny, mind you. I have received the same paltry salary all these years. In good faith, I have not even submitted this injustice for arbitration. Shame be upon you. I assure you, this paltry salary would not even support my pet chicken. I could have made more taking the trash out at McDonalds or being a substitute greeter at Walmart. I perform my trade under the same conditions as a door-to-door mail carrier. Neither rain, sleet, snow, nor stray dogs shall deter me. Not only that, I ring the bell strictly according to my contract. That's 5 minutes before service begins and no more than 5 or 6 rings. Any more than that, and the community might think the church was on fire. At one time, I hired an assistant named Sean out of my own pocket. Alas, poor lad, the stress and skill required proved to be too much. In closing, I ask this learned body, how could you in good conscience carry on such a cruel charade with one of your most loyal and dedicated employees?



Grudgingly but Faithfully,

Tommy Fluker



IN ALL HIS GLORY

On the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, many Christian churches celebrate the Transfiguration of Our Lord. After telling his shocked, uncomprehending disciples that he would die and rise again, Jesus took Peter, James and John up a mountain. Suddenly Jesus appeared to be glowing! "He was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light" (Matthew 17:2, ESV).

Moses and Elijah appeared, and a voice said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen



to him" (verse 5). Jesus' disciples fell to the ground, overcome by fear. But Jesus touched them, told them not to be afraid

and led them down the mountain.

The disciples witnessed firsthand the glory and Godhood of Jesus, who would soon die for the sins of the world and rise again to give us life.

2017 Committee Responsibilities

Administration: Barbara Morris

Christian Education: Lynda Hall

Evangelism: Nina Dobyns

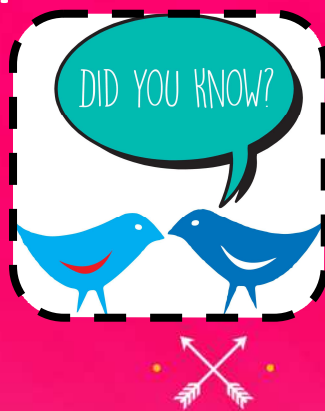
Fellowship: Karen Palmer

Finance: Paul Laverty

Mission: Chuck Davidson

Properties: Glenn Drumm

Worship: Jay Walrath

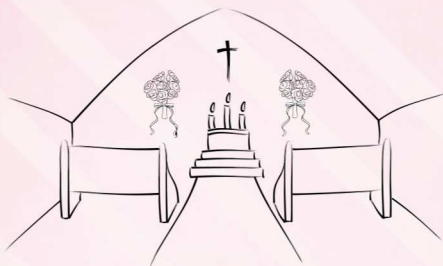


Giving Credit Where Due?

Running late for a meeting, a man circled the block, looking for a place to park. Desperately, he raised his eyes toward heaven and prayed, "Lord, if you'll find me a parking spot, I promise I'll start going to church again."

Just then, a car pulled out of a space right in front of the man. "Never mind," he said to God. "I found one!"

WORSHIP COMMITTEE



Your Worship Committee is looking forward to working with you during the upcoming year. Our purpose is

to provide and ensure worship opportunities for the congregation so that praise and worship become meaningful experiences of our faith and obedience to God. We are also to oversee and improve the quality and worship in the life of the church.

As stated in our Manual of Operations, the Worship Committee is to be comprised of at least four [4] members; one [1] active elder serving as chairperson and three [3] or more from the congregation. My goal is to have a committee of eight [8] to ten [10]. Please let me know should you have interest in joining us. We plan to meet on the first Wednesday of each month at 10 AM in the Fellowship Hall.

We hope each of you have a happy and healthy 2017.

Jay Walrath, Incoming Worship Chair

MISSION UPDATE

Souper Bowl Sunday is Feb. 5th: an opportunity for us to provide non-perishable food items for the Center of Hope. While we do provide food and paper items year-long, this is a special day to focus on the many who depend upon support in the Livingston area.

Did you know that our 52 shoeboxes all ended up in Panama? This year our plan is to split our shoebox filling project with the Port of Houston seafarers and Samaritan's Purse; it's never too early to start collecting those little items which seafarers could use along with smaller things for the children.

Your Session has approved participation this year in four PCUSA **special offerings**:

April 16 (One Great Hour of Sharing); June 4 (Pentecost); Oct. 1 (Peacemaking); and Dec. 24 (Joy): each of these provides us a chance to provide extra financial support to important local, national, and international causes.

Upcoming Events:

April 1st: 9--2 **Garage sale** in church parking lot with your donated items helping raise funds for our Fellowship



Hall chairs. No clothing or shoes; Room 3 is available to store pre-priced items. Patricia Herrmann is leading this effort for us.

May 6th: **Rise Up** returns to Livingston with our main focus being on helping the Extra Mile Ranch as we serve with other churches to improve lives and places in Polk County. Volunteers will be needed on this Saturday, so be pondering upon your level of involvement.

Your Mission committee meets Feb. 6th at 11am; all are welcome.

Chuck Davidson, Mission Chair



GOD'S CONVERSATION HEARTS

Those familiar conversation hearts that show up every February can be more than just trite romantic or friendly sayings. Use them to remind you — or to teach a child — of the greatest love of all: God's love for us, which empowers our love for others. For example:

- TRUE LOVE: What love is truer than giving up one's only Son so people might have everlasting life? (John 3:16).
- MINE: Jesus knows us intimately, as a shepherd knows his sheep. No one can snatch us from him (John 10:27-29).
- FOREVER: God loves us with an "everlasting love" (Jeremiah 31:3).
- LOVE ME: The greatest commandment is to love God with our whole being (Luke 10:27).
- TRUST ME: "Let not your hearts be troubled." We can count on Jesus, now and for eternal life (John 14:1-3).
- SWEET TALK: God's words are sweeter than honey (Psalm 119:103).
- BE GOOD: We show our love for Christ by keeping his commands (John 14:15).
- CALL ME: God longs to be in fellowship with us. We can talk to him anytime in prayer (Jeremiah 33:3).
- FRIENDS: The greatest love involves laying down your life for your friends (John 15:13) — precisely what Jesus did.
- #1: "We love because [God] first loved us" (1 John 4:19).



BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES



Our February Birthdays are:

- Shep Green, 2/15
- Rafael Heredia, 2/20
- Aidan Heredia, 2/20
- Beverly Davidson, 2/21
- Carla Gore, 2/21

Our February Anniversaries are:

- Hershel & Phyllis Mackey, 2/9
- Rick & Susie Nobles, 2/14
- Steven & Linda Eckert, 2/23



Our Sunday Services

Adult Bible Study – 9:00 a.m.

Worship -10:00 a.m.

Children's Celebration (for youngsters ages 5 & older) 10:00 a.m.

Nursery for children up to age 4 is available at all church meetings, services, and events.

2017 Fellowship Calendar



The January 2017 fellowship luncheon was hosted by the Presbyterian Women.

There will be no Lent soup supper this year.

The Worship committee scheduled the service in

the sanctuary at 5:00. The choir will be working on their music at 5:30, leaving many not able to attend soup supper this year.

year. We are assisting in the effort to save funds for the church.

There will be luncheons scheduled as follows:

Mothers Day	May 14
Fathers Day	June 18
KFCE Luncheon	August 13
Thanksgiving Feast	November 12
Christmas Meal	December 10

The church will provide the meat, bread and tea for the luncheons. Please bring in your wonderful covered dish and dessert items.

Karen Palmer, Fellowship Chair