

# First Presbyterian Church

## *Tidings*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

910 N WASHINGTON AVE

LIVINGSTON, TEXAS 77351

MAY 2024

## AFLAME WITH FAITH

In the Old Testament, fire often symbolizes the presence of God's Spirit. For example, God called to Moses from a burning bush (Exodus 3:2-6) and defeated the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:30-39). In the New Testament, tongues of fire rested atop the believers gathered on Pentecost (Acts 2:3).

Some Christians have described a burning or current-like sensation when they encounter God.

Methodism founder John Wesley said his heart was "strangely warmed" during worship. After such an encounter, people often feel compelled to share the Good News of Jesus. The flame of faith inside one believer can spark a revival of faith in others. As Charles Spurgeon said, "A burning heart will soon find for itself a flaming tongue."



## YOU ARE MY WITNESSES

John White (1924-2002) was a medical missionary, psychiatry professor, church planter and prolific author who wrote about faith and outreach. He refuted the notion that being an effective witness for Christ is akin to being a salesperson. Christians are representing and sharing a person, he said, not touting a product.

"A good witness is like a signpost," he added. "It doesn't matter whether it is old, young, pretty, ugly. It has to point the right direction and be able to be understood. We are witnesses to Christ; we point to him."

## Special Events

- **May 1<sup>st</sup> - Administration Meeting, 9 a.m., AB; Mission Meeting 11:15 a.m., FH; COSI Team Meeting after the Mission Mtg.**
- **May 5<sup>th</sup> - Communion Sunday, 10 a.m., Sanctuary**
- **May 9<sup>th</sup> - Ascension of the Lord; COSI Concert, 5 p.m., Sanctuary**
- **May 12<sup>th</sup> - Mother's Day; Fellowship Luncheon after the 10 a.m. Service, FH**
- **May 13<sup>th</sup> - Presbyterian Women Circle Meeting, 1:30 p.m., FH**
- **May 17<sup>th</sup> - Tidings articles due**
- **May 19<sup>th</sup> - Day of Pentecost**
- **May 26<sup>th</sup> - Trinity Sunday**
- **May 27<sup>th</sup> - Memorial Day**

## Food Pantries supported by FPC, Livingston: 2024



Center of Hope (COH): open T & Th (8 times per month)  
 Revival (Onalaska): open T & Th (2 times per month)

COH	J	F	M	A	M	J	July	A	S	O	N	D
Families Served	781	793	801									
Individuals Served	2364	2354	2267									
<b>Total families:</b>	939	974	1248									
<b>Total Individuals:</b>	2808	2872	3513									

  

Revival	J	F	M	A	M	J	July	A	S	O	N	D
Families Served	158	181	447									
Individuals Served	444	518	1246									

## Consoler, healer, guide

Holy Spirit, Lord divine,  
 Come from heights of heav'n  
 and shine,  
 Come with blessed radiance  
 bright!  
 Come, O Father of the poor,  
 Come, whose treasured gifts  
 endure,  
 Come, our heart's unflinching  
 light!  
 Of consolers, wisest, best,  
 And our souls' most welcome  
 guest,  
 Sweet refreshment, sweet  
 repose.  
 In our labor rest most sweet,  
 Pleasant coolness in the heat,  
 Consolation in our woes. ...  
 Cleanse our soiled hearts of sin,  
 Arid souls refresh within,  
 Wounded lives to health  
 restore!  
 Bend the stubborn heart and  
 will,  
 Melt the frozen, warm the chill,  
 Guide the wayward home  
 once more!

## Bible Quiz

What two rivers that we still know today are named in the Creation account in Genesis 2?

- A. Nile
- B. Yangtze
- C. Jordan
- D. Tigris
- E. Ganges
- F. Euphrates



Answer: D & F (See Genesis 2:10-14)

## Christian symbol

GREEN — Green is the traditional liturgical color for the weeks after Pentecost (as well as the season of Epiphany). The Pentecost season largely overlaps with spring and summer, which is fitting because green symbolizes growth: growth of plant life and crops, and growth of the church in discipleship and faith.



## A house united

When President Lincoln declared in 1858, "A house divided against itself cannot stand," he was echoing Jesus. Scribes thought Jesus was casting out demons by Satan's power, so Jesus responded, "How can Satan cast out Satan? ... If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand" (Mark 3:23-25, NIV). There are countless modern examples: Civil wars. Families torn apart. Business partners going separate ways. Even churches splitting.

Jesus used the "house divided" image to point out the nonsense of the scribes' words. It takes someone other than the "strong man" (v. 27), or demon, occupying a space to cast that demon out. Evil can't drive out evil. Sin isn't stronger than sin. Hate doesn't solve hate. Violence doesn't end violence. Two wrongs don't make a right.

Jesus came to "bind" evil with goodness, conquer hate with love and teach us the same. Throughout the gospels, Jesus treats all people with love — even those who oppose him — so that, in the end, we all will be a house *united* by God's goodness.



Your Mission team met on April 3rd and covered quite a lot of agenda items.

A giant THANK YOU to all who donated to the One Great Hour of Sharing. An amazing amount \$1524 was turned in at time of our meeting. We will have the Pentecost special offering this month, with 40% allocated for the Revival Food pantry.

Another giant thank you to those who donated food items for the Center of Hope during the unique April food drive.

A third thank you to Bonnie Laverty for coordinating our participation in Presbyterian's recent luncheon/fundraiser in Houston on April 18th. Sixteen folks attended (four cars), and Pastor John met us at the event.

We still have funds to help someone attend Camp Cho-Yeh this summer, though spaces are very limited. We are helping one day camper thus far attend his first camp.

Our next COSI event is May 9th: Dr. Jimmy Simmons in our sanctuary at 5pm. I suspect he will draw a crowd, so come early.

We have begun planning a Mission Sunday for Sept. 15th: stay tuned in.

We have been unable to set up a YikesBikes event but have one more possibility.

We meet on May 1st at 11:15 in FH, Room 2; meeting is open to all.

Chuck Davidson, chair



*Thank you to Bonnie for organizing our Church group to the PCHAS luncheon at Lakeside Country Club in Houston on April 18th. It was a beautiful day for driving our four-car caravan. Pastor John joined us there for the program and lunch.*



*This is a photo of some of the members of the Friendship Sunday School class and donations we collected for the SPCA of Polk County.*

Dr. Jimmy Simmons in Concert  
with accompanists  
Ethan Ainsworth and Renee Vore

See the famous Jimmy Simmons  
in concert for free!



Dr. James M. Simmons, President Emeritus, Lamar University, recording artist and conductor, will perform live, in concert on Thursday, May 9 at 5:00pm at First Presbyterian Church in the Sanctuary, Livingston.

Dr. Simmons has performed with some of the most well-known celebrities in the entertainment world. Some of the impressive celebrities include Frank Sinatra, Burt Bacharach, Dionne Warwick, Ray Charles, Rosemary Clooney, Natalie Cole, The Four Tops, Dinah Shore, Connie Stevens, Eddie Arnold and many more.

Dr. Simmons has his recordings (CDs) available on Amazon and iTunes.

Ethan Ainsworth, Choir Director, Organist and Pianist,  
First Methodist Church

Renee Vore, Choir Director, Livingston High School

Come and enjoy an hour of fabulous  
music and fellowship.

First Presbyterian Church is located  
at 910 N Washington, Livingston

# Lord Why Is It

by Tommy Fluker

Lord why is it, when things go wrong, I call your name  
When no, not others, tis I to blame  
Am I quick to condemn, and slow to praise  
Do I make meaningful or squander my days

Lord why is it, I seek to change and call your name  
I try ot hard enough and stay the same  
Do I feel grateful or wish for more  
Can I give and can I adore

Lord why is it, when deeds hurt others, I call your name  
Even though later, I'm filled with shame  
Am I glad for or do I envy  
Am I blind or do I see

Lord why is it, when blessings come, I forget your name  
When inside I know, excuses are lame  
If I pray hard enough, will you hear my plea  
The answer is, you're always there for me

## Mother-and more

Though I've primarily known God as Father — along with metaphors such as rock, eagle, shepherd, potter — I also learned of Scripture passages portraying God as mother. For example (all NIV):

“For a long time I have kept silent. ... But now, like a woman in childbirth, I cry out, I gasp and pant” (Isaiah 42:14).

“As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you” (Isaiah 66:13).

“Like a bear robbed of her cubs, I will attack them” (Hosea 13:8).

In others, God is pictured doing traditional “women’s work”: making clothes (Genesis 3:21), sweeping (Isaiah 14:23), preparing and hosting a meal (Proverbs 9:1-6), baking bread (Luke 13:21).

One of my favorite images of God is tucked in Hosea. While many modern dads nurture their toddlers this way, the tender words surely call to mind a mama’s care: “It was I who taught [Israel] to walk. ... To them I was like one who lifts a little child to the cheek, and I bent down to feed them” (Hosea 11:3-4). Most importantly, God — however known — is loving and good.

—Heidi Hyland Mann

# Open hands

Liturgical scholar Balthasar Fischer (1912-2001) shared an “a-ha” realization about the significance of praying with open, outstretched hands, an ancient practice. The opposite gesture, a closed fist, is used to threaten others or even inflict violence. We also grasp things in closed fists, refusing to let go, to share, to hold gently or loosely.

When we pray with open hands, Fischer explained, we’re saying before God that we renounce “all highhandedness, all pride in [our] own sufficiency, all violence.” We hold up our empty hands to God, saying, “I have nothing that I have not received from you, nothing that you have not placed in my empty hands. Therefore I do not keep a frantic hold on anything you have given me; therefore, too, I desire not to strike and hurt but only to give and to spread happiness and joy.”



# Celebrate!

## MAY

*Birthdays and Anniversaries*

- Chuck & Beverly Davidson, 05/08
- Tom & Ann Wilkins, 05/20
- Rafael & Shona Heredia, 05/26
- Jan & Kathy Koman, 05/29
- Debbie Phillips, 05/05
- George Nixon, 05/18
- Katie Ferguson, 05/28
- Jan Koman, 05/29
- Rosalind Wiedman, 05/29

### Elder of the Month Virginia Key

## Quotes

“If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant: if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome.” —Anne Bradstreet

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“None can believe how powerful prayer is, and what it is able to effect, but those who have learned it by experience.” —Martin Luther

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“In times of stress, the best thing we can do for each other is to listen with our ears and our hearts and to be assured that our questions are just as important as our answers.” —Fred Rogers



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Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. -  
12:30 p.m., M-F

### Sunday Schedule

**Friendship Bible Class - 9 a.m.**

**Worship - 10 a.m.**

**Adult Bible Study - 11 a.m.**

### Wednesdays

**Prayer Group - 1 p.m.**

**Adult Bible Study - 2 p.m.**