



April 2020

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In-person activities suspended

Taking unprecedented but necessary action, First Presbyterian Church's session voted by email on March 17 to suspend all activities at the church until Monday, May 11, to help reduce the spread of the coronavirus, COVID-19. These activities include worship services, Sunday School, circles, Bible studies, LOGOS. Stephen Minister continuing education programs, senior seminars, session and deacon meetings, committee meetings and choir and bell rehearsals.

THE CHURCH & COVID-19

How the coronavirus affects our worship and other gatherings at First Presbyterian Church

This action was recommended to the session by Pastor Bobby after a meeting of the staff and the Safety and Security Committee. He also took into consideration the Williamson County judge's declaration March 14 of a local state of disaster and imposing an eight-week ban on all gatherings of more than 50 people.

Sunday services during this time will be live-streamed from the Worship Center-Fellowship Hall.

Pastor Bobby called it "a painful and difficult decision for the session," but knowing "that the best way we can love our neighbors in this unique time is to do our part in slowing the spread and diminishing the impact of the COVID-19 virus, a virus that is proving particularly detrimental to older adults but is readily carried and spread by folks of any age."

The session will assess plans weekly and let the congregation know if they change.

The day before the Sunday service March 15, the session voted to cancel in-person worship and live-stream a sermon by Dr. Tom Currie, a service whose participants included Penny Leone, Monica Koenig, Philip Smith, Susan and Thomas Isenhour, Joy Bedford and Jeff Pratt.

In a letter to the congregation, Pastor Bobby said the staff and session have provisional plans "to help us continue and follow Jesus together in this unique time."

For an explanation of those plans, turn to page 4 and read the letter from Pastor Bobby.



Dr. Sallie Watson, General Presbyter of Mission Presbytery, and Pastor Bobby at his installation March 1. Turn to page 3 for more photos.



ANNIVERSARIES

- 1 Jeremy & Alicia Gambell
- 2 Bob & Joan Lutz
Roger & Suzy Taylor
- 3 Lee & Amanda McIntosh
- 7 Ken & Marilyn Peters
- 12 Shawn Levsen & Adrianne Brandt
- 19 Chris & Tricia Osborne
- 21 Bill & Faith Baechtel
- 23 Bill & Margaret Shirley
- 24 David & Carol Siekmeier

BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Charles Brainard
- 2 Seth Basey
- 3 Johnny Decker
- 4 Joan Dudding
- 5 Eric Seaman
- 6 Lea Ann Hutton
- 7 Vivian Leloux
Elizabeth McFarling
- 9 Cynthia Guidici
Melissa Pilcher
- 10 Shirley Galloway
- 11 Terri Borocz
Joyce Porch
Kasyn Walden
- 12 Cindee Molenda
- 13 Kaye Bishop
Stephen Schellenberg
- 15 Joey Mikel
- 16 Dennis Hilgman
Megan Perkins
- 17 Jeremy Gambell
Meghan Molenda
Joan Shrader
- 19 Bill Hinds
Cathy Hubbard
Peggy Taylor
- 20 Patricia Alexander
- 21 Rebekah Pilcher
- 22 Cindy Bausch
Bruce Sorenson
Nelson Stubblefield
- 23 Roger Nelson
Cathy Shirley
Dean Taylor
Rachel Taylor
- 25 Sarah Hammit
Ann Hindman
- 26 Ouida Henderson
Gayle Taylor
- 27 Bill Stanley
- 28 Zayden Gibson
- 30 Larry Burk
Sarah Ferguson



In the hospital last month: Jennifer Gunn (surger) and **Harvey Henning**.

Our sympathy to:

♦ **The Stubblefield Family** on the death of Carolyn's mother and Terri's grandmother, Genevieve Boernecke, February 27. Services were held March 6 in Oklahoma.

♦ **Patrick & Amanda Tolbert** on the death of Patrick's grandmother, Bobbie Erskine Hesterly, February 27. Services were held March 7 in Arkansas.

♦ **Guy & Cynthia Guidici** on the death of Cynthia's father, Roy Vernon Boyd, February 27. Services were held March 13 in Hurst.

♦ **Beverly & Collin Jones** on the death of Beverly's husband and Collin's father, Rev. Dr. Justin B. Jones, March 9. He was ordained May 1, 1978, and served churches in Nebraska, Georgia and Texas. He was honorably retired by Mission Presbytery October 1, 2016. Services will be held at a later date.

In memoriam: Myrna McKee joined the Church Triumphant on March 12. Services will be held in Pennsylvania at a later date. Myrna had been a member of our congregation since November 1985.

Serving in the military: Col. Brian Burk, **Larry Burk's** son; Maj. Josh Daleiden, **Betty Bradford's** grandson-in-law; **John Decker**; Jared A. Gross, **Robert Bedford's** nephew; **Brian Hall**; Capt. Daniel Hammond, **Keith & Sue Renard's** grandson-in-law; **Garrett Herbst**; 1st Staff Sgt. Matthew L. Johnson, son of **Glen & Ann Kaiser**; Brandon Keith, **Phil & Jeanne Smith's** son-in-law; **Nicolaas Leloux**; Tech. Sgt. Robert McClanahan, grandson of **Minta McIntosh** and nephew of **Lee McIntosh**; **Sgt. 1st Class Paul Rayburn**; Nicholas Stamos, **Larry & Helen Burk's** grandson; and Christian Winckel, grandson of Sandy Hayes.



We hope you will go with us. Registration begins April 15. Visit moranch.org for more information about the Conference Center.

Would you like to help plan the retreat? Do you have a question? Contact Joy Bedford, 512-863-3381 or joy@fpcgeorgetown.org.

	Actual	Annual Budget	YTD % Annual Budget
Income			
Pledges	\$212,398	\$841,881	25%
Other	\$27,553	\$105,180	26%
TOTAL	\$239,951	\$947,061	25%
Expenses			
Validated Mission	\$11,926	\$57,593	21%
Local/Other Mission	\$1,000	\$29,802	3%
Ministry of the Word	\$22,765	\$148,5010	15%
Program/Support Staff	\$79,450	\$468,710	17%
Christian Education	\$4,552	\$39,350	12%
Music and Worship	\$1,623	\$21,756	7%
Evangelism/Care	\$1,769	\$11,115	16%
Property	\$16,099	\$90,500	18%
Stewardship/Finance	\$2,980	\$19,700	15%
Other Oper. Expenses	\$7,677	\$42,820	18%
Debt Retirement	\$16,259	\$97,548	17%
TOTAL	\$166,1000	\$1,027,395	16%



Dr. Bobby Hulme-Lippert was installed as pastor of First Presbyterian Church in a service held the afternoon of Sunday, March 1. Installation participants are (front, from left) Dr. Bill Pederson, Dr. Ron Swain, Pastor Bobby and Dr. Bill Poe; (middle row) Dr. Allen Hilton, Dr. Sallie Watson and Dr. Stacy Ikard; and (back) Karen Rayburn, Paul Stubbs and Evelyn Fox.

Dr. Bill Poe (left), FPC's transitional pastor during 2018-19, delivers the charge to Bobby.



**Flowers in Worship/
April**

- 5 Tim & Becky Kennedy
- 12 Easter lilies
- 19 Marcia Sloma
- 26 Ron & Patsy Becker

Sign up to donate flowers for worship!

Most people donate their arrangement after the service to be used in our Flower Ministry, which divides the arrangement into bud vases and re-gifts them to our shut-ins and members in the hospital.

Easter Lilies in Worship April 12

We will decorate the Worship Center-Fellowship Hall with lilies for Easter Sunday, April 12, when worship will be live-streamed. The flowers are \$10 each. Make your check payable to FPC and write "Easter Lilies" on the memo line. Complete this form and include it with your check. You may bring/mail it to the church office.

Name _____

I wish to donate _____ Easter lily(ies) at \$10 each, at a total cost of \$ _____

In honor of: _____

In memory of: _____

In celebration of: _____

Please take my plant to a homebound or ill person.

I will pick up my plant(s) no later than **April 17**.

LETTER FROM PASTOR BOBBY

March 18, 2020

Dear First Presbyterian Church Family,

I continue to be grateful for the remarkable service of worship put together and led by Rev. Dr. Tom Currie, Penny Leone, Philip Smith, Susan Isenhour, Monica Koenig, Tim Smith, Jeff Pratt, Joy Bedford and Thomas Isenhour. It was such a joy, as well, to see how interactive so many of you were with that unique service.

I am writing to provide the latest update and plans that the session has for the church. We have taken into account guidance from the CDC, and we are mindful of the eight-week ban that Williamson County has placed on gatherings of more than 50 (which began on Monday, March 16, and ends on Monday, May 11). Most centrally, we seek to love one another and our community in the best way possible. In light of all of this, **the session has voted to suspend all in-person activities at the church until Monday, May 11.** These activities include worship services, Sunday school, circles, Bible studies, Stephen Minister continuing education, senior seminar, session and deacon meetings, committee meetings, choir and bell rehearsals, and LOGOS. Be assured, however, that we are still active with staff, session, and practicing our worship continuously in albeit different ways.

We will assess these plans weekly and let you know if or when anything shifts from them. We want to remain flexible and adaptable as the situation evolves, and certainly it would bring us great joy if we could meet again in-person before May.

Know, however, that as things stand right now this is a painful and difficult decision for the session. We readily recognize how foundational and formational our time together is. However, we also know that the best way we can love our neighbors in this unique time is to do our part in slowing the spread and diminishing the impact of the COVID-19 virus, a virus which is proving particularly detrimental to older adults but is readily carried and spread by folks of any age.

The staff and session have worked hard to come up with some provisional plans to help us continue and follow Jesus together in this unique time. Below are some of the initial plans, and these will be updated and improved as we move through the coming days.

Worship: Like this past Sunday, worship will be live-streamed. We have already worked on improvements to the audio so that it will come through more clearly

this time around. The link for worship will be sent via email on the Friday before worship. The link will also be posted to Facebook and on the church website. The email will also include a worship bulletin and discussion questions that your household can work through after the service of worship. Hard copies of the sermon will be sent to members who do not have or use computers, and those hard copies will also be made available on the church's website.

A Note on Memorial Services—If we have a death in the congregation during this time, close family may choose to have a service at the church or graveside. However, public memorial services will be scheduled after May 11.

Congregational Care: Each week, the officers of the church will be calling all of the members of the church to check in and inquire ways the church can be helping in this time. When you receive your call, please take the opportunity to express any needs you have or ways the church can be helpful. Throughout this season, we will pay special attention to those who are most isolated or already homebound and now cannot receive visitors due to new visiting restrictions in place at a number of our resident communities. We will also do twice-a-week mailings to those members who do not have or use a computer. Those mailings will include things like the printed copies of the sermon, the bulletin for Sunday's upcoming service and devotionals.

A Note on Transportation:

Medical Appointments—For any members who need assistance getting to and from medical appointments, Penny Leone (penny@fpcgeorgetown.org) is the point of contact. She can assist in coordinating those, and anyone interested in helping provide rides may let her know of your willingness to do that.

Grocery Store Runs—For members who cannot shop for groceries themselves or need to be especially mindful about avoiding crowds right now, please do not hesitate to contact Kathy Kerr Kubatzky (kathy_kerr2001@yahoo.com or 512-705-7696). She is the point of contact who will ensure a congregant will do that for you. If you would like to help shop for and deliver groceries for members, please contact Kathy so she has your information.

Education and Nurture: Joy Bedford, Jaime Cowan, David Lee and Sarah Hulsey and the Education and Nurture Committee are pulling together various ideas

to facilitate in-home discipleship opportunities for individuals and families. More will be communicated as those plans unfold. For now, know that minimally we plan to email a devotional each morning during this extended time of social distancing. The devotional is entitled *"Closing the Distance: A Daily Devotional."* We hope it proves a source of encouragement in this time.

Mission—The Mission Committee has been reaching out to our ministry partners to inquire about best ways we can be supporting them in this time. We will update you as opportunities present themselves.

Website—In the next 24 hours, we will have a new banner on the front page of our website related to all of our plans being made in light of the COVID-19 virus. Simply click on that banner, and you will be taken to a page with the latest information and resources.

Financial Stewardship: We hope you will continue to financially support FPC and our ministries through this difficult time. You can do this in a few ways:

- ♦ **Checks**—You can mail your checks to the church office (703 S. Church St., Georgetown, TX 78626)
- ♦ **Direct Deposit**—You can set up direct deposit with the church. Contact Sue Bell if you would like to do this (fpcfinance@fpcgeorgetown.org).
- ♦ **Online Giving**—You can give one time or set up recurring donations via online giving. Go to fpcgeorgetown.org and click on the "Give" button in the upper right-hand corner.

Church Office: We will remain open, but some staff will be working remotely more frequently, both as we attempt to keep a measure of social distance and because some of the staff are also doing more childcare given that many schools and daycares are closed for the time being.

Summer Plans: If your committee has ministry plans for the summer, continue forward with those. It is difficult to know where we will be at that point, but for now it makes sense to continue making your plans and meeting (virtually) as needed.

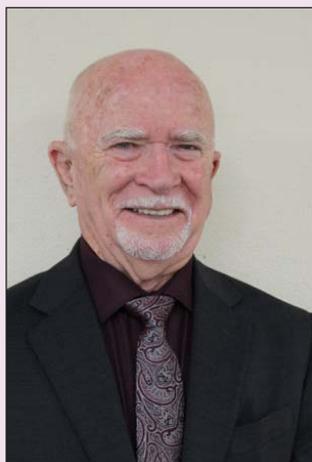
This hardly covers every detail that has been discussed among the staff and session, but we do hope it gives you a solid picture of the current plan and some of the ways we sense God calling us to step forward in faith for such a time as this. Know, again, it grieves us deeply that we are not gathering as usual, but we do give thanks for God's abundant faithfulness and we are deeply encouraged by the continued love and support that all have been offering one another in this time.

Certainly, we commend you to continue in that great work: Feel free to make phone calls and write letters to one another. Connect over social media. Create digital small groups. Reach out to folks who sit in the pews around you each week; if nothing else, let them know you are thinking of them and praying for them in this time. Undoubtedly, the gifts of God will be made known all the more fully in the coming days as we connect with one another in these simple ways.

Grace and Peace in the Lord Jesus Christ,

Bobby

Welcome, NEW MEMBERS



Don Curl joined January 12 by Reaffirmation of Faith. He is retired and enjoys hunting, fishing, horses and dogs. He is the father of FPC member Tricia Osborne. (108 Ridge Oak Dr., Georgetown 78628; 956-874-5909)



Roy & Nell Tucker joined last October 27 by Letter of Transfer from First Presbyterian, Crockett. Roy and Nell are both retired educators and enjoy traveling. (704 Rosedale Blvd., Georgetown 8628; 512-943-8618)

Presbyterian Women

Greetings, my Presbyterian Women! I sadly must let you all know about some cancellations. The church is suspending all in-person activities until May 11, and that will include all of our April circle meetings and our Spring Gathering scheduled for April 19.

As for May: We will let you know through your circle leaders and church email announcements. I certainly miss getting to see you and your beautiful faces, but as my mother has always wisely told me in times of uncertainty, “this too, shall pass!”

I will leave you with a verse from the book of John: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” (John 14:27)

—In His Love,
Becky Hesson-Smith

WAYS TO GIVE

While FPC is live-streaming services: Consider these ways to give to the church during the coming weeks

Though we will not be gathering for several weeks, First Presbyterian Church still needs your generous donations. Please choose the form that best suits you, and thank you for continuing to support FPC in these uncertain times.

♦ **Cash/Check**—Mail your check directly to the church at:

First Presbyterian Church
Attn: Financial Secretary
703 S. Church Street
Georgetown, TX 78626

♦ **Bill Pay**—Setup an Online Bill Pay with your bank. This option gives you control of updating your information at any time and does not incur fees for the church.

♦ **Online**—Visit our webpage at fpcgeorgetown.org and click on “Give” for our online giving option. You can set up a one-time or recurring donation option through our 3rd party PayPal. Once you click on “Submit,” the form will take you to a separate page at PayPal in order to actually process the payment. This option gives you control of updating your information at any time: Fees to the church are \$0.30/transaction fee *and* 2.2% processing fee.

♦ **Automated ACH Debits**—FPC banks with First Texas Bank. Complete an “Authorization Agreement for Automated ACH Debits” form and the Financial Secretary will process your donation each month directly through First Texas Bank and your bank. Please email or call the church office if you would like a copy of this form. This option does not incur fees for the church.

♦ **Direct Distribution from an IRA or Tax Advantage Account such as a 401(k)**—

Those members who have reached the age where yearly minimum distributions must be made from their IRA, 401(k), etc., can have a direct distribution (a charitable donation) paid directly to the church. This method does not incur any fees for the church and has a tax advantage for the member as these funds count towards your minimum distribution but do not count towards your income for the year.

♦ **Securities**—A charitable contribution of long-term appreciated securities—stocks, bonds or mutual funds that have realized significant appreciation over time—is another tax-efficient way to give. This method of giving is popular due to the following advantages:

Any long-term appreciated securities with unrealized gains (meaning they were purchased over a year ago and have a current value greater than the original cost) may be donated to a public charity and a tax deduction taken for the full fair market value of the securities (up to 30% of the donor’s adjusted gross income). Since the securities are donated rather than sold, capital gains taxes from selling the securities do not apply. The more the appreciation the securities have, the greater the tax savings will be.

This option requires time for the transfer of assets and coordination with the Church Financial Secretary. Fees upon sale of the assets by the church will be incurred. The donation will be included on your annual giving statement.

FIRSTWORD

published monthly by

First Presbyterian Church
Dr. Bobby Hulme-Lippert
Pastor

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YOUTH MINISTRY

Studying the fruits of the Spirit

This semester during our Wednesday Youth Bible Studies we have been studying the fruits of the Spirit from Galatians 5:22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law." And I noticed a common misconception from the start of our series, not just from our youth, but from myself as well.

One of the favorite fruits is patience. I've said it, our youth have said it, and I'm sure you have said it: "Oh, yes, I need God to give me more patience!" And that's where we have mixed up the factors and the products (or results) of this "spiritual" equation. Take the equation $1 + 2 = 3$, 1

and 2 being the factors, and 3 being the product or result. When we talk about the fruits of the Spirit, the fruits are the result (the end product) of the work of the Holy Spirit inside us and our response to the Spirit.

And that's why it's been said, "Be careful what you pray for: God may give it to you!" God doesn't *give* us patience but instead will give us opportunities to respond to the Spirit that will *result* (bear fruit) in patience.

I pray that during this challenging time our church would be willing to respond to the Spirit in ways that would bear the fruits of the Spirit.

—God bless, David Lee Hulsey

MISSION

How you can help the The Caring Place while services are suspended until further notice

Friends, because of the present concern about the coronavirus, I have to report a number of changes at The Caring Place. Both thrift stores, the one on Railroad Avenue and Second Helping on Williams Drive, are closed until further notice. Programs and Services are also closed. The Food Pantry will operate out of the donations drive-thru from 10 a.m. to 12 noon Tuesdays and Thursdays until further notice. There will be no daily bread. Donations of items are not being accepted at the drop-off.

We are encouraged to make monetary donations instead of food donations. One way of doing this is to use Amazon Smile. Designate The Caring Place as your nonprofit, and 0.50% of the cost of your purchases can go to The Caring Place. Also,

you can link your Randalls Remarkable Card, designating The Caring Place as your nonprofit organization. They will give 1.0% of the cost of your purchases to The Caring Place. Last, but not least, you can make monetary donations, which will allow The Caring Place to purchase food items from the Capitol Area Food Bank. There we can buy three items for \$1.

This is a tough time for all of us, but it will hit those with monetary problems much harder than the rest of us. Won't you consider monetary donations for the next few weeks?

For the effect of COVID-19 on The Caring Place operations, and updates, go to www.caringplacetx.org/covid-19.html or follow the organization on Facebook @thecaringplace. —Jenny Carswell

Mission Sewing

Thank you to:

- ♦ Lenice Smithwick and Alison Harrison for the stuffed animals with blankets and books.
- ♦ The individual who generously donated the colorful skeins of designer yarns. We appreciate your thoughtfulness.

Any donations of your excess yarn, fabric and sewing supplies may be placed in the yarn barrel outside the church office.

—Kathy Jones





Penny Leone, RN
Parish Nurse
 penny@fpcgeorgetown.org

Canceled:

Senior Seminar
 Thursday, April 16
 and
 Vibrant Living Seminar
 Monday, April 20

*April
 Calendar*

COMPASSIONATE CARE MINISTRY

Points from Parish Nurse Penny

By the time you receive this, you will have said, thought, heard or written coronavirus or COVID-19 hundreds, if not thousands, of times. I honestly considered NOT saying anything about it, knowing that you'd be SICK (pun intended) of hearing about it. Then, what kind of parish nurse would I be to miss the opportunity?

A few facts about viruses in general:
 What is a virus? It's a submicroscopic microorganism that cannot grow or replicate apart from a living cell. Viruses are considered to be the most abundant biological entities on earth. Viruses come in different shapes, such as round, spherical, tubular, 12-sided or crown-shaped. (The family of viruses that looks like a crown is called coronavirus.)

What is a virus made of? A virus has DNA or RNA (genetic materials) surrounded by protein. Some also have a lipid (fat) layer. Unlike a cell, it does not have organelles (a nucleus, mitochondria, ribosomes.)

How does a virus work? It invades living cells and uses the cell's chemical machinery to keep itself alive and replicate

itself. The cell is forced to produce thousands of identical copies of the original virus which spread to other cells, and the cycle starts again.

What can't a virus do? 1) It can't reproduce on its own. It must have a host cell. 2) It can't respond to anything. It can't move on its own. 3) It doesn't have working parts.

How long does a virus live outside of a cell? This varies according to the type of virus, the temperature, the humidity and the surface it lands on. Generally, viruses live better on hard surfaces (plastics, metals, etc.), whereas bacteria prefer soft surfaces (fabrics, etc.).

How do I get rid of a virus? God made you wonderfully and fearfully! Your body works hard as soon as you are infected to send the virus packing. So rest (your body is working hard), drink plenty of fluids (your body uses fluids to flush out toxins) and eat healthy food. Seek medical care if your symptoms become worse. To love your neighbor, cover your cough, wash your hands frequently and stay home if you are ill.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
29 Dr. Bobby Hulme-Lippert Preaching 11:00am Worship - WCFH	30	31 10:30am Pastoral Care 11:00am Staff Meeting	1	2	3 Church Office Closed at noon
5 Palm/Passion Sunday Dr. Bobby Hulme-Lippert Preaching 11:00am Worship - WCFH	6	7 10:30am Pastoral Care 11:00am Staff Meeting	8	9 7:30pm Tenebrae Service	10 Church Office Closed: Good Friday 12:00pm Good Friday Service
12 Easter Sunday Dr. Bobby Hulme-Lippert Preaching 11:00am Worship - WCFH	13 Church Office Closed: Easter Monday	14 10:30am Pastoral Care 11:00am Staff Meeting	15	16	17 Church Office Closed at noon
19 Dr. Bobby Hulme-Lippert Preaching 11:00am Worship - WCFH	20	21 10:30am Pastoral Care 11:00am Staff Meeting 4:30pm Newsletter Deadline	22	23	24 Church Office Closed at noon
26 Dr. Bobby Hulme-Lippert Preaching 11:00am Worship - WCFH	27	28 10:30am Pastoral Care 11:00am Staff Meeting	29	30	1 Church Office Closed at noon

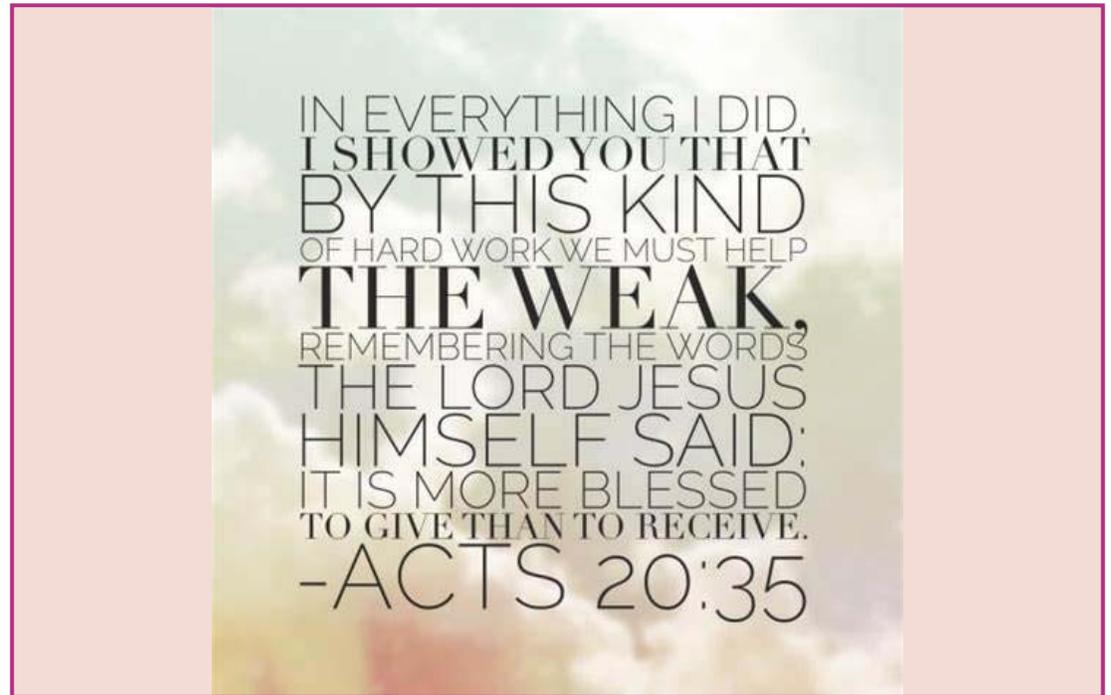
SPOTLIGHT



FPC's Transient Ministry/ Mission

"Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'"

—Matthew 25:37-40



It now has its own Mission Advocate

There's a new Mission Advocate at First Presbyterian, joining the 25-plus members who already advocate for a mission supported by our church.

Dawn Bookert, Mission Committee member and member of the LOGOS board, had a concern that the church's Transient Ministry could use more resources. "At a LOGOS board meeting last fall, someone mentioned we were almost out of gift cards for walk-ins. This was well before Thanksgiving. A discussion followed about the growing needs of the community."

Not long after that, she said, "Pastor Bobby asked me to lead a prayer resource table on missions for the Leadership Retreat in January. While preparing for that, I noticed there wasn't an advocate for the transient mission."

In February, when the Mission Committee discussed it as an agenda item, Dawn volunteered to be the advocate for the Transient Ministry "because I believe it is a worthy mission based on scripture." And the first thing she did was propose that more monies be found to support the ministry, which has a budget of just \$400 in 2020. She learned that someone coming to our church is eligible to receive a \$10 H-E-B gift card each quarter (a total of four each year, and a "Blessing Bag" with food and toiletry items. "I don't think

we're doing enough to serve this population," Dawn said.

At its February meeting, the Session voted to allow donations from members directly to the Transient Ministry fund, a line item in the mission budget. That \$400 has already been spent this year, buying 40 \$10 H-E-B gift cards in January to be handed out to individuals who seek assistance, mainly for food, in the church office during 2020. Those 40 cards are expected to last all year. Such gift cards can't be spent on alcoholic beverages or cigarettes. But they can be used to buy gas.

Christina Bondesen, church office manager, is responsible for dispensing the gift cards, and she says that often her supply is depleted by Thanksgiving, when some people come in needing money to feed their families during the holiday.

"Transient" might be a misnomer for the target population this mission serves. Transient is defined as "a person traveling about, usually in search of work, a guest or boarder who stays only briefly in a place." In truth, although some are transients or homeless, many of those seeking assistance are not transient or homeless. They reside in Georgetown, although they may move around often, and don't have enough money to make ends meet, or feed themselves or their

(continued on page 11)



What's in a Blessing Bag?

Bottled water, 2 granola bars, box of raisins, peanut butter crackers, fruit snacks, chewing gum, gummies, lip balm, bar of soap, wet wipes, tissues, toothbrush/paste, floss, pair of socks and bandaids.

A label on the bag reads: "You matter! You are not forgotten! Hope this Blessing Bag brightens your day! The church name, address, phone and web page address also are on the label."

Left, Maddox Azuma-Hall and Cathy Ramsey assemble bags.



The dental items in the bags are donated by the dentist practice in Hutto of Dr. John McEntire, FPC member.

LOGOS Blessing Bags for transient or homeless people

An FPC Blessing Bag is something Christina Bondesen can give a person seeking assistance at the church, even if he or she isn't eligible for an H-E-B gift card that day. She will offer a bag to "anyone who walks through the door asking for help."

Dawn Bookert, new mission advocate for FPC's transient/outreach mission, is familiar with these bags. Using LOGOS funds, she buys the 17 items that are put in large baggies by LOGOS children. Last year, 30 bags were assembled. This past January, 60 Blessing Bags were produced, Dawn said.

The idea for Blessing Bags originated with FPC staff member Kathi Davenport. LOGOS Director Jaime Cowan said, "She heard us talking about ways we as a church could help those folks who come through the church doors looking for assistance. Kathi packs her own Blessing Bags and she told us what's in them."

Jaime added, "Christina researched other items to include in our bags. She also spent time looking for places or resources where recipients of our Blessing Bags can go for help in Williamson County. The result is a reference sheet that we include in every bag."

LOGOS got involved because, Jaime said, "we were looking for mission projects that our kids could physically take part in. When this idea came up, we knew it would meet a need in the community, and it was something the kids could help with."

The other side of the resource sheet is decorated with a message by a LOGOS child. LOGOS pays for most Blessing Bag items with monies from its annual fundraising dinner. Some are donated by generous church members. —Marty Curtis



From left, Jaime Cowan, Christina Bondesen and Dawn Bookert check three Blessing Bags to make sure all items are there.

Mission Advocate

(continued from page 9)

families, Christina said. They are truly less fortunate. These same people, who live at or below the federal poverty level, are often clients of The Caring Place's Food Pantry and its other services. "Although sometimes when they come into our church office they may have exhausted the resources available to them at The Caring Place," she added. Perhaps a more accurate description of this FPC mission would be "Transient/Out-reach Ministry."

So to answer the question: "Why doesn't the church office just refer these people to The Caring Place?" They may have already been there and exhausted that resource.

One of the suggestions for use of donations to this mission is the purchase of \$20 H-E-B or Walmart gift cards be given to families, with the \$10 cards for individuals.

Some of the people who come into the church office for help are what Christina describes as "regulars." They have been here for many years and are well known to her and the previous church secretary, Cindee Molenda. According to Christina, Cindee would often give people money of her own, and often give them a ride if they had no other means of transportation. Staff over the years have, no doubt, opened their pocketbooks to people who have

shown up in dire need, and helped with their transportation.

Our church "Transient Assistance Guidelines," which Christina uses, say: "If a person is insistent that they need money, give them up to \$20 if you have it with you. The church will reimburse you. This is to keep any one person from tying up a great deal of your time."

Those same guidelines read: "When a person calls or comes into the office looking for financial assistance, the following guidelines should be used. We DO NOT help with rent or utility payments. Refer all persons to The Caring Place. Our local mission money goes directly to The Caring Place for this specific purpose. In some instances when a meal is all that is needed, we can offer a \$10 H-E-B gift card, if available. *An applicant is eligible for a gift card only once a quarter.*"

At one time, FPC was a member of the Georgetown Ministerial Alliance, which designated a "Church of the Month," to which all other churches would refer people seeking assistance during that month. Christina said there has been discussion of FPC's again becoming a member of that group. If that happens, other guidelines or practices would be considered for our church's transient ministry.

—Marty Curtis

The Caring Place 2019 data that reflect community need

2,621 # of unduplicated families served
 6,659 # of unduplicated individuals served
 40% below 18 years of age
 17% 55 years of age and above
 4% veteran or spouse/child of veteran
 33% uninsured
 13% homeless
 61% at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level
 91% At or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level

Total resources provided: **\$3,259,047**
 Food distributed to area families thru 4 food programs: **1,559,492 lbs.**
 # Meals provided to area families: **1,299,577**

—From TCP's 2019 Annual Report



Ways our church and members help people in need

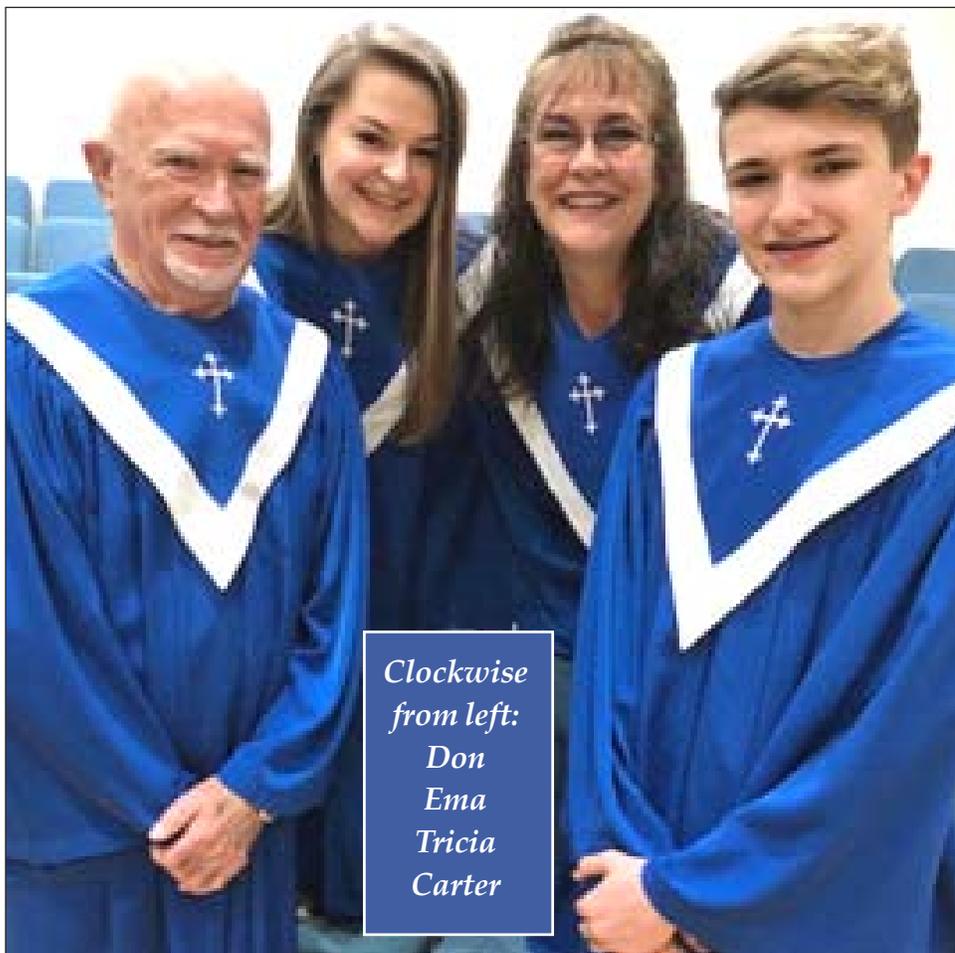
- ♦ The 2020 FPC budget has \$400 earmarked for "transient ministry" and has been used to buy \$10 H-E-B gift cards (40 total), which are given to people seeking assistance.
- ♦ LOGOS children make "Blessing Bags" that are given to people who ask for help at the church office.
- ♦ Look on the back of your bulletin this Sunday to see a list of both local and global agencies and entities, many of which serve the less fortunate. Those agencies and organizations are recipients of FPC mission dollars.
- ♦ Groups and individuals in our church, including the youth, volunteer to make sandwiches and lunches that are distributed by Helping Hands of Georgetown four days a week. (See next column.)
- ♦ Members volunteer at The Caring Place, the Georgetown Project and Backpack Buddies (to mention just a few), which provide food and other services for adults and children.



Helping Hands of Georgetown

provides meals in the community for the underserved, working poor and homeless. Volun-

teers go out Monday-Thursday each week to hand out brown bag lunches from a mobile canteen. The organization also provides a hot meal each Sunday night. Volunteers distribute any items they have collected (clothes, toiletries, food) to people in areas of the community with a high need, as well as areas with a homeless population.



*Clockwise
from left:
Don
Ema
Tricia
Carter*

Three generations in the choir

The Chancel Choir gained a new member recently, and three generations of a family, when Don Curl joined daughter Tricia Osborne, granddaughter Ema Osborne and grandson Carter Osborne to sing at the 11 a.m. worship service. It may be a first. Two generations have been represented in the choir, but three may be a record.

Don moved to Georgetown to live with his daughter's family in 2018 and recently joined the church after visiting the Osbornes here for many years with his wife, now deceased. "This has been the closest thing to a church family that I've known in a few years," he said. Don has bachelor's and master's degrees in music education and is a former school band director. As a member of First Presbyterian in Edinburg, Don, a baritone, directed the choir and served as elder, and he was an

elder and deacon at First Pres in Denton.

Of the FPC Chancel Choir, Don says, "It's fantastic—the best I've sung in or conducted," and he has performed with and often led many choirs.

Tricia has been a member of FPC since 2000 and was married to her husband Chris here in 1997. "I gave her away in the Sanctuary," her dad recalls. Both Ema, now 21, a soprano, and Carter, a tenor baritone, 16, were baptized here and grew up in Sunday School, LOGOS, LOGOS musicals and youth group.

Through Chris's family, Ema and Carter are 7th generation Georgetown residents. Chris' mother was FPC member JoBeth Carter, now deceased. She first joined the church in 1976 and was a member from 1985 until her death in 2016. Tricia met Chris, a church member since 1996,

when she moved to this area to work after college.

Tricia was FPC Director of Children's Choirs for 11 years and directed LOGOS musicals every year during that time, with Ema and Carter both participating. "In every single one of them," they both echo. A tenor, Tricia has sung in the choir for years and plays with the handbell choir. She and two other women join the male tenors on the back two rows of the choir loft. "They make up half of our tenor section," Don says with a laugh.

Ema: both singer and dancer

Ema sang in the choir and performed duets and solos for Youth Sunday services while in high school. She graduated cum laude from Stephen F. Austin State University last December with a major in dance education and minor in English. She came home to work and look for a teaching job. Carter, an East View High School sophomore, has also sung in the choir, occasionally for cantatas and other events.

While looking for a school position teaching dance, Ema is teaching dance at a local studio and working on the central and south Texas staff of the American Dance and Drill Team School in Salado. A former drill team member at East View High School, she judges dance competitions all over the region sponsored by the school.

Pastor Bobby asked Ema to perform a liturgical dance to "Seek Ye First" and "Kumbaya" as part of the Sunday, March 29, service (live-streamed) during the Lenten series of sermons on prayer.

She said, "I was unsure about how to approach such an emotional and worshipful style when I heard about the idea of incorporating liturgical dance into this specific day's worship. I know that God used this opportunity for me to glorify him, using the talents he has given me. I am so thankful for the chance to share this wonderfully vulnerable form of worship with our congregation."

—Marty Curtis