

Grace Presbyterian Gazette



May, 2020

PASTOR'S CORNER

Well, we're still in this social distancing challenge as a church from the COVID-19 pandemic which our world is still experiencing and doing our best to manage as responsibly as we can. I have really been encouraged by the level of cooperation and goodwill so many have been giving around the world. Our Session continues to monitor the situation and will stay in touch with you about returning to normal operations and meetings as soon as it is safe to do so.

I wanted to share a thought for us during this difficult time, from Colossians 3:1-2. This passage reminds us to set our minds on the person of Christ and on the things that are "above."

At the beginning of this year, I took a trip to assist a pastor friend who was being ordained into an ECO church in Florida. As I got onto the plane which took off from Little Rock, it was in the morning and this particular morning was very dark. It was raining, and instead of looking like a morning the sky looked almost like night time. As the plane was taking off, it eventually got airborne and as usual the plane started angling upward into the dark, rainy clouds. The plane kept rising into the darkness and eventually to the top layer of clouds.

Then, all at once, daylight exploded into view - almost blinding - no more rain, no more darkness, just the happy, bright, perfectly clear sky! Everything was so incredibly bright! These two moments were only seconds apart, and yet they truly felt as if they were two, completely different worlds! I had to force myself to believe that they were both existing, at the same time!

How appropriate it is that God decided to call the place where he lives, "the heavens," which means the sky, though of course only symbolically. This place, this other dimension, this other world, the spiritual world of heaven, is a place where God and his joyful and glorious presence is known and undeniable.



In this passage, Paul is saying that we need to remember the truth of the existence of heaven, and how safe we are in the hands that are holding us from there and how loved we are from there, right now and at all times. We must try never to forget that it exists, just as I had to force myself to believe in those two very different realities that morning! We forget that it exists just above us, down in our gloomy, dark, rainy mornings. We often get depressed from the how hard this life can be and think that our struggle is the only reality. We need to remember this OTHER place, just above our dark clouds:

"If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth." (Col.3:1-2)

Paul is definitely NOT calling us to disengage from this world or pull away from diligently serving people, work, and life, but to do it motivated and conscious of God's close presence in heaven. He is calling us to train ourselves to stay conscious of heaven's existence, and to put our joy and our security in it. This is what this verse is calling is to believe and do.

May Christ hold you fast in the security of His atonement which justifies us and adopts us, as we seek consciously to keep serving Him during this time, in ways that please Him and bless others. Amen. ■

SPOT LIGHT ON: BERNICE CHAPIN

BY RENEE HUNTER

“I’ve done a little bit of everything,” said Bernice Chapin, and she wasn’t exaggerating. Born in North Little Rock, Bernice has lived most of her life in Central Arkansas, with the exception of five years in Texas.

After graduating from North Little Rock High School, Bernice trained as a nurse and went to work for Fort Roots Veterans Administration hospital, then a psychiatric facility.

Bernice married her first husband in 1963, and they moved to Texas, first to Dallas, where she worked at the VA hospital, and later to Denton, where she worked at Denton State School, a facility that serves the intellectually disabled.

But Bernice and her husband “came to a parting of the ways,” she said, “and I came home.” She returned to Fort Roots VA, working in the alcohol and drug abuse program.

After retiring on disability in 1973, Bernice sought something new for her life, and found it. She purchased several acres near Vilonia and became a farmer, learning as she went.

“I found out that hay didn’t grow in bales, and it didn’t jump into the barn to be stored,” she said. She lived on that acreage for 17 years, and at one time or another had “every kind of animal you could ever have on a farm.” One of her pigs, an 800-pound sow named Susie Fern, was something of a pet and was very protective of Bernice.

While running the farm, Bernice also found time to work in a slaughterhouse, to help out at a chicken-and-dairy farm, and to care for her mother. And she was reporter for the Vilonia News, a community newspaper. She has copies of some of her stories.

Soon after returning to Arkansas, Bernice renewed her friendship with Dr. John Chapin, a friend from her nursing-school days. In fact, John was an usher at her April wedding, and she was matron of honor at his June wedding. His marriage, like hers, had ended in divorce.



Because both were caring for elderly parents, the couple didn’t marry until 1988. They sold the Vilonia farm and purchased 34 acres on Lower Ridge Road in Conway, where they lived until 2007, when they moved to Driftwood St. John died in 2013. In 2017, Bernice moved to Princeton Village.

Bernice was baptized when she was 13, and was active at Rose City Baptist Church as a teen. As an adult, her work kept her from being as active as she liked, “but I always had my faith.” After retirement, she went to a Vilonia community church that was “Baptist one Sunday and Methodist the next.” John was not a church-goer, and that didn’t suit Bernice. First, she persuaded him to attend First Christian Church in Maumelle, quite a drive. The couple eventually joined First Presbyterian. Bernice is a charter member of Grace.

Tacos 4 Life Mobile Pack

Tacos 4 Life was founded with a Meal 4 Meal mission – for every taco, rice bowl, quesadilla, salad or nachos purchased, a hungry child receives a meal through Feed My Starving Children. All the meals are hand-packed at our annual Mobile Pack events and shipped to over 70 countries, where they're received by kids in need.



MISSION & EVANGELISM

BY KEN HUNTER

During March, GPC completed two of our projects. On Friday morning, March 13th, nine members participated in the clean-up of litter along our section of Prince Street during which we picked up eight bags of litter. On the following morning, eight of us were involved, along with a number of other groups in the “Tacos for Life” meal-pack program held at the Conway Expo Center. We also with some youth from 2nd Baptists packed 720 meals at our stations. There were many stations spread over the Expo Center.

Our primary project scheduled for April was “Feed the Need.” It has been postponed indefinitely. This is the major food drive for the Conway Ministry Center’s Storehouse Food Pantry. We were scheduled to manage the Oak Street Kroger location as we did last year.

GPC is involved with and supports the **Conway Ministry Center**. The **Storehouse Client Choice Pantry**, which

supplies food and hygiene supplies to the homeless and those in need, is one part of this ministry. It continues to operate each Thursday despite having to make modifications due to the Coronavirus situation. On Thursday, March 26th, 254 families, consisting of approximately 750 individuals, were served. It was the first visit to the pantry for 111 of these families. Of the total, 140 of the families were out of work and 27 were without transportation. This was about three times the normal number served and the number is likely to increase in the next few weeks. The **need** for food and hygiene supplies has increased considerably and several of the regular donors can no longer donate. **If you would like to help, you can place your donations in the two tote bins located in the hallway at church.** Contact Ken Hunter or call the church for information. Any nonperishable food item can be used, but peanut butter, canned meat and canned pasta type items are most needed.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES AT GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

- ◇ **Toad Suck Daze** has been put off (indefinitely at this time), therefore we will not have a water stop event on 5/2/2020 as planned.
- ◇ **All Meetings in addition to Sunday Worship gatherings, such as Sunday School, Grace Gardens, and Tuesday Brown Bag Study** will be postponed until we return from COVID-19 distancing.
- ◇ Some groups are however happening virtually on Zoom and internet gatherings. Let us know if you have any questions regarding any in particular.
- ◇ If you need help with anything from our church office, please call 501-504-6899 or email Erin at gracepres@conwaycorp.net. Her **office hours** are Wednesday, and Friday 8:30-2:30.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◆ The 2020 Sanctuary Setup and Cleanup sign up sheets are posted in the hallway. We need volunteers to help fill these spots. If you are able and would like to serve in this capacity, we would appreciate your help!

MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT

March, 2020

Expenses	\$13,957
Tithes	\$14,457

BIRTHDAYS:

4/17 - Charles Phares; 4/26 - Larry Dunn; 5/1 - Sheila Rupert; 5-15 - Bill Johnson; 5/19 - Vicki Phares; 5/21 - Jim Hays; 5/24 - Trudy Jordan; 5/26 - Laura Deem; 5/27 - Peggy Woosley

CURRENT PRAYER LIST AS OF (5/1/2020):

Don Adams, friend of Joe and Sue Dablock; Bill Conner; Charlie Rose Cullum, friend of Annette Sackhoff; Bo Denton; Larry Dunn; Paul Ellis, son of Herman and Betty Ellis; Harold Fultz, cousin of Annette Sackhoff; Nancy Higgins; Steve Hoffman, friend of Nancy Davis with cancer and transplant need; Steve Jensen, transferred to Jordan, son of Barbara Watkins; Betty & Fred Knight, friends of Pedersen family; Maddie Kittler's dad (for safety as nurse at UAMS in ER); Martha Lierley; Ann Moss, mother of Debbie McConkie; Susan McNabb and family, passing of her mother, Patricia Thompson; Passing of Pat Murphy, friend of Rusty Mosley; Netta Seifert, friend of Joe and Adele Pruett; Jeff and Jenny Whitehead, friend of Joe and Sue Dablock.

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