



First Presbyterian  
MIDLAND

# Life

*news to grow on*  
Edition 15 - April 2011

## Holy Week

*Inside Cover*

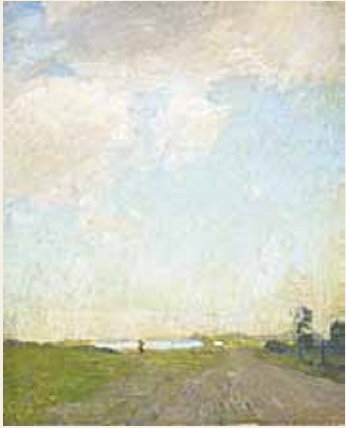
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*Dear Friends,*



Cover:  
*Sunshine after the Rain*  
by William Langston Lanthrop

## **Holy Week at First Presbyterian Church**

**Maundy Thursday,**  
April 21  
Worship in  
Sanctuary  
6:30 pm

**Good Friday,**  
April 22  
Worship in Chapel  
6:30 pm

**Easter Vigil, Saturday,**  
April 23  
Chapel  
6:30 pm

**Easter Sunday**  
Worship in the Sanctuary  
8:15 and 11:00 am

**The Bridge** in the Chapel  
11:00 am

**Annual Family Easter  
Celebration** in Chapel  
9:30 am

I write this late in March, one of my favorite times of year because of the NCAA tournament – “*March Madness*” they call it. I didn’t get to enter a “bracket” this year, and I haven’t watched as many games as I’d like, but I’ve still seen some amazing plays, last minute shots, and upsets by underdogs. (Someone once asked me if I ever thought about giving up “*March Madness*” for Lent. I changed the subject.)

This year it seems the madness extends beyond the court. Do you remember anything like this? The revolution in Tunisia, Egypt, (relatively peaceful) and now Libya (relatively violent with international missiles and bombs); a powerful earthquake and tsunami in Japan, the peril of a damaged nuclear plant; ongoing violence on the border of the US and Mexico; political polarization; the volatility of the American economy; the price of oil; church denominational decline, division, debates; eleven funerals in seven weeks in our own congregation.

Do you ever have that unsettling feeling that something is happening – something is going on, but you are not quite sure what it is? You are also not quite sure how it will affect you, but you are hoping something or someone is on your side.

On Tuesday during our morning Bible study we read Acts 17. Paul is in Athens at an equally unsettling time historically and notices all the temples and statues - one with an inscription: “To an unknown god.” One commentator remarked that the Greeks (along with many others) had so many gods because they were looking for something, someone who was on their side. When they went to war, they wanted someone on their side, so they prayed to the god of war. When they planted their crops they knew they needed someone on their side, so they prayed to the god of the harvest. Paul boldly speaks to them about the “unknown god” who is known in Jesus Christ, who could not be limited or contained, who is sovereign and personal.

This Lenten season, in the midst of all the madness, we’ve been studying Jesus’ blessings. Dale Brunner thinks “blessing” is God’s way of saying “I’m on your side.” We think of Lent as a journey to the cross, and then resurrection – through unknown, unsettling darkness, to light. Is there any more profound proof of God’s blessing and promise to be “on our side”?

I hope you find our worship (both on Sundays and Wednesdays) a place to settle during unsettling times. Aware that many people attend on Palm Sunday and Easter, I’d like to extend a special invitation for you to be a part of our Holy Week services. In these times of worship we hear the full story of Jesus death and find the blessing which makes us ready to celebrate on Easter.

Blessings!

  
Steve



## Prayers for...

**Prayers of Intercession are requested for** Jered Groner, Annette and Dick Braun, Beth and Charles Priddy, Roger Elliott, Dick Prentice, Florence Doss, Mary Anne and Gene Bartus, Jess Parrish, Jacquelyn Brown, Martha Holton, Larry Snyder, Sarah Wyrick.

**Please pray for military personnel deployed for Operation Iraqi Freedom (Iraq) and Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan):** Michael, Casey, Daniel, Carlos, Megan, Drew McKelwaith, Chris Miles, Aaron French, David Thornhill, Hank Hortenstine, Adam Graham, Tom Wolters, Mike Neu, Edwin Gaston, Zach Frisbie, Jake Hall, Hunter D. Martin, Clayton Slover, Damon Darnell, Danny Wakefield, Dean Forest, Joe Banner, Morgan Cruthirds, Stephen Clayman, Justin Galan, Stanley Najjar, Steven Castellon, Michael French, Paul Finfrock, Charles Scott, Dr. David Shepherd, Tommy Brown.

## Congratulations to...

Elizabeth and Chad Cooksey upon the birth of their daughter, Allison Anne Cooksey, on February 16, 2011 in Dallas; great granddaughter of Norma and Jim Webb; granddaughter of Sharon and John Webb and Tricia and Tommy Cooksey; niece of Jonathan Webb, Andrew Webb and Courtney Cooksey.

Wynne and Lewis Brown upon the birth of their twins, Margaret Rose Brown and Henry Perryman Brown, on March 2, 2011 in Dallas; sister and brother of Bessie and Cadell Brown; great grandchildren of Bessie Liedtke and Ann Perryman; grandchildren of Marion and Cadell Liedtke; niece and nephew of Claire Liedtke, Bessie and Will Doffermyre, Leslie and Michael Fertitta; cousins of Will Doffermyre, Marion, Nancy Claire and Annie Fertitta.

## Condolences to...

Diane and Marc Shannon upon the death of Diane's mother, Gerry Hempel, on February 15, 2011; grandmother of Lindsey.

The family of Shawn Eicher (Extended family member of Tammy Smith) upon her death on Tuesday, February 22, 2011.

Marvin Stetler (former member) upon the death of his wife, Lori, on February 23, 2011.

Bobby and Sharon Floyd upon the death of Bobby's father, Gene Floyd, on February 27, 2011; grandfather of Michelle, Robert, Michael and Coleman.

Harold Lucchi upon the death of his wife, Anne, on February 28, 2011; mother of Gina (Corky) Allen; grandmother of Mallory and Macki McKim.

Judge Ray McKim upon the death of his wife, Helen McKim, on March 2, 2011 in San Angelo; mother of Ray (Betty) McKim, III; grandmother of Mallory and Macki McKim.

Jane Riddle and her family upon the death of her husband, Ray Riddle, on Wednesday, March 2, 2011.

Roxane and Ben Strickling upon the death of Roxane's father, Derwood Ratliff, on March 8, 2011; grandfather of Kelly Strickling, Mitchell Strickling, and Lexie (Jason) Horner.

Greg Bartha upon the death of his mother, Ruth Bartha, on March 20, 2011.

Decker Dawson upon the death of his wife, Lou Dawson, on March 22, 2011.

Jim and Julie Burke upon the death of Tim's father, Bob Burke.

## Thank you for your nice letters...

Please stop by the information center at the Texas street reception area to read the thank-you note we received from family of Alpheus Harral (uncle of Aline Collins).

## Traditional Worship Music Schedule for April

### April 3

The Sanctuary Choir will share a setting of *The Beatitudes* by Biery at 11:00 worship.

Violinist John Madura will play and the Sanctuary Choir will sing.

### April 10

The Agape Ringers will ring anthems by Warzyn and Wagner at both services.

The Sanctuary Choir and the children's choirs will combine for 11:00 worship.

### April 17, Palm Sunday

The Sanctuary Choir will share Hogan's joyful "*Ride On, King Jesus*" at both services, and the Celestial, Carol, Cherub, Elementary and Junior Choirs will sing at 11:00 worship.

### April 24

*The Day of Days* will be celebrated by our Sanctuary Choir with anthems by Clausen, Halley, and Handel with brass ensemble.

### Special Choir Events – and YOU!

The Sanctuary Choir invites singers to join us not only for our 125th anniversary celebration worship services, but for Eastertide services, too.

Please contact Greg in the music office, 684-7821, ext. 139, or [gpysh@fpcmid.org](mailto:gpysh@fpcmid.org) for more information.



## From Mee to You

### Children's Ministry Newsbrief

Once again, I wish to thank you for partnering with me in guiding your child(ren) in a relationship with God and with fellowship with our Christian family.

Here we are in the mist of the Lenten season. What have you changed for Lent? Did you add a discipline, or give something up? During the Ash Wednesday service. Pastor Mary Beth asked us about our treasures and what we are doing with them? Pastor Steve encouraged us to practice a new discipline. One idea he gave was to pray about all that is around you for which you are thankful. What a wonderful discipline this is to share with our children – to focus on all that we are thankful for in this broken world. The closing hymn was “*In Christ Alone*”, there is so much to give thanks about. Below is the first verse.

*In Christ alone my hope is found;  
He is my light,  
my strength,  
my song  
this cornerstone,  
this solid ground,  
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.  
What heights of love,  
what depths of peace,  
when fears are stilled,  
when strivings cease.  
My comforter,  
my all in all,  
here in the love of Christ I stand.*

It is my prayer that you will encourage your child(ren) to be involved here as often as possible, to build relationships with their peers and the adults around them.

The following activities are available for your child(ren) to help equip them for life:

**Sunday School 9:30 – 10:30 pm** don't miss out

**5:55 Club** Wednesday evenings during the Gathering from 5:55 – 6:30 pm

**Choir** Wednesday evenings from 6:30 – 7:30 pm through April 6th

**Easter Sunday: Annual Family Easter Celebration from 9:30 – 10:30 in the Chapel** (where the Bridge service takes place). We will sing, worship, pray, hear the Easter story through the Resurrection Eggs, hunt eggs and plant a tree to help us remember the new life. **Bring the whole family, young and old, to this wonderful Family Easter Celebration!**

**VBS, Vacation Bible School:** This is for children turning 4 by September 1, 2011 through those entering the third grade. PandaMania is the name this year and we are excited to invite you to join in and volunteer and for your child to be a participant. Look for more information in this edition of LIFE.

**AWC, Adventures with Christ:** Information coming soon!

His,  
Chrissie Mee  
Director of Children's Ministry

***“But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly”.***

Matthew 6:6 (King James version)



**The Prayer Closet is there for YOU. PLEASE feel free to step in and close the door and PRAY.**



## Why the Name Stephen?

The name Stephen comes from St. Stephen, who was the first lay person commissioned by the apostles to provide caring ministry to those in need (as recorded in Acts 6).

Our Stephen Ministry Trainees, Mary Rasmussen, Randee Rathbone, Vicki Rice, Elton Cole, Carl Moore, Gene Needham and Al Spinks, led by Suzy Boldrick, began training on February 15 and will continue through May 24. They are nurturing their gifts and acquiring new skills so that they can bring Christ's love and care to hurting people on behalf of our congregation. Please lift them up in your prayers and encourage them in this endeavor.

**Remember, YOU can play an important role in our Stephen Ministry . . .**

. . . Because you or someone you may know (a friend, neighbor, co-worker or relative) may be going through a difficult time and might benefit from the focused care, encouragement and support of a Stephen Minister. If you or someone you know is hurting, talk with one of our Stephen Leaders: Mary Margaret Davis, Suzy Boldrick, Andye Conly or Nancy Baker. They can talk with you about how we can connect the person with one of our Stephen Ministers. It's a great way for you to show how much you care!

### The Meaning of the Stephen Series Logo

The logo's most dominant feature is the cross of Jesus. It reminds us that Christ is at the center of Stephen Ministry and all Stephen Ministry relationships.

The broken person behind the cross symbolizes how we are all broken people, broken by our own sin and imperfections.

The Stephen Series logo tells the story of a care receiver's journey from brokenness to wholeness through the transforming power of the cross of Jesus. It serves as a simple reminder that it is not the Stephen Minister who restores a person to wholeness. Rather, it is only through the cross of Jesus that a person can be made whole.



The whole person in front of the cross signifies the wholeness we encounter through the transforming power of the cross of Jesus. It is only through Jesus and his life, death on the cross, and resurrection that we, who are broken people, are made whole.

The circle is a symbol of God's eternal and never-ending love for us. God's love surrounds us, holds us, heals us, with the cross of Jesus at the center of that love. For it was Jesus, God's Son, who allowed himself to be broken on the cross to save us from our sin and give us the opportunity to be restored to wholeness through him.

## The Life of Prayer

Join us for *The Life of Prayer*, a new Sunday school study beginning Sunday, March 13, and continuing through the Sundays of Lent until April 17 in Room 210 at 9:30 am. We know we're called to pray, but the reality is that we do not always find it easy to pray.

We'll explore together why we pray, how we pray, and how we keep on praying. As we make the journey with Jesus to the cross in this season of Lent, we'll seek to deepen our communion with him by practicing a variety of methods of prayer. *Everyone is welcome!*



We love because he first loved us.

1 John 4:19



# Spirit Walk

## Growing Old with God

“I don’t care about my health,” 17-year-old son Kyle retorted quickly when I politely suggested that Dorito’s and Dr. Pepper did not make for an ideal Saturday breakfast.

With my mother-in-law’s recent 80th birthday celebration at the forefront of my mind, I snapped back, “Well, you’ll care about your health when you’re Mamaw’s age and you realize that you haven’t taken care of your body.”

He was unfazed, needless to say; however, I couldn’t help but cringe at Kyle’s pompous statement about his health. Maybe it’s because I have felt as of late like my own health has become more and more precarious as my 50+ body rebels against faculties that used to be taken for granted -- simple things like seeing and hearing and walking. Surely they’re using smaller type in the church bulletin these days. And I’m convinced that people at my table mumble in busy, loud restaurants. Even the simple task of walking causes hip pain after long jaunts.

I wouldn’t be too bothered by these minor adjustments I’ve been forced to endure (after all, I’ve found a great website for cute reading glasses – a whole new fashion statement!) but through my parents and Craig’s mother, I’ve gotten a very focused view of where this slow deterioration is headed.

The evening of mother-in-law Ann’s surprise birthday dinner party, we had her meet at our house first before heading to the restaurant. She was expecting a small family celebration, and we wanted to stall a few minutes to be sure all the guests would have arrived by the time we got there. Craig was on a business call, so I invited her into the den, where we settled in for small talk.

“What did you do on your birthday today?” I asked.

“Well, this morning, I went to my first balance class,” she began. Before she could get a breath to continue telling me about her day, I jumped in:

“Balance class?” I quizzed with a slight grin, thinking that she was entirely too spry to need instruction on remaining upright. “What’s that?”

She proceeded to tell me that Manor Park – the retirement village where she lives independently -- offers a class that meets two days a week for six weeks, two hours per session, all with the goal of improving balance.

“But today,” she informed me, “we just talked.”

“Talked!” I retorted, laughing. “How do you talk about balance for two hours?”

“Well,” she said, “we each shared about our fears of falling so the instructor will know what we most need to work on.”

I already knew that Ann had had two falls in the last year and that she now refused herself the luxury of a hot bath for fear of slipping in the tub, or worse, not being able to hoist her tiny self out of the slippery porcelain, but I never dreamed that this active, bright-minded woman actually feared hitting the ground unexpectedly.

“We have homework to do before the next session, and I’m dreading it,” she said. “We are supposed to stand on one foot for as long as we can several times throughout the day.”

Confused, I asked exactly what about that bothered her, and I was shocked when she admitted that she cannot stand on one foot for more than a millisecond or two. Sure that I had misunderstood the homework, I stood and raised my right leg.



“You can’t do this?” I asked, sure that she would correct me and demonstrate a much more intense exercise. She confirmed that I’d done the assignment correctly and proceeded to show me how difficult she found the task.

Unable to shake the notion that anyone short of an invalid would be unable to balance on one leg, I phoned my own mother the following day and repeated the conversation I’d had with Ann. I just knew she’d say that something was horribly wrong with my mother-in-law. Instead, she exclaimed, “A balance class? I wish I could go to a balance class!”

Still unbelieving that my 79-year-old mother -- who used to practically sprint through the mall when we shopped – would have balance issues, I insisted that she stand up while I was on the phone and try lifting one foot off the ground.

“It’s harder than you think, Suz,” she said consolingly. “Getting old is not for the faint at heart.”

Wow! So this was what I had to look forward to – first blind and deaf, and then teetery! Indeed, I thought, my teenage son needs to treasure every free-flowing artery and elastic muscle in his sturdy frame.

A few days later, sitting on a cushiony pew to honor the legacy of Ray Riddle, one of our church’s finest, most respected pastors who had died at the age of 92, I thought again about the balancing act of aging. Only this time, my perspective was through wide angle lenses instead of cheaters. Indeed, Ray was old; but never faint of heart. In fact, he balanced his affinity for people with his love for the Lord right up to the very end. I’d seen him in church just two Sundays before his death and was warmed by his broad smile and trademark greeting, “Hello, dahlin’!” as he practically skipped to his seat in the sanctuary with his wife, Janie, who is not just aged, but legally blind as well. Both of these true church elders marched into old age – intermittent bad health and all – with joy in their hearts and humor tipping their lips.

I know the Bible greats’ bodies weren’t tainted by processed foods, pollution and electronic media (or any other media for that matter!), but they did roam deserts, eat locusts and sleep on the ground. Moses was a mere 80 years old when he conversed with God through the burning bush. Abraham was 100 when he finally fathered a child. Noah was 600 when the ark set sail and we won’t even mention how Methuselah managed to live 969 years!

What I can glean from patriarchs of the Bible and the elderly saints among us today is that, despite our bodies, which God created in his own image, He will use us, fuel us and continually infuse us until we have passed the balancing class; until we have not just talked about our fears but have learned to lean on Him; until we have loved Him deeply, glorified Him wholeheartedly, and obeyed Him sufficiently – all in the midst of our everyday comings and goings.

The beauty of getting old is that, no matter how frail our bodies become, the Lord is still reachable. We don’t need good eyesight to capture His vision, or good ears to hear Him speak. We don’t need loads of energy to feel His power, clean arteries to feel Him touch our hearts, or legs in order to walk with Him. Heck, we don’t even need sound minds in order to know Him because He transcends the very vessel He crafted to house us.

My physical trainer says that if I keep exercising and lifting weights, I just might be able to stand on one foot when I’m 80.

Lord, give me strength for the race!

– Susan Atchison



**The Bridge “sermon only” CDs are available**

Order forms are available at the church reception area or call Rhondy at 684-7821 to place an order.

**DVDs now available upon request**

of 11:00 am worship in the Sanctuary. Cost of each DVD is \$5.

# Embracing God’s Healing Love Through Prayer

Are you seeking “God’s Healing Love through Prayer”? FPC will be hosting a during Lenten Season. Dr. Joe Johnson, Community Life Pastor of Grace Lutheran Church, Huntington Beach, California, will be leading our community through teaching, worship and prayer to minister the Father’s love and blessing and connect believers to the Father’s heart. Pastor Joe received his M.Div. from Luther Seminary and his Doctorate of Ministry from Fuller Theological Seminary. He is the director of Heart of the Father Ministry. [jjohnson@gracehb.org]

Lent is a time of preparation for Christ’s death & resurrection. It is a time for contemplative reflection and a time of refocusing our lives...and remembering the Gift God gave when He died on the cross. Lent is an ideal time for healing. Healing prayer ministry has Biblical authority: Healing is in God’s created order, the kingdom(Mt 10:1,7-8) and the wounds of Christ(Mt 8:16-17, Mk 16:18, Rom 15:19; 1Cor 12:9; 1Pet 2:24; James 5:14-16). There are three kinds of healing: spiritual, emotional and physical. Healing prayer ministry connects God’s empowering presence to people’s needs.

**“EMBRACING GOD’S HEALING LOVE THROUGH PRAYER”** will be the focus of our ecumenical conference, held @ FPC on March 25-26 (Friday evening 6:30-9:00 pm.; Saturday 8:30 am-4:00 pm). No admission will be charged; “love offerings” will be accepted. Continental breakfast will be provided; lunch will be provided on Saturday for a small fee. Opportunity to hear Dr. Joe Johnson preach and conduct healing prayer is available Sunday, March 27 @ Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, 9 am-noon; open to the public. Those churches that are presently involved in the planning & support of the event beside the host church, First Presbyterian Church: St. Ann’s Catholic Church, St. Stephen’s Catholic Church, Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, Episcopal Church of the Holy Trinity, St. Nicholas Episcopal Church, First Christian Church, St. Luke’s United Methodist Church, Trinity Presbyterian Church, and Midland Association of Churches. Watch for more information in the next few weeks. If you are interested in participating in a “prayer team”, please contact Sally Green: [egreen3444@sbcglobal.net](mailto:egreen3444@sbcglobal.net) or Jean Kiker: [jbkiker@suddenlink.net](mailto:jbkiker@suddenlink.net)

*“Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly.”*  
Isaiah 58:8

– Prayer & Spirituality Ministry

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Friday, March 25	Sanctuary	Saturday, March 26	Fellowship(Lynn) Hall
6:30-7:00 pm	Registration (No fees)	8:30-9:00 am	Registration (No fees);
7:00-7:30 pm	Praise & Worship		<i>Continental Breakfast</i>
7:30-9:00 pm	Session I – Dr. Joe Johnson	9:00-9:30 am	Praise & Worship
(Historical & Biblical roots of healing prayer)		9:30-10:45 am	Session II – Dr. Joe Johnson
9:00-9:30p.m.	Opportunities for healing prayer	10:45-11:00 am	Break
[Love offerings accepted]		11:00-12:30 pm	Session III – Dr. Joe Johnson
		12:30-1:15 pm	Lunch available for \$6.00
		1:15-1:35 pm	Praise & Worship
		1:35-3:00 pm	Session IV – Dr. Joe Johnson
		3:00-3:15 pm	Break
		3:15-4:00 pm	Session V – Dr. Joe Johnson (Healing & Commissioning Service in Sanctuary)

[Love offerings accepted]



Come join us as we work hard for God's Kingdom! FPC will be working on a Christmas in Action house again this year.

Our house this year belongs to a grandmother who is raising two of her grandchildren. This family will benefit greatly from the new windows, doors, siding and paint we will install on their home. Please come and help us tackle this project and provide an incredible blessing for this family. Lunch will be provided on both of our work days, so plan to stay as long as you can!

**Friday and Saturday, April 8 and 9**  
**9 am to 5 pm**  
**1802 English Drive**

## Keeping In Touch!

Can you help? One of the great needs of our congregation is to be In Touch with folks who have been such an important part of our church through the years but are unable now to come to church.

What a great thing it has been for someone from the church dropping by on a regular basis...to see how things are going...to see if there are needs which the church might help to address...and to maintain the "tie that binds" us together in Christian fellowship.

At present, we have numerous persons who, for the most part, are not able to join us for worship and activities of the church. The In Touch Ministry will be meeting on April 7 at 11:30 am in the Koinonia Room. If you can serve in this important ministry of the church...In Touch...please call Mary Margaret Davis at the church office 684-7821, ext.120. Thank you for helping to extend the caring ministry of Christ.

## FPC Life newsletter to be available online!

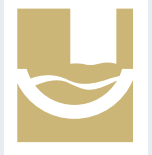
Due to the ever-increasing costs of printing, handling, and postage to mail each month's issue of Life, we will begin delivering the publication online to those of you who have the ability to receive it that way. Here are several reasons why:

- *a conservative cost estimate for the production of the monthly issues of Life is approximately \$1200*
- *it takes approximately 8 hours for our staff to print 900 of each month's issue*
- *several additional hours for our staff to label and sort the bulk mailer by zip codes*
- *a crew of faithful volunteers are required to then "seal" each finished newsletter per USPS standards*

Emailing the Life newsletter will not only help us save financial resources that we can use elsewhere, but we will also be saving LOTS of paper and wear-and-tear on our Riso machine. We will continue to offer paper copies of the newsletter at the church and to those of you who may not have internet access. By receiving the newsletter online, you will always have the ability to share the newsletter or something of interest with family members and friends or to print the document if you wish. Please notify Marty Burns at [mburns@fpcmid.org](mailto:mburns@fpcmid.org) or 684-7821 to update your current email address if necessary or to request continuation of the US mail version of our newsletter. Thanks so much for your willingness and understanding as together we make this effort to be more efficient in our service to you and our Lord Jesus Christ!

The Session has called a Congregational Meeting for Sunday, April 10, 2011, at 10:30 am in Lynn Hall for the purpose of (a) receiving a report on adjustments to the Pastors' Terms of Call concerning salary changes approved at the February Session Meeting for the 2011 budget, and (b) discussing any matters that may arise from the proposed adjustments.

Serve





*Faces of Children...a ministry of prayer for children at risk  
www.facesofchildren.net*

*Faces of Children prayer group meets at 11:30 a.m. Wednesdays in the Bride's room at FPC Midland.*

## Suffering Shepherd



### The Twenty-third Psalm (King James Version)

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters.  
He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.  
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.  
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Amen.

~~~~~  
A few years ago, First Presbyterian Church hosted an art walk as a helpful tool for reflection and prayer during Lent. In a hallway off the sanctuary, near windows overlooking the prayer garden, there were paintings, photographs, and written and musical pieces, waiting for those who come to pray, meditate, and reflect.

My husband Jeff and I had collaborated on an artistic piece and I thought it might work for this art walk. I'd photographed a prickly pear cactus and put scripture with it that told about Jesus being crowned with thorns. Jeff had constructed a rustic frame from salvaged fencing. I intended to explain why we submitted this photo in the devotion I planned to write for the prayer guide. I was going to share what our Mexican-American acquaintances taught us when we lived in South Texas—about their custom of eating nopalitos, the tender, young pads of the prickly pear cactus.



*Early Christian image of Christ as the Good Shepherd (Fourth Century A.D.), Museo Epigrafico, Terme di Diocleziano, Rome.*

Nopalitos are simple fare—fresh ones can be found in the market during the spring and often substitute for meat in meals during Lent. But there's a deeper meaning behind their use. The thorns of the cactus evoke images of a crown of thorns—a crown the King of the Jews wore as he suffered. Our South Texas friends said they remember the suffering of Jesus in this tradition.

Well, I never did get around to writing about Jesus' suffering and the imagery of the thorns. But I did loan our entry to the art walk—this photograph of a prickly pear crown of thorns in its wooden frame and scripture from John 19—minus the explanation.

Imagine my discomfort when I realized I hadn't paid attention to the theme for the art walk...the Twenty-third Psalm. There our picture hung, amidst beautiful pieces of art that actually reflected the theme...a picture of a prickly pear cactus.

The art walk coordinator good-naturedly asked me the title of our submission. I squirmed and begged her to take it off the wall. She laughed and said, "No way, I don't have anything else to go there." My lame response was, "OK, how about this: 'He maketh me to lie down in green pastures and avoidith prickly pears?'" She laughed again and said, "How about: 'Suffering Shepherd?'"

~~~~~  
During Lent, I think about the sacrifices Jesus Christ made on our behalf. I contemplate the suffering this Good Shepherd endured for us. I dig deeply and examine my own sinfulness. I marvel at what this man endured for me and for you. He suffered for us—for the broken, the thoughtless, the preoccupied, and the unaware; for the self-indulgent, the wasteful, and the vain; for the helpless, the hopeless, the powerless, and the lost. He suffered enormously—for us.



During the Lenten season, I find myself contemplating suffering more than I usually do during other seasons of the church. And it's not only Jesus' suffering I seem to dwell on, but the suffering that occurs in my little corner of Midland, Texas and in the rest of the little corners of the world. You see, in my line of work with Faces of Children, observing suffering is pretty much an everyday occurrence.

During Lent my everyday research and reading about the horrible situations and complex issues that affect children seems to take on a magnified quality. I find myself questioning God even more stridently during the Lenten season. I find myself stomping my foot at God, demanding God to tell me why children have to suffer so very much...asking God why children are exposed to the kind of suffering Richard Foster calls an "unredemptive negative variety—suffering that is utterly cruel and completely meaningless."<sup>\*</sup>

"Our most vulnerable citizens have become the world's most disposable commodity," writes Wess Stafford, president and CEO of Compassion International, in his book *Too Small to Ignore*. "No matter what the setting, children seem to be a second-rate mandate. No matter what the ill of society, it tends to spiral downward and eventually land with its cruelest and most smothering impact on our littlest citizens. Small, weak, helpless, innocent, vulnerable, and trusting, they are the waiting victims for our simple neglect and most evil abuse. No matter what goes wrong, the little ones pay the greatest price."

Why? Why do these little ones have to pay that enormous price? Why must they suffer in such a way? Doesn't Jesus, our Good Shepherd, make it evident how much he loves and cares for these lambs, these littlest citizens? Stafford affirms that when he says, "Jesus uttered a powerful and terrifying warning to protect little ones from the kind of stumbling and abuse that humanity can impose upon them if they are not treasured, nurtured, and respected enough. His disciples never got a more enraged tongue-lashing than when they tried to keep children away from the Master." If children are valued so much by our Redeemer, why do they suffer so horribly?

This basic question of suffering literally caused me days of struggle and frustration while trying to write about it. I started to record how I contributed to the suffering of children. I documented ways I put stumbling blocks before them. Then I became stumped and the words just wouldn't flow.

I took a detour and read about Intercessory Prayer and the Prayer of Suffering in Richard Foster's book *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*<sup>\*</sup>. I got distracted trying to decide whether or not to write about what Foster refers to as redemptive suffering; the kind of suffering that has purpose and meaning; the kind of suffering a parent does when he or she makes sacrifices for their children in order to give them a better life. The kind of suffering the Lamb of God endured that we might have eternal life.

I've accepted the fact that, in this lifetime, I probably won't get answers to my questions about the meaningless, cruel suffering of children. However, I'm reassured by the knowledge that our Savior understands what it's like to suffer as a human being. This Suffering Shepherd has walked through the valley of the shadow of death. I'm no theologian and I may be going out on a limb, but I believe that Jesus has experienced both kinds of suffering Foster talks about, the unredemptive, negative kind and the redemptive, sacrificial kind. Our compassionate Lord knows the pain and suffering of these little ones intimately because he has been through it. He suffers with them; he grieves for them; he loves them deeply.

As disciples of this Good Shepherd, I believe we are compelled to follow his guiding rod and staff, no matter how difficult it might be to witness or share in the suffering of his precious children. During the Lenten season and beyond, I believe we are called to suffer with, grieve for, and love through prayer and other actions, those for whom our Suffering Shepherd sacrificed his life.



Ecce Homo  
Gesicht Christus  
Antonello da Messina  
c. 1473

*"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."* 2 Thess 5:16-18

Prayer Closet Ministry is seeking someone who would like to pray on Thursdays at noon.

Please contact Bonnie Sanders at 687-5179 or Carolyn Price at 683-3390 if you are interested.



### Sunday School

All youth join us every Sunday at 9:30 am in Room 228 for Sunday School. We will start out as a big group with fellowship and announcements and break into grade-level classes to dig into the study of Scripture and life and how they intersect!

### JOLT

All youth meet together with guys or girls your own age in a small group environment where it is safe to share, ask questions, and simply “do life” as a family together. This is a great place to grow in your faith while growing in relationships with others.

Most groups will meet on Wednesdays from 6:30-7:30 pm. For details about your group, contact Becky Holmes.



What happens when a pack of fun-loving pandas invade our church? The wildest VBS you’ve ever seen! Get ready to take a walk on the wild side, as we invite you to join us for PandaMania Vacation Bible School 2011...Where God is Wild about You!

The adventure begins **Tuesday, May 31** and continues through **Friday, June 3**, from 9 am to noon. This bamboo blast is for children ages 4 by **September 1, 2011**, through those that have completed 2nd grade. Be on the lookout for registration forms. Wanting to volunteer and be a part of the fun? Please call Amber Crumpler 432-638-2658 or Diane Ham 432-631-2446. We can’t wait to see you there!

### Spring Book Fair

Children and their parents – and even grandparents – will have the opportunity to bask in literary heaven when the Spring Book Fair comes to the Child Development Center. Look for the book display in the CDC lobby from March 29 through April 7. While members are free to browse the books at any time, official hours of operation will be Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 am to 4 pm and Wednesdays during the Gathering, 7 to 8 pm. In addition, it will be open on Sunday, April 3, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 pm.

This is a wonderful opportunity to buy quality books at reasonable prices for children and adults of all ages. You may also support the CDC by purchasing books pre-selected by teachers for individual classrooms. Happy reading!

### Annual Family Easter Celebration:

MAKE PLANS TO JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE EASTER IN OUR 125TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR!!!

We invite you to join us Sunday, April 14th, from 9:30 – 10:30 am. Everyone is welcome – the young and the young at heart!

Come sing, worship, pray, hear the Easter story through the Resurrection Eggs, hunt eggs and plant a tree symbolizing new life!

### Children’s Ministry Summer Intern:

*Love God  
Love children  
Love sharing the word of God with children*

Come talk to Mee, Chrissie Mee, if you are out of high school and interested in working with children this summer as a Children’s ministry intern then call 432-967-1488.

## 2011 Lenten Lunch Concert Series

Wednesdays from 12:00-12:30 p.m. • First Presbyterian Sanctuary  
Featuring local school ensembles

**March 30**

Bowie Fine Arts Academy Choir - *Kathy Pysh, Director*

**April 6**

Midland High School Band - *Brian Collins, Director*

**April 13**

Midland Christian Band - *Jon James, Director*

**April 20**

Trinity School Jazz Band - *Michael Santorelli, Director*

All concerts are free and open to the public.  
Childcare is available for kindergarten age and younger.  
Lunch is available one half-hour before and after  
each concert for \$6 in FPC's Lynn Hall.

For more information: [bsawyer@fpcmid.org](mailto:bsawyer@fpcmid.org)  
[gpysh@fpcmid.org](mailto:gpysh@fpcmid.org)

Invite



### Great Escape

Who? 6th, 7th, & 8th graders  
(*grade as of May 2010*)  
When? June 18-24, 2011  
Where? Gunnison, Colorado  
How Much? \$425

Register Online at [www.fpcmid.org](http://www.fpcmid.org)



### Mission: Houston

Who? Current 7th & 8th graders  
(*grade as of May 2010*)  
When? July 24-29, 2011  
Where? Houston, Texas  
How Much? \$300

Register Online at [www.fpcmid.org](http://www.fpcmid.org)



### FUN in the SON

Who? Current high school students  
(*grades 9-12*)  
When? July 9-15, 2011  
Where? SouthPadre Island, Texas  
How Much? \$400

Register Online at [www.fpcmid.org](http://www.fpcmid.org)

*For more information about any of these  
trips, contact Todd or Becky at 684-7821.*



## Welcome New Members:

**Chris & Courtney Renaud**

## Pictorial Directory Appointments Available

**SMILE!** It is time for a new First Presbyterian Church Pictorial Directory. A new and improved Olan Mills will be taking pictures during the month of April (with the exception of Holy Week). No-pressure sales and posing flexibility are just a couple of the many changes you'll notice this year. You may sign up for your appointment on line at [signup.olanmills.com](http://signup.olanmills.com) or you may sign up Sunday mornings in Lynn Hall through March 27. You can also call the church office during the week and Marty Burns can make an appointment for you.

*Please make plans to be a part of the new directory!*

## Primetimers Events

### Men's Lunch Out.

Tuesday, April 12 at 11:30 am. We will meet at Swenson's, 900 W. Loop 250. Come for fun and fellowship with good friends.

### Primetimers Mission project.

Wednesday, April 13 at 2 pm in the Koinonia Room. The Primetimers have an ongoing mission project. The items we would like to include are: toothpaste, toothbrush, bars of soap, hair combs, small bottles of shampoo, conditioner and hand lotion. If you would like to contribute any of these items for this project, please drop them by the reception desk. Come help, and plan to stay and watch the movie at 3:00 pm.

### Movie Matinee.

Wednesday, April 13 at 3:00 pm. in the church parlor. The movie this month is Get Low. This movie is a true tall tale - funny and touching. The cast of characters includes: Robert Duvall, Sissy Spacek, Bill Murray and Lucas Black. Come see a great movie and enjoy the fellowship.

### Scrapbooking and Jewelry Making/Repair.

Thursday, April 14 at 10:00 am in the Koinonia Room. Bring your photographs to organize, crop or just visit about them. Come and work until 2:00 pm and we will pick up something for lunch. Joyce Watts will help with jewelry ideas and repair. Sharla Somers will show us fast and easy shortcuts to get your pictures in albums, ready to enjoy. All ages are welcome.

### Primetimers Monthly Meeting.

Tuesday, April 19 at 11:30 am. Carl White, a Master Gardener, will give us great information about backyard birds and their habits. Lunch cost is \$5. See you in Lynn Hall!

### Ladies Lunch.

Tuesday, April 26 at 11:30 am at Olive Garden, Loop 250. This will be a Dutch treat event with lots of opportunities for fellowship.

### Angels in Aprons.

The purpose of this ministry is to provide for a small fee ready to eat food in individual frozen servings. The May menu will be baked ziti south sea chicken, green chili eggs, calico corn and lemonade, and fruit salad. This is an outstanding menu and you can place your order by calling Rhondy at the church office.

Your order must be placed by Thursday, April 21. The small individual portions can be picked up and paid for on Thursday, May 5 from 2 to 3:30 pm in the Family Life Center foyer. Please note the shorter pick up hours.

### Ragtown Gospel Theater, Post, Texas.

We will see the matinee performance of "Heaven - a Divine Comedy" at the Ragtown Gospel Theater in Post, Texas on Saturday, May 7. This is a \$2 million facility that takes audiences to a first-century Jerusalem plaza. Enjoy a full hour of vibrant and uplifting southern gospel music featuring Chip Polk. Glen Polk will be portraying all four parts; a king, an angel, a woman and Elvis. This trip will be filled with lots of surprises. The cost will be \$20 paid in advance for the theater ticket and reserving your seat on the minibus. You will need to bring money for your meals and any other purchases. We will leave from the church parking lot at 7:30 am.

### The Quest for the Best Hamburger in West Texas.

We will be going to Odessa to White House Meat Market to check out their hamburgers on Friday, April 8. The minibus will leave from the church parking lot at 10:45 am. Call Mary Margaret at the church office to reserve your seat.

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### AARP Driver Safety Program...

A one-day, four-hour refresher course for experienced motorists age 50 and older will be offered on Monday, May 9. The fee is \$12 for AARP members (membership card required) or \$14 for non-members. This includes the cost of the manual. The fee is payable by cash, check or money order at the beginning of the course and is not refundable. Upon completion of the course, each participant will be given a certificate which can be used to reduce one's car insurance for three years.

So come and improve your driving skills and save money on car insurance. The course will be 12:45 pm to 5:00 pm on Monday, May 9, 2011. If you desire to take this course, please contact Mary Margaret Davis at the church office. You will need to fill out a registration form by noon on Friday, May 6.



## The Ideal Church

The decade of the 1930s is of course, well remembered for the Great Depression. Just having discovered oil, Midland did have an industry to build on. But even that was hard with the price of oil at 10 cents a barrel. We also experienced the Dust Bowl with the drought from 1930 to 1936. A.C. Francis remained our Sheriff through the decade. Franklin Delano Roosevelt became president in 1933 as Hitler became Chancellor of Germany. King George V died in 1936, King Edward abdicated to marry Wallis Simpson, and King George VI became the King of England. By the end of the decade, the economy was recovering, but World War II began in Europe. Nature, economy and world peace were a threat, but something good was happening those years in Midland.

First Presbyterian Church called Wilber J. Coleman, the first of several pastors that stayed for a length of time. Stability came and membership more than doubled from 140 members in 1930 to 301 by 1939. Among the many new members, a few names stand out; Francis Link, Mrs. E.W. Anguish, Mr. and Mrs. W. L. Miller, John Dublin Jr., Betty Sue Cowden, Mrs. Jack Wilkinson, and Col. John Perkins. In 1937 the congregation decided the time had come to build a new church building. A building committee was appointed and a site was purchased at the corner of West Texas and A Streets, where we are today. By September the vote was brought to the membership to sell the property at the corner of Wall and Big Spring Street where First Presbyterian Church got its start. The two buildings and land were sold to Fred Wemple for \$13,000.00 cash. Our forefathers were good stewards, keeping the shrubs and trees to transplant to the new facility. The new building cost \$38,000.00. We now know this area as the Chapel. The ministers from the Methodist, Baptist, and Christian Churches, and former pastor Murphy assisted Pastor Coleman in placing artifacts in the cornerstone on October 31, 1937. The first service was held on December 12, 1937, with a sermon entitled, *"The Ideal Church."*

This decade saw new innovations like airmail and commercial flights across the Atlantic Ocean. In 1931 RCA Victor produced the first long running phonograph. Prohibition ended in 1933 and Scotch Tape was first marketed by 3M. The 1936 Olympics were held in Berlin. Famous athletes of the decade included Joe Louis, Max Baer, Buster Crabbe, Joe DiMaggio, Lou Gehrig, Babe Didrikson, Jesse Owen, Mel Ott and Bobby Riggs. Swing music was the fad while best sellers were *The Hobbit*, *Brave New World*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, and *As I lay Dying*. Artists O'Keeffe, Picasso, N.C. and Andrew Wyeth, Chagall and Dali shaped modern art and Ansel Adams made art out of black and white photography. In 1937, Kodachrome was invented.

In 1934, U.S. Marine Corps Major General Smedley Butler testified to Congress that a group of American businessmen asked his help to overthrow the U.S. government of FDR and establish a fascist regime. The next year Huey P. Long, candidate for president, was assassinated. In 1937, the same year FPC built its church on Texas Street, the Hindenburg exploded over Lakehurst, New Jersey, and a school exploded in New London, Texas. Amelia Earhart disappeared, and Walt Disney produced *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*. We all need that wonder and escape. In 1939, Otto Hahn, Lise Meitner and Fritz Strausman discovered nuclear fission. The silver screen took us to Oz and Tara, as Europe took to war yet again.

"The Ideal Church", I would have loved to have heard that sermon...

*(Correction from last month: Shirley Guthrie was a man.)*



## Lenten Come to the Quiet

### Wednesdays, March 23-April 13



5:30 Gathering Meal in Lynn Hall

6:30 Come to the Quiet Worship in the Chapel

Nursery care provided for children kindergarten and under beginning at 6:00 pm.

5:55 Bible Club and Children's Choir for children K4-6th grade will continue as usual during Lent.

In keeping with our Lenten theme, Blessed, we'll be considering how Jesus makes room for everyone in the Kingdom of God and how we, in return, invite others into the Kingdom by practicing hospitality. Join us on Wednesday evenings for praise, prayer and spiritual practice as we prepare our hearts to more fully receive Jesus' gift of salvation through his life, death and resurrection.

Thanks to the tireless **Life** "chain gang"  
Martha Holton • Vera Osadchuk • Gladys Nickell • Carol Craig • Jackie Perry • The church staff

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Sue Kerr • Marilyn Hightower • Tammy Smith • Harold and Carol Hughes • The church staff

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