



First Presbyterian
MIDLAND

Life

news to grow on
Edition 14 - March 2011

Family Promise

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Dear Friends,



Blessed

*A Sermon Series on the
Beatitudes, Matthew 5:1-13
February 20 – April 17*

As Ash Wednesday and the Season of Lent approach we turn to the portion of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount known as the *Beatitudes*. What does it mean to be *blessed*? Join us each Sunday morning as we explore one of the most well-known (yet most difficult to understand) texts in the Gospels.

Ash Wednesday

*A Service of Repentance,
Ashes, and Pilgrimage
March 9
6:30p.m. – The Sanctuary*

The season of Lent is close at hand and as you read this, we have already begun our theme for Lent in Sunday morning worship: Blessed.

I wonder what you think of when you hear the word 'blessed'. What makes a person blessed? In the Beatitudes, the prologue to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says that the blessed are ...the poor in spirit...the meek...the mourning...the merciful...the pure in heart...the spiritually hungry and thirsty...the peacemakers...the persecuted...the insulted. I don't know about you, but I don't always want to be on that list, especially if I have to be one of the persecuted or insulted! But I do want to be blessed, especially blessed by Jesus. As Jesus spoke the Beatitudes, Matthew says he had climbed up a hill to teach in response to this great crowd of people who have come with "all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and he cured them" (Mt 4:24). I am still wrestling with what it means to be blessed, particularly in the way Jesus talked about blessings. I am fairly confident, however, that blessing begins by coming to Jesus with all our pains, our sin-sickness, our struggles and being near to him so that we can receive his healing and salvation.

Dallas Willard says that the Beatitudes are one of the many ways in which Jesus proclaims the availability of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God as portrayed in the Beatitudes includes some unlikely and unexpected guests. For this reason, I want to issue you an invitation to take up the Lenten discipline of practicing hospitality. We are blessed to be a blessing. So, as we come to Jesus with all our needs and desires this Lent, as we affirm once again our need for forgiveness and the salvation gifted to us through Jesus' death and resurrection, let's bring others with us. On Wednesday nights, March 23-April 13, we'll be discussing more fully some particular acts of hospitality in our Lenten Come to the Quiet services at 6:30 in the chapel.

In the pages of this issue, you'll find many opportunities to worship, be equipped, serve and invite this Lent. It's my prayer that you'll take full advantage of these opportunities so that we can discover together how truly and radically blessed we are to follow in the footsteps of our Savior.

Love and Blessings,


Shannon

Prayers for...

Prayers of Intercession are requested for Jered Groner, Larry Mills, Annette and Dick Braun, Deanna Rutherford, Bill McIntire, Beth and Charles Priddy, Sarah Wyrick, Roger Elliott, Dick Prentice, Florence Doss, Arden Grover, David Koch, Randy Stevens, Mary Anne and Gene Bartus, Frank "Kip" Agar, Sr., Susan Richardson.

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 Finrock, Charles Scott, Dr. David Shepherd, Tommy Brown.

Congratulations to...

Susan and Courtney Cowden upon the birth of their son, Courtney Holt Cowden, IV, on January 17, 2011, in Kansas City, Missouri; great-grandson of Margaret Cowden and the late Courtney Holt Cowden, Sr.; grandson of Kaye and Holt Cowden; and nephew of Mandy and Chris Cowden.

Jennifer and Taylor Sell upon the birth of their daughter, Caroline Gentry Sell, born January 19, 2011, in Midland; granddaughter of Lisa Sell; and niece of Stephanie Sell and Spencer Sell.

Sara and Luke Parish upon the birth of their son, Case Pritchett Parish, born January 20, 2011, in San Antonio; grandson of John and Janet Pritchett; great-grandson of Marie (Dene) Radtke and the late Don Radtke; and nephew of Russell Pritchett.

Meredith and Andrew Peeler upon the birth of their son, James Turney Peeler, on February 2, 2011, in Dallas; great-grandson of LaVoe and Ken Peeler; grandson of Pam and Kyle Peeler and Elizabeth and Jim May; nephew of Adam Peeler and Heather and Austin Peeler.

Condolences to...

Kay and Charles Bird upon the death of Kay's mother, Mariva Bast, on September 28, 2010, in Midland.

Aline Collins upon the death of her uncle, Alpheus Harral, on January 25, 2011.

Charlotte and Ted Bosecker upon the death of Charlotte's father on January 25, 2011.

Idalia Maldonado (FCP Maintenance Staff) upon the death of her sister on January 27, 2011, in Mexico .

Sharon and John Webb upon the death of Sharon's cousin, Jenifer Sledge, on January 27, 2011.

Joe Younger upon the death of his wife, Wanda Younger, on February 2, 2011, in Arkansas.

Karen Gray (FPC Maintenance Staff) upon the death of her brother-in-law, Mike Tucker, in Dallas on February 2, 2011.

Dr. Larry Haggard upon the death of his niece, Dr. Erin Cook, on Saturday, February 5, 2011.

Rob Heckathorne upon the death of his mother, Maneeta Heckathorne, on February 5, 2011.

James and Whitney Gripp upon the death of James' mother, Melanie Gripp, on February 6, 2011.

Rod and Patti MacDonald upon the death of Rod's father, Kenzi MacDonald, on February 9, 2011, in Dallas; grandfather of Chad (Morgan) MacDonald, Curtis MacDonald, and Whitney MacDonald.

Arthur Odum upon the death of his wife, Marilyn Odum, on February 9, 2011.

Family and friends of Tom Arnold upon his death on February 10, 2011.

Ann Creamer, Amy Robnett, and Nancy Dean upon the death of their father, Hal Dean, on February 12, 2011.

Jeannie and Taylor Mayne upon the death of Jeannie's mother, Ruth Howard, on February 16, 2011; grandmother of Howard (wife, Rachel; son, Will), Patrick, Russell, and Annette Mayne.

Adelle and Paul Dowling upon the death of Adelle's mother, Jessalyn Eschberger, on February 17, 2011.

Thank you for your nice letters...

Please stop by the information center at the Texas street reception area to read the thank-you notes we received from MARC and Bertha Asdo.

Worship



Traditional Worship Music Schedule for March

March 6

The Jubilate Singers will sing music by Hopson and Pysh at 8:15 worship, and the Sanctuary Choir will sing anthems by Wilberg and Biery at 11:00 worship.

March 13

Carl Moore will be soloist at both services.

March 20

Cellist Sarah Wilson will play at both services, and the Sanctuary Choir will sing Gilbert Martin's setting of "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" at 11:00 worship.

March 27

Saxophonist Pano Mata will be soloist at both services, and the Sanctuary Choir will share settings by Leavitt and Pysh at 11:00 worship.

125th Anniversary Choir

The Sanctuary Choir invites singers to join us for our 125th anniversary celebration worship services.

Please contact Greg in the music office, 684-7821, ext. 139, or gpysh@fpcmid.org for more information.



“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.

My favorite photo of daughter Caroline sits prominently easled in our game room. “Why did you frame *that*?” Caroline shrieked the first time she saw it.

My answer was simple. It was the answer only another mother would understand. You see, Caroline is crying in the picture; but her tears flowed from elation, relief and joy.

“I love that picture,” I crooned. “It reminds me of how good God is. It reminds me that He cares about what we care about.”

The photo was snapped the day before her first class as a freshman in college, and just seconds after she had received a bid from the sorority that she had “suicided” during rush, indicating that if she couldn’t be an Alpha*, she’d be nothing at all.

Rush had been a roller coaster of emotion, causing my husband to declare that it was downright barbaric in the 21st century to operate such a cruel and senseless process for something that was, in his esteemed opinion, senseless and unnecessary in the first place.

“Why don’t they just line all the girls up and have a draft,” he suggested at the time. “What difference does it make which sorority you’re in as long as you’re in one?” he questioned in all seriousness. But Caroline had declared her love for Alpha Beta Chi early on, and the closer it came to Bid Day, the more nervous we all became that her feelings might not be reciprocated.

I remember sitting in church that fateful Sunday morning before “the news” would be dispensed, fiercely containing a gallon of anxious tears as I heard the sermon about God’s ways being bigger than our ways; His thoughts greater than our thoughts. I was downright feverish with worry that God would use this time in my sweet daughter’s life to teach one of those big lessons that hurts so much! Oh, how I prayed with utter selfishness on her behalf that the only lesson to be learned that day would be that He does, in fact, answer prayers.

Hence, the picture. With wet cheeks and mascara-soaked eyes, Caroline’s face displays an awkward cross between joy and anguish – like she cannot comprehend yet the greatness of the news evidenced by the pale blue fleur-de-lis pinned to her chest.

She is a senior now, and we have often told people that she likes TCU, but that she loves her sorority. The friends she has made will undoubtedly be there to marry her and bury her. They are lifelong sisters, to be sure, and I know she credits her sorority with much of her growth through the past four years.

I couldn’t see her face and no one was there to snap her photograph when she called this past December once again crying over Alpha.

“I think I’m going to be kicked out,” she whimpered, barely audible, as I halted my Christmas baking to take in the news. “I was sick last week and didn’t go to the Chapter meeting, and the Standards Committee said I had too many points deducted to remain active.”

Had she not been so devastated, I would have taken a harsher approach, but I did glean between sobs and gasps that the sorority has certain requirements for attendance, philanthropy work, academics and social obligations that must be maintained in order to remain in good standing. As did many of her pledge sisters with the familiar disease of senioritis, she had allowed her diligence towards those requirements to lapse. However, she seemed to be the only one who would allowed herself to dip low enough on the points scale to be deemed unworthy of active status.

She gained her composure as we talked and revealed to me the horrifying news that, should she choose to appeal her ousting, she would be called before the entire chapter to give an account for every point deduction taken against her. She shrunk at the notion of such humiliation, but admitted that she had gotten herself into the predicament and that she would endure whatever was involved to be reinstated.

Final exams began the very next week, and it seemed that the Standards Committee – made up of college students, after all – had bigger fish to fry. No time for an appeal. No time to return frantic emails and text messages from the curly-headed girl standing on the stool with the noose around her neck.

Fear and shame melted into anger as the holidays approached with nary a word from the committee. Over the break, she researched her options on the Alpha website, and



undoubtedly prayed like crazy for mercy. As the days wound down before her return to school, we advised her to go along as if nothing had happened; to be the model active in every way, dotting every i and crossing every t.

“But I’ll feel so dumb showing up if they don’t want me there,” she moaned. Still, she heeded our advice and complied like a good little Girl Scout, even when her peers did not join her. She speculated that maybe her file had been lost in the shuffle of new officers, as no mention was made again about the possibility of deactivation. Well, until she missed another meeting, that is.

“Are you kidding me?” I texted furiously at the news that she’d been sick once again and had neglected to obtain a doctor’s note excusing the absence. I was through with support and niceties. I was hot and bothered that she would be so irresponsible as to essentially flag down the Standards Committee and dare them to kick her out. I ranted and railed against her and actually hoped that she would be removed from the sorority if that was what it would take to teach her a lesson. It had been four years since I’d sat in the pew and begged God to have mercy on my daughter. Now, I wept with open palms, handing her over to Him for the punishment she justly deserved. Craig and I honestly couldn’t believe we’d raised a child that would so blatantly disregard imminent consequences.

Her meeting with Standards was set for Sunday night, and she tells me that she arrived with part humbleness and part fight, as she really had been sick and the campus Health Center had been closed due to four ensuing days of ice and snow. She even took her empty cough syrup bottle and email printouts she’d had with her professors for classes missed due to her sickness. When she arrived, the girls on the panel were all smiles and bantered about her familiarity with the “hot seat.” An odd way to begin a lynching, to be sure.

It was not long before those awkward tears of relief and joy glistened in the spotlight of a girl bathed in grace.

“We know you were sick,” the chairman smiled sweetly. “And we know it was too icy to get to the doctor. That’s not why we called you in.”

The girl went on to explain that the committee had taken notice of Caroline’s improved attendance and attention to detail, and that, after weeks of waiting, had successfully petitioned Alpha’s national office for permission to keep Caroline!

Her text to me said simply, “Call when you can. I have good/great news!”

Now I was the one in tears.

“Do you see what that was, Caroline?” I asked with deep conviction. “That was grace. You have just received something you did not deserve. God and those girls showed mercy to you, and they did not have to do it.”

Jesus died on the cross for my sin so I could have eternal life, and He didn’t have to do it. I deserve to die. I should be required to have every offense in my life read before a jury of my peers. I should be judged and locked out. My name should no longer be on the rolls. I should have no legacy. No membership. But the committee of Three has convened, and I’ve been given a chart full of points that will never diminish.

Wouldn’t you love to see the snapshots in God’s game room?

– Susan Atchison

*sorority name was changed

Stephen Minister trainees

Please keep our Stephen Minister trainees, who began training classes February 15, in your prayers as they nurture their gifts and acquire new skills so they can bring Christ’s love and care to hurting people on behalf of our congregation. Also pray for our Stephen Leaders who will guide them through their training. In session one, our Stephen Minister trainees learned about “*The Person of the Caregiver*”. They received an introduction to the fifty hours of training and explored the Christ-centered foundation of Stephen Ministry.



Equip

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 a.m. worship in the Sanctuary.

Cost of each DVD is \$5.

Mo-Ranch 2011 Women’s Conference

Conference I: May 31-June 2

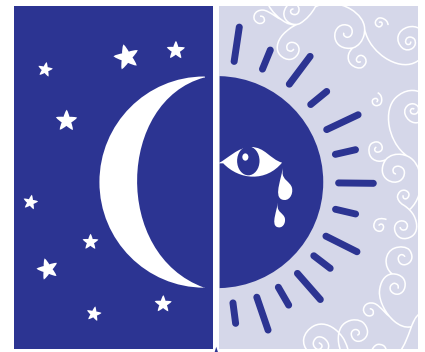
Conference II: June 3-5

God will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more: mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away. Revelation 21:4

Hope Beyond Tears: Mourning and Crying and Pain Will Be No More

If you have eyes to see this, you’ll find it everywhere.

Suffering—whether it’s in our daily lives or the news—appears with unwavering regularity. So where does the promise of Revelation 21:4 fit in here?



HOPE BEYOND TEARS

Mourning and Crying and Pain Will Be No More

Join us this summer at the 2011 Mo-Ranch Women’s Conference as we wrestle with the themes of suffering and hope through keynote addresses by The Rev. Dr. Martha Moore-Keish (Assistant Professor of Theology at Colombia Theological Seminary). Worship services will be led by The Rev. Dr. Ann Hoch (Pastor of Memorial Presbyterian Church, Fredericksburg) and Dr. Diana Greene (Executive Director of Worship, Music, and Fine Arts at First Presbyterian Church, Houston). There will be a generous offering of workshops.

FPC Midland is well-represented in the leadership of this conference with Karen Winkler serving as the conference designer and leading a workshop about her experiences working with Partners Relief and Development in Burma. Sue Stroman is on the planning team and will help with free time crafts and conference leadership. Associate Pastor Shannon Weisenfels will lead a workshop about balancing work, family, and spiritual life at the second session of the conference. Faces of Children Director Chris Laufer is serving as the 2011 women’s conference director.

We hope you will attend this conference next June at beautiful Mo-Ranch! A registration form is available on the FPC website, the Mo-Ranch website, and in the church office. Please contact Chris Laufer, claufer@facesofchildren.net, if you have any questions.

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 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Wednesdays during the Gathering, 7 to 8 p.m. In addition, it will be open on Sunday, April 3, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

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!

Prayer Class

The word prayer (or some form of it) is mentioned around 512 times in the Bible. Prayer is a very important part of the life of a child of God and we have been taught that truth, but what does prayer mean to you? How do we know if God hears our prayers? Is prayer really that important to my Christian life? How do I pray with the mind of Christ? We will explore the power, purpose and presence of prayer in this class starting Wednesday, March 9, at 11:30 a.m. in the church parlor. We will begin with lunch and the class will run for 4 weeks. Ron Ellison, Education Facilitator of Midland Hospice, will be the instructor. Lunch will cost \$5. Come and join us.

Healing and Wholeness Conference

Are you seeking “*God’s Healing Love through Prayer*”?

FPC will be hosting a Healing and Wholeness Conference 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. Read more about his ministry at jjohnson@gracehb.org

Lent will be a time of preparation for Christ’s death and resurrection. It will be 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 will be an ideal time for healing. There are three kinds of healing: spiritual, emotional and physical. Healing prayer ministry connects God’s empowering presence to people’s needs, and it has Biblical authority 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).

“**EMBRACING GOD’S HEALING LOVE THROUGH PRAYER**” will be the focus of our ecumenical conference, held at FPC on March 25-26 (Friday evening 6:30-9:00 p.m.; Saturday 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.). No admission will be charged, but “love offerings” will be accepted. Lunch will be provided on Saturday for a small fee. Dr. Johnson will preach and conduct healing prayer on Sunday, March 27, at Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, 9 a.m. to noon. Churches involved in the planning and support of this event are: First Presbyterian, 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.

If you are interested in participating in a prayer team as we anticipate this wonderful conference, please contact Sally Green at egreen3444@sbcglobal.net or Jean Kiker at jbkiker@suddenlink.net

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

Endowment Fund: A Legacy of Giving

The First Presbyterian Endowment Fund is designed to offer an extra dimension of stewardship, providing the opportunity to make gifts and bequests that will benefit generations to come in the following ways:

Direct Mission Support. Extending Christ’s message and ministry by consolidating any sized gift or bequest to compound the impact of loving and leading all people to deeper life in Jesus Christ--both here at home and around the world--through direct mission support generated through earnings of the fund.

Facilities Support. Creating financial resources generated from the Endowment fund’s earnings for the upkeep, maintenance, and improvement of the church’s facilities.

Ministerial Support. Extending support of varied, important Christian ministries well beyond the donor’s lifetime.

Estate Planning. Offering a resource and catalyst in matters of estate planning strategies or planned gifts and educating each other to remember the church and its mission.

Ways to help grow the Endowment Fund:

Capital Gifts. Cash, stocks, bonds, minerals, royalties and other property.

Memorials and Honorariums. Gifts made in honor or in memory of a friend or family member.

Planned giving. Deferred gifts may be made by naming the First Presbyterian Church as a designated beneficiary in your wills, trusts, gift annuities, life insurance policies, or retirement plans.

As we celebrate our past 125 years, please consider how your endowment could be a living legacy for the future of Christ’s work in the church. Call Brad Ellis in the church office if you’d like to discuss your financial plans.

Equip



Child Development Center Summer Program

Registration packets for summer 2011 will be available March 8.

Registration for children currently in the program and for church members will be March 24.

Registration open to the community will be March 30.



Building communities, strengthening lives

Did you know that...
The average age of a homeless person in the United States is nine?
Families with children make up 40 percent of the homeless population?
During the 2009 school year, the Midland ISD school system counted over 500 homeless students?
There is no place in Midland for homeless families to stay together?

Virtually all who work with IHN are volunteers who take time out of their own personal lives to help the homeless. They do their best to make us comfortable, warm and well fed. The Day Center allows us to get the kind of assistance we need to find places to live, get to doctor appointments and meet personal needs. I don't know what my family would have done if it hadn't been for IHN.

– Raleigh R., Former Guest

Yes, it's true; there are families in Midland, Texas that are homeless. These families are living out of their cars, in parks or in crowded apartments with friends or relatives. Many renters are often only one paycheck or calamity away from homelessness. The loss of a job, an increase in rent, a sudden medical bill, the absence of family support---any one of these can drive a family into homelessness. It is a reality in our community. However, help is on its way – Family Promise is coming to First Presbyterian Church.

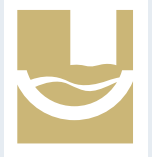
Family Promise is a national organization that creates a network of churches in a city in order to provide housing for homeless families. The program is already up and running in over 150 cities around the nation, including Odessa and Lubbock. Nationally, over 100,000 volunteers are involved in helping tens of thousands of homeless families.

Here's how it works: the local Family Promise director, Tom Miller, examines applicant families and chooses only the families who are willing to abide by the stringent guidelines of the program. No more than 14 people will be allowed in the program at one time. The families are in the program for an average of 30-60 days. They not only receive shelter, but also meals, financial counseling, help finding a job, and other encouragement toward self-sufficiency. The proven approach of Family Promise has helped over 80 percent of guests to secure their own housing.

In Midland, 16 congregations have agreed to partner together with Family Promise. As a host church, FPC will be hosting the families in the program four times a year. The families will arrive Sunday evening at the church and spend each night in our facilities through the following Sunday morning. During the days, those who are not at school or work will be at the Family Promise day center located near downtown, where they will receive support and direction in getting back on their feet. Our church simply provides a place for the families to spend the night along with an evening meal, breakfast baggies and sweet hospitality.

When I first learned I would be in a shelter, I automatically pictured a 'shelter'. But what I found were caring and concerned people who made the darkest time in my life so much brighter. The help and guidance I received is beyond words.

– Dorothy O., Former Guest



This ministry is not only a huge benefit for the guest families, but God also blesses the churches that are involved. In few other venues of our society today do we have the opportunity to interact on such a personal level with people of our community who are in need. Family Promise offers many meaningful opportunities for volunteers:

- *prepare a meal*
- *read a story to a toddler*
- *help write a résumé*
- *assist students with homework*
- *setup and tear down*
- *donate furniture or clothing*
- *offer compassion and support*
- *spend the night at the church (2 people each night)*

Not everyone can serve in a foreign land or lead a relief effort, but we can all be hospitable! Family Promise gives us the chance to do mission work right here in our own back yard.

Our first week to host this remarkable ministry will be March 13-20. Please prayerfully consider how God might be able to use YOU to help carry out this incredible mission. Whether you can give 30 minutes or multiple days, volunteer positions are available for you. If you're not available for the week we host in March, keep in mind we'll be hosting again in June, September and December. If you're willing to give in any way to this ministry, please contact our volunteer coordinator, Cynthia Howard at 684-5803, or Walter Thompson at the church office.

You provided more than food, shelter and transportation. There were encouraging and affirming words, laughter as you visited with us, and sometimes quiet when that was needed. You gave us time to gather our life back together.

– Matt M., Guest

I've participated in all of the 'jobs' at one time or another, from setting up the cots to cooking a meal, to sleeping over. Each job in itself is such a small commitment; to cook a meal for a handful of people once every three months, to play games with or read to children, cuddle an insecure toddler or easiest of all, sleep for eight hours. I cannot express how much joy I feel knowing that in some small way I personally have helped make life better for someone else.

– Lorraine Stejskal, Volunteer





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.*



Rage against the Pain

It seems like everywhere I turn lately, I'm faced with tragedies involving children. The sudden death of a young woman leaving three children motherless...The premature birth of a brain-damaged baby who has seizures because of the drugs her mother consumed while pregnant... Another young mother has a major stroke—her life still hangs in the balance... Three children burned to death in a fiery car accident...A child gunned down in front of a grocery store in Arizona...Children and parents enslaved by the Burma Army, forced to be porters and land mine sweeps...Girls and women in the Democratic Republic of Congo gang raped—victims of sexual violence as a weapon of war...

The situations overwhelmed me—the pain seemed unbearable. And then anger, that potent face of fear, enveloped me. I wanted to shake the young crackhead mother, strangle the Arizona gunman with the crazy grin, stomp my foot at God and demand to know why children are orphaned, chase the Burma Army generals into a minefield, and then do something unmentionable in a church newsletter to the men who mass raped teenagers and pregnant women (it involves a machete).

As I searched for devotion material for the weekly Faces of Children prayer list, I came across Marianne Williamson's writings on anger in her book *Illuminata, a Return to Prayer*. I gave God grateful thanks for Williamson's Spirit-filled writing and articulate prayer—words that calmed me and brought peace.

Anger*

"What is not love is fear. Anger is one of fear's most potent faces. And it does exactly what the fearful ego wants it to do: It keeps us from receiving love at exactly the moment when we need it most. Our greatest need, when fearful, is to be able to express how scared we are. Instead, of course, we are often tempted to express anger, meekly hoping that somehow, someone will read our minds and say, 'I know you're only angry because you feel so scared. Come here and I'll love you.' There are those rare moments when the other person is evolved enough to do that; in the vast majority of cases, however, our anger will send others further and further away from us, increasing our pain and our terror.

In the realm of mental energy, what we give to others stays with us. That is true of both love and fear. Anger, then, is not to be denied but surrendered to God. Our prayer is to be shown an alternative way of conflict resolution. We want both to be in touch with our anger and to release our anger. What we do not want is to project our anger onto someone else in the false belief that we will then feel better. Such behavior offers only temporary relief. Before we express our anger to others, the attitude of empowerment is to express our anger as well as our pain to God. God can handle it. The line 'Vengeance is mine, sayeth the Lord' actually means just that. When the anger mounts, call on God. Tell God first.

"Dear God, Take from me my rage.

I feel such anger from my pain, my frustration, and my disappointment.

I throw my anger in so many inappropriate places. I do not contain it or use it creatively.

*Dear God, Please grant me serenity and peace that I might know my power within
my peace.*

*Transmute my rage, transform my anger that I might not direct it against others
or myself,*



*That it might be undone, unraveled through the grace of God.
Where I am focusing on someone's guilt, please show me his innocence, for I know that
my attack on him is my own damnation. I am willing to see everyone's innocence.
Please show it to me. Thank you. Bless us all. Amen."*

Taking these overwhelming feelings to God in prayer is the only way I know how to survive the anger, the rage, the grief, and the paralyzing fear for at-risk children that bubbles up more often than I care to admit. Surrendering the pain to God in prayer is the only way I know to help children in situations beyond my reach or understanding. Telling God how afraid I am for these children and myself helps me diffuse the anger and receive the love God has to offer. Voicing my concerns for children through prayer is the most effective way I have to show them my love.

Thanks be to God for God's willingness to shoulder my burden of pain, rage, and anger.

**Illuminata, a Return to Prayer* by Marianne Williamson, Riverhead Books, New York, 1994

*-Grace and peace,
Chris Laufer*

Meals on Wheels Month

Meals on Wheels needs your help.

Each year FPC provides substitute drivers for Meals on Wheels (MOW) routes for the month of April. FPC will need 4 volunteers to sign up to be substitute route drivers for each weekday during the month of April. Delivery starts at 10:30 am and most routes require about an hour to complete. Since these positions are for substitute drivers, routes will vary from day to day and we will not be driving the same routes for the month. MOW will make reminder calls each day to those who have signed up, so it is important that you provide your phone number and email address when signing up. Sign-up sheets will be available at the FPC front desk and will need to be returned to MOW around the middle of March. Please consider volunteering some of your time in April for this worthwhile cause that provides a daily hot meal to homebound residents of our great community. For any questions, please contact Rhondy at the church office or Shanda Garner at MOW, 689-6693.

Paper Drive

Be a Hero...help crush the "paper monster."

During the month of March we will be collecting paper goods for Breaking Bread Soup Kitchen. Containers will be at the A Street and Texas Street entrances. Below is a list of what we need:

*16 oz solo cups
10" 3-compartment plates
Plastic ware
Toilet paper
Paper towels*

Be a Hero Now!!

You can be a hero by giving blood to someone in need.

FPC is having a blood drive on Sunday, February 27, from 8:00 am-12:00 pm in the Bride's Room.

Please call Rhondy at the church at 684-7821 to schedule your appointment time.

"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.



Invite

Memory Book

Dear Church Members,

After enjoying a wonderful church service and congregational meeting to kick off the commemoration of our 125th Anniversary, we are ready to go forward with a great year of celebrating!

This past summer, Spencer Starnes spent time taking videos of some of our church members. This video will be shown throughout the year at different services and activities. If you would like to purchase a video, the cost will be \$2.00 each and will be available by contacting the church office.

The Memory Book has been published and is available at the church office. It is full of wonderful memories and first-hand accounts that were shared by so many of our members. Please take one book per family. If you would like more copies the cost will be \$2.00 each.

Did you go to Sunday school growing up, attend choir, help out in a mission field, attend church, go to VBS? If you were involved in any way, we appreciate your faithfulness to our church. If you have been a part of First Presbyterian Church for 50 years or more there is a certificate of gratitude for your faithful service at the church offices. Your copy is waiting for you!

Be sure to go by and look at the Anniversary Photo Gallery between the east sanctuary entrance and church offices. There are wonderful pictures old and new. We do need help identifying some of the people, so be sure and help us out if you can.

Blessings,

Ellen Bell

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 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!



"Wheelchair Guy" to Thank FPC

Don Schoendorfer, commonly referred to as the "wheelchair guy," will be in Midland the weekend of February 25th and will speak at both services in the sanctuary on Sunday, February 27.

Schoendorfer was the first civilian ever to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his world service of sending 560,000 free wheelchairs to the poorest of the poor in 80 countries around the world. The ceremony to honor him was held in Arlington, Virginia, and was narrated by NBC's Brian-Williams. The medal was presented by Colin Powell with 32 military medal winners present.

Schoendorfer is a fascinating speaker and has hundreds of exciting stories to tell about the recipients of the white plastic wheelchairs. His purpose is to thank FPC for our great year of donating 556 chairs. He and his wife Laurie will be houseguests of Maxine Hannifin.

Faithful

Invite



A glimpse of our church life and history

While most of our focus as a church is on the present and the future, here is an opportunity to look back. Currently on display in FPC's Garden Gallery is **Faithful**, an exhibit of historical photographs from the FPC archives, including images from our humble beginnings through the 1990s. The display is not a complete picture of our church by any means, nor is it chronological, but instead, a glimpse into church life and a celebration of God's faithfulness these last 125 years.



This is a participatory exhibit. We invite you to help us identify people, events, and dates and record your recollections in one of the books positioned throughout the exhibit.

In addition, you will notice a thread of contemporary architectural images of the church juxtaposed with the historic ones. Photographed by Missy Grimes, these images capture the uniquely beautiful and repetitive design elements which, while often overlooked, characterize our church and bring to mind experiences, people, and God's active presence in this place.

Don't miss the opportunity to celebrate and remember.

Here Come the Brides

Did you say "I do" in the First Presbyterian Church sanctuary or chapel? If the answer is yes, we would like to include your wedding picture in an upcoming exhibit of FPC Weddings Photos from the last 125 years.

Framed or unframed photographs may be delivered to the church office by April 10. All photographs will be handled carefully and returned. Please include names, dates, location and any other pertinent facts with your submission.



Mr. and Mrs. Bob Wiggins

Contact Kathy Schorr at 684-6392 for additional information.



Invite



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.



Spring Break Mission Trip to El Paso

High school students are going to the colonias of El Paso, TX, March 13-19, where we will join the work God is already doing there through VBS and several construction projects. It is a week that promises a lot of sweat, great fellowship and an encounter with the God who is on the move!

Questions? Need information? Contact Todd or Becky at 684-7821.





**FPC Youth Missions, Inc:
A Fail-Proof Investment**

Here's your opportunity to invest in what God is using our teens to do to further His kingdom! For only \$10 per share, you can become a "shareholder" in FPC Youth Missions, Inc. Buy as many shares as you want! Your investment will go immediately towards materials for the mission work we will be doing in the Sparks Colonia outside El Paso



over Spring Break. Our hope is that by investing, you will feel even more a part of the mission efforts of our youth. As an added benefit this year, you will receive an invitation to a Shareholders' Luncheon on March 27, where you will hear from mission participants about the "dividends" of your generous investment. So, come get your shares on Sunday mornings through March 13 in Lynn Hall, and see what God does with your investment!



Great Escape

Hey, all you junior highers! Mark your calendars for June 18-24, 2011.

Join us as we go to the beautiful Rocky Mountains for The Great Escape!

The Great Escape is a camp especially for junior high school students with great recreation, tremendous speakers, awesome music, and an experience like none other! You will be in an exciting atmosphere where you will feel the love of Jesus in a special way. We will be staying at Western State College which is nestled in the Gunnison Valley about 4 hours southwest of Denver. Besides the dynamic teaching, outstanding worship, small group and family time together, we will take advantage of the awesome Rockies surrounding us by participating in summer mountain activities like river rafting and hiking.

If you would like to know more about The Great Escape, check out the website www.ycmhome.org.

Cost for the trip is \$425 and includes: lodging, food, transportation and white water rafting. You will need money for meals while we travel and some spending money.

Register online now at fpcmid.org. Follow the link to the The Great Escape page to register. If you need assistance, please contact Becky at 684-7821.





FUN in the Son

The setting for Fun in the Son Padre could not get any better. South Padre Island on the Gulf of Mexico where afternoons will be spent enjoying the surf and sand of the beach. Morning and evenings will be spent at the South Padre Island Convention center, within walking distance from the hotel, hearing from speakers and worship bands that will challenge and inspire you. The week is sure to be filled with FUN, hearing the GOSPEL, growing in your FAITH, and experiencing the larger body of CHRIST.

If you would like to know more about Fun In the Son, check out the website www.ycmhome.org.

The cost of the trip is \$400 which includes registration, lodging, food and transportation.

You will need money for meals while we travel and some spending money.

Register online now at fpcmid.org. Follow the link to the Fun In The Son page to register. If you need assistance, please contact Becky at 684-7821.





MISSION: HOUSTON

The JH Mission Trip is on the move! We're headed to Houston, Texas -- the fourth largest city in the country! While we're there, we will do three things:

1. Live in the city→ we will stay in safe, simple accommodations in the heart of Houston.
2. Learn about the city→ we will learn about the lives and unique challenges faced by city dwellers and the ways in which God is fostering healing and wholeness through indigenous missions on the ground.
3. Be part of the solution for the city→ we will work with the Center for Student Missions and be connected with hands-on ministries, making a substantive difference in the city of Houston. It could be anything from soup kitchens to nursing homes, or after-school programs for children to the Salvation Army. But whatever it is, you'll be a part of God's work in Houston!

To find out more about the Center for Student Missions, check out www.csm.org. Over the last 23 years, they have taken over 100,000 people into America's urban centers to be the hands and feet of Jesus. If you have questions or would like additional trip information, contact Todd or Becky at 684-7821.

Don't let this incredible opportunity pass you by! God is on the move...sign up NOW!

The cost of the trip is \$300. Current 7th and 8th graders are invited to register online at fpcmid.org

Follow the link to the Junior High Mission Trip page to register. If you need assistance, please contact Becky at 684-7821.





Welcome New Members:

Cory & Jennifer Hall
Eric Petersen
Wesley & Jean Pittman
Neal & Kathy Summers
Jerry Upton
Ashley Wineinger

Primetimers Events

Men's Lunch Out. Tuesday, March 8, 11:30 a.m. We will meet at Clear Springs Cafe, 5707 Andrews Hwy. Come for fun and fellowship with good friends.

Primetimers Mission project. Wednesday, March 9, at 2 p.m. in the Koinonia Room. The Primetimers have an ongoing mission project. The items we would like to include are: toothpaste, toothbrush, bar 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 by the reception desk. Come help and plan to stay and watch the movie at 3:00 p.m.

Movie Matinee. Wednesday, March 9, at 3 p.m. in the church parlor. The movie this month is *Red*. This movie is the action-comedy about a small group of retired CIA field operatives who are targeted for elimination. Featuring actors Bruce Willis, Morgan Freeman and Mary Louise Parker, this movie guarantees to be a lot of fun. Come see a great movie, relax and enjoy the fellowship.

Scrapbooking and Jewelry making/repair. Thursday, March 10, at 10 am in the Koinonia Room. Bring your photographs to organize, crop or just visit about them. Come and work until 2 p.m., and we will pick up something for lunch. Joyce Watts will help with jewelry ideas and repair. Sharla Somers will show you fast and easy shortcuts to get your pictures in albums ready to enjoy. All ages are welcome.

Primetimers monthly meeting. Tuesday, March 15, at 11:30 a.m. in Lynn Hall. Steve Schorr will make a presentation about the future plans for FPC. Lunch cost is \$5.

Ladies Lunch. Tuesday, March 22, at 11:30 a.m. at Swenson's on 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 April menu will be zitto, south sea chicken, green chili eggs, calico corn and lemonade 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, March 24. The small

individual portions can be picked up and paid for on Thursday, April 7, from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the Family Life Center area foyer. Please note the shorter pick-up hours.

Abilene Adventure Tour. Thursday March 24, and Friday, March 25. Primetimers will be taking a one night trip to Abilene. We will be checking out Frontier Texas, The Grace Museum featuring the exhibit of An Act of Faith: The Art of Mary McCleary, and Buffalo Gap.. We will check out a candy factory, eat dinner at the Copper Creek Restaurant and lunch at Perini's. The cost for one night in a motel will be \$150 for single occupancy or \$75 per person for double occupancy, plus your meals and any extra things you would want to purchase. The fee includes lodging, museum and Buffalo Gap fees and is filling up fast, so get your check, payable to First Presbyterian Church, to Mary Margaret at the church office no later than Tuesday, March 3. The mini bus will leave the Texas Street parking lot in front of church offices at 8 a.m.

Painted Churches of Fayette County
Come visit the painted churches of Fayette County on April 14 to 16. The painted churches in Dubina, Ammannsville, High Hill and Praba are within a few minutes drive of each other on quiet farm to market roads near Schulenburg. They are widely known for their beautiful stenciled ceilings, delicately ornate altars and lovely stained glass windows. We will have a tour of the churches, visit the quaint town of Gruene, spend one night in Fredericksburg and take in the fun performance of Rockbox. Maybe we will even see some wild flowers. We will depart Midland at 7 a.m. from the Texas street parking lot. This delightful 3 day, 2 night tour will cost \$330 for single occupancy and \$165 per person for double occupancy. This fee includes your hotel rooms, tour of painted churches and Rockbox performance. Your check made out to First Presbyterian Church is **due by Friday, March 4**. Join the fun for this outstanding trip by contacting Mary Margaret at the church office, 684-7821.



Thanks to the Ladies

The next big FPC Anniversary celebration will be a chuck wagon cookout on May 1. Mark your calendars now and look for more information next month.

Our history review this month covers the Roaring Twenties, a time of great prosperity before a great financial disaster. The Roaring Twenties brought us the first radio station in Pittsburgh in 1920, women's right to vote, Harlem, flappers, Yahtzee, crossword puzzles, King Tut's tomb, TV, Lindbergh, Goddard, Birdseye, movies with sound, prohibition, phonograph records and Winnie the Pooh. It also brought Mussolini, Stalin, Lenin and Hirohito. The world has always had good and evil. Give thanks that God is with us.

First Presbyterian Church had a rough start with a new pastor, L. W. Matthews, who became ill and died soon after arriving. Again, A. P. Willis helped out, preaching twice a month. Then, B. K. Tenny from Barstow/ Van Horn preached once a month. Finally, in 1923, the Rev. Ted Holifield was called. He soon resigned as his wife had been divorced, and people could not accept that. No attempt was made to call another pastor. Sunday school was not held and it looked as if, for a second time, First Presbyterian would dissolve.

Maybe it was because women earned the right to vote in 1920, but more than likely it was because of the survival spirit that frontier women had to have, and the fact that these women knew that they had been marked as God's own; in any case, the women held the church together.

The Women's Auxiliary continued to meet, have a budget and make contributions. It was these eight women that started up Sunday school again in 1925. The author of the first history of our church, Mrs. J. M. Caldwell, was a member of this group. Interest was reborn and G. C. Bidwell, from Barstow/Van Horn preached once a month until May of 1926 when Shirley Guthrie, a student at the Richmond Theological seminary at Richmond, Virginia, conducted services. A woman preacher! Not a called servant, but a needed servant indeed! The fall brought missionary J.W. Allen whose positive personality helped to bring the church back to normal. He left in 1927, but with the discovery of oil, opportunity and prosperity brought people to Midland and to First Presbyterian Church. The Rev. R. T. Murphy was called in 1927. Names that we remember start to appear in the Session minutes as they join: Charles and Dorothy Holtzgraf, Mrs. George Abell, Mrs. E. Y. Bedford, Murray and Mrs. Andrew Faskin, Nell Midkiff, J. Y. Gossett, Mr. and Mrs. George Wallace, and Juliette and Fred Turner, several of whose descendants are members to this day. (A History of the First Presbyterian Church, Harriet Hanna (Mrs. J.M.) Caldwell).

The decade of the 1920s started the pattern that we still see in our economy today. When the rest of the country is out of work, the oilfields have been our financial saving grace. The industry got a huge boost with Santa Rita #1 near Big Lake in 1922. The following year Midland formed the Chamber of Commerce, encouraging oil companies to choose Midland as their headquarters. In 1928, both the Lions Club and Rotary Club began here. The tank farm was built in 1926 by Gulf, and in 1928, the tanks that Magnolia owned burned, but were soon rebuilt. Another tank farm fire in 1929 claimed several lives. Prohibition affected our community, keeping Sheriff A.C. Francis and Bud Estes busy arresting moonshiners. Our first gas station, the Ever Ready, was not too far from the first church at Wall and Colorado. Built in 1927, it sold gasoline for about 15 cents a gallon.

The first Midland College was closed in 1921. Clarence Scharbauer, Sr. built the Scharbauer Hotel in 1927, where the Hilton now stands. The tallest building between Ft. Worth and El Paso was built, opening July 5, 1929. Known then as Hogan's Folly, the twelve-story building became the Petroleum Building and is sometimes still referred to as The Shell Building. (Images of Midland, James Collett).

The journey continues...



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 6:00pm

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"
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