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JULY 2020

ISSUE 20-7

The Diligent

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ARP LAKE WALES, FL

“...a Christ-centered fellowship of believers devoted to glorifying God through true worship, personal evangelism, discipleship, and servanthood.”

AT A GLANCE

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Leadership

THE ARMOR OF GOD

A SERMON SERIES ON EPHESIANS 6:10-20

From Pastor Chad

As Christians, we are citizens of the kingdom of heaven (Philippians 3:20) called to live in the world as the people of God, shining the light of the Gospel into the present spiritual darkness.

When we were saved in Christ, we were not only made citizens of God's heavenly kingdom, but we were also enlisted into the Lord's military. Think about that for a minute. We are not saved by grace and then set up on easy street to live a life of comfort and ease. No, when we received the blessing of eternal life in Christ, we were then called to serve with him in the fight against the spiritual forces of evil to whom we were once loyal

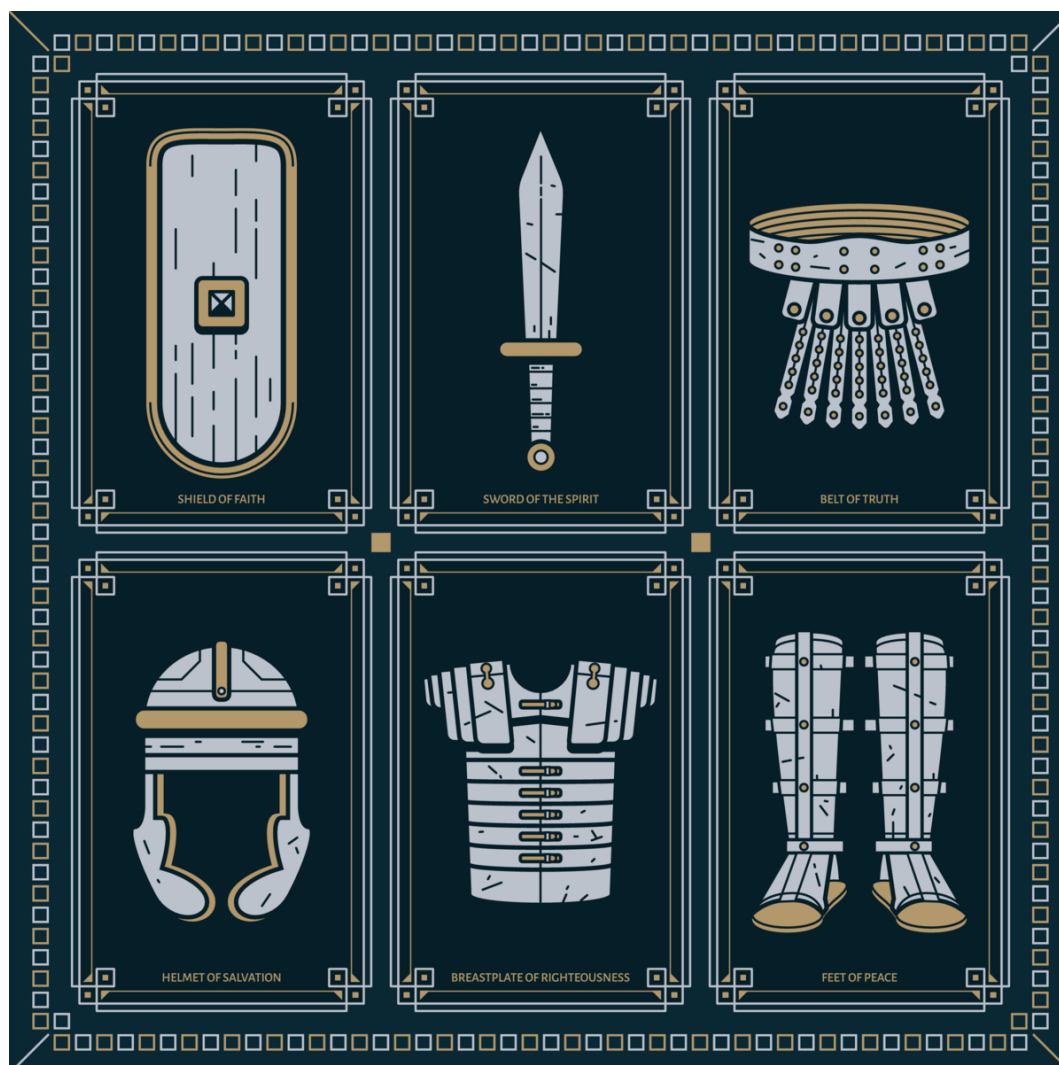
(Ephesians 2:1-3). We were called to join the battle and to fight in such a way that the Gospel might be proclaimed and lived out before the many souls who remain captive to sin so that they too might be liberated by the grace of Jesus. As members of God's spiritual army, we

are not left to fight without protective garb nor with inferior weapons. Rather, we are outfitted with the necessary clothes and tools for war against the devil and "against the rulers, against

the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12).

Ephesians 6:10-20 lays out the specifics of how the Lord has outfitted his people for the spiritual warfare that we are in and in which we will remain until the return of Jesus Christ. Beginning July 19, I will be preaching a series of sermons on

this portion of God's Word to help us understand the nature of the battle, the equipment we have been given for the fight, and the assurance that the war is already won in Christ Jesus. ■



ARMOR OF GOD - SERMON SCHEDULE

July 19	Armor of God	Ephesians 6:10-20	Outfitted for Spiritual War
July 26	Armor of God	Ephesians 6:10-20	Belt of Truth
August 2	Armor of God	Ephesians 6:10-20	Breastplate of Righteousness
August 9	Armor of God	Ephesians 6:10-20	Shoes of Peace
August 23	Armor of God	Ephesians 6:10-20	Shield of Faith
August 30	Armor of God	Ephesians 6:10-20	Helmet of Salvation
September 6	Armor of God	Ephesians 6:10-20	Sword of the Spirit
September 13	Armor of God	Ephesians 6:10-20	Praying Always in All Ways with All Perseverance

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

June 2020 Session Highlights

The elders of First Presbyterian Church meet monthly on the fourth Tuesday. The following notes are highlights from the meeting on June 23, 2020.

- The Session considered Hebrews 11:1-3 for its devotional before the meeting. The theme was the hope and certainty that our faith in Christ gives us during these uncertain times with the COVID-19 pandemic, racial injustice, civil unrest, etc.
- The Stewardship and Finance Committee reported that as of the end of May 2020, tithes and offerings toward the church's 2020 general budget are at \$408,146, which is 43% of the 2020 budget. This is above the average of 39% (2015-2019) our church has historically received by the end of May. Our expenses were \$358,131 which is 37% of the budget, giving a net gain of \$50,015. Praise was given to God in prayer for his financial blessing.
- The Session approved a staff recommendation that we continue worship and ministries under the Phase One Guidelines established in June (see our website for details) with two modifications: (1) Beginning on July 5, our nursery will be open for the worship service hour. We will follow the CDC recommendations for childcare providers. (2) We will offer communion on the first Sunday of each month with modifications to the way the elders will serve the elements. Details about these changes will be communicated on the website. (Update: *The decision to open the nursery for worship service was suspended by the Session on June 30 until further notice due to the current rise of COVID cases.*)
- A report was given by Rev. Chad Reynolds of highlights from the State Meeting of the Florida Presbytery held on June 9 via Zoom.

PRAYER FOCUS

JULY 5 - Lament

JULY 12 - Ministry of Reconciliation

JULY 19 - FPC Administrative and Support Staff

JULY 26 - FPC Music Ministry

•The chairmen of the committees of the Session gave reports of the work and ministry they are overseeing. Prayer was offered after each report, asking for the Lord's guidance and blessing.

•A season of prayer was had for various needs within our congregation, community, and the world. ■



Discipleship

WHEN WE CAN'T FIX EVERYTHING

From Pastor Mackay

Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.
- Matthew 5:24

The world has many unmet needs. Now more than ever, we have them streaming (or "screaming") to us all the time. Christians are to be people who help. Jesus' words above pretty much settle the issue. Yet, our time and our wallets can only be stretched so far. With so much before us, how do we know whom to help?

We should consider a biblical principle many have called "moral proximity." The Bible gives us a number of ways to think through how we prioritize the time and resources that we have to give. Paul says in Galatians 6:10, "... let us do good to everyone." The choice of whether or not we should give of ourselves for others' sake is not really a choice for a Christian (Phil. 2:3, John 15:13). But Paul's phrase has two important qualifiers. Before it, we read, "...as we have

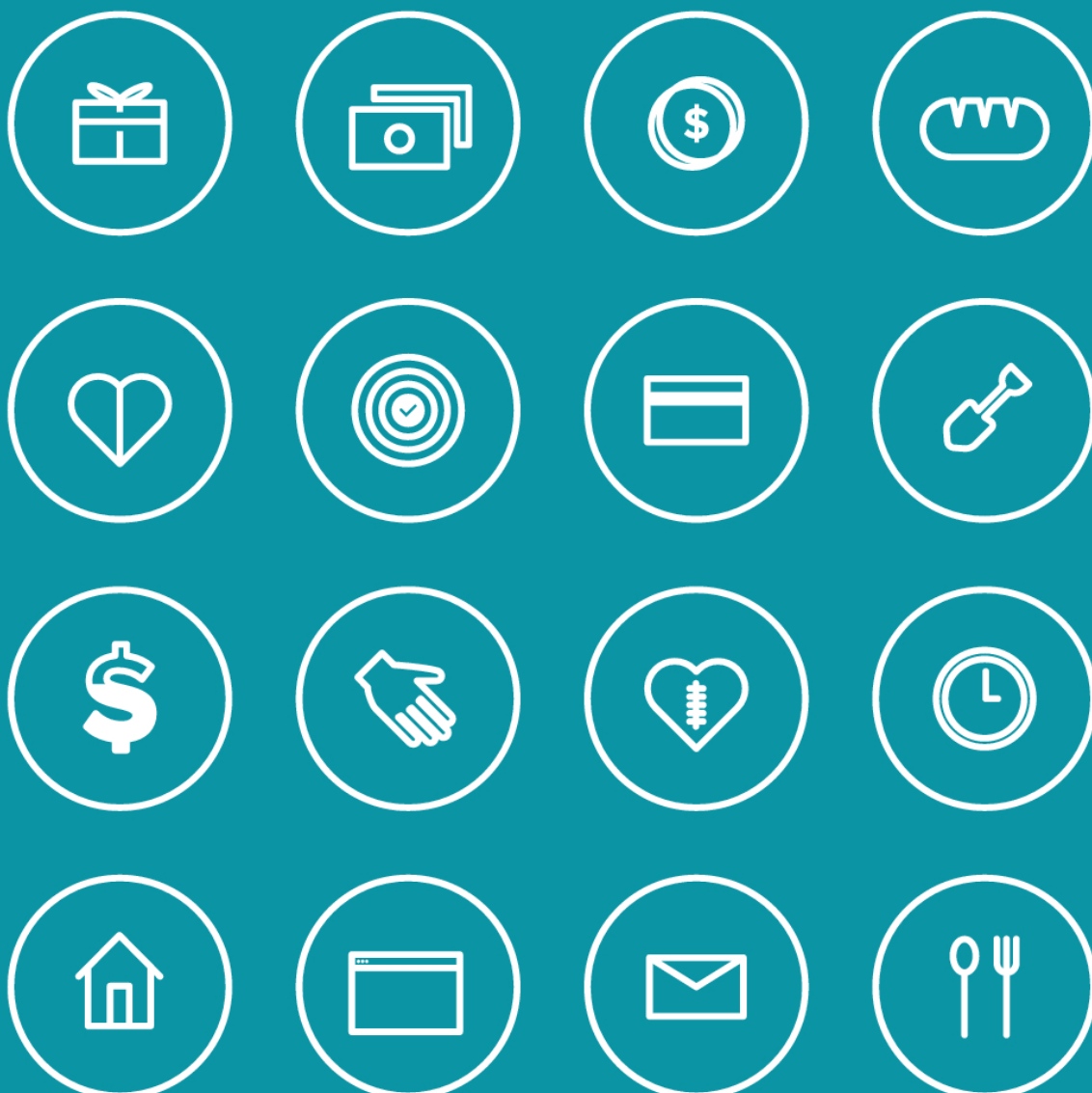
opportunity," and after it, "...and especially to those who are of the household of faith." There's a lot we could tease out of that one sentence, but here's a preliminary conclusion we can draw: our obligation to help is not equal regarding every need we discern. Here are two factors the Bible gives us as we think through discerning priorities in service.

The first I'll call "closeness." In his instructions to Timothy, Paul takes up the issue of widows receiving support from the church (1 Tim 5). Then, as now, the church was where those lacking basic resources would come for help. Yet, Paul does not direct that the church should help in every situation without exception. There are people who should meet the needs of widows before the church: their families. They shoulder the primary obligation when someone in the family is in need. Paul doesn't beat around the bush about it. If a family refuses to help, Paul says, they are "worse than an unbeliever." So,

when the church of Ephesus sees Widow Jones has a need, they ought to be aware, but it is Widow Jones' family that ought to act first. If the family meets her needs, the church has no guilt to bear, even though they offered no substantive help.

So, we should look first to what is close to us, and this includes geographical proximity. Our neighborhoods and communities are first in line. As we saw with the family, it also includes relational proximity. In my years in youth ministry, students often spoke with starry eyes about their desire to travel to foreign cultures and help impoverished people groups. I encouraged their desire, but told them that before they travel to the other side of the world,

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they need to help their parents wash the dishes! The Bible points us first to what is right in front of us.

Next, the Bible guides our discernment in terms of our ability to help others. In 2 Corinthians 8-9, Paul considers ability as he exhorts the church to financial giving. He does not admonish the Corinthians in the same way as people who ignore their families. Instead, he encourages (8:8), aware of the fact that individual Christians may not be in the same place financially or spiritually (9:6-7). Now, the theme of the passage is to press on toward generosity and, out of the abundance God provides, to give beyond our means. Nevertheless, Paul is gentle and realizes that not all are called to give the maximum amount.

We also must consider our ability; we are all finite. A father with four young children at home simply may not be able to lead a concerted church effort to finance a charitable cause, no matter how worthy it may be. His abilities are limited by the calling to raise his children in the Lord.

Distinguishing what we ought to do and what may be a good thing to do can be difficult, especially since we all need some prodding to look beyond ourselves in the first place. Let us be careful to pay attention to the opportunities that we can meet that are directly in front of us (see that opening verse from Matthew one more time). However, let us not feel guilty when we cannot solve every problem for every person. ■

EKKLESIA & SMALL GROUPS

ADULT SMALL GROUPS

At present, our Adult Small Groups are continuing to meet in varied formats. Some have resumed meeting on campus, some are still using technological means, and others are meeting off-campus. Whatever your group is doing, stick with it. If you would like to join an Adult Small Group, please contact Pastor Mackay for more information.

LOOKING AHEAD...

The Discipleship Committee will be discussing our 2020-2021 discipleship calendar at their July meeting (including Ekklesia). Pray for them as they make plans!



Music Ministry

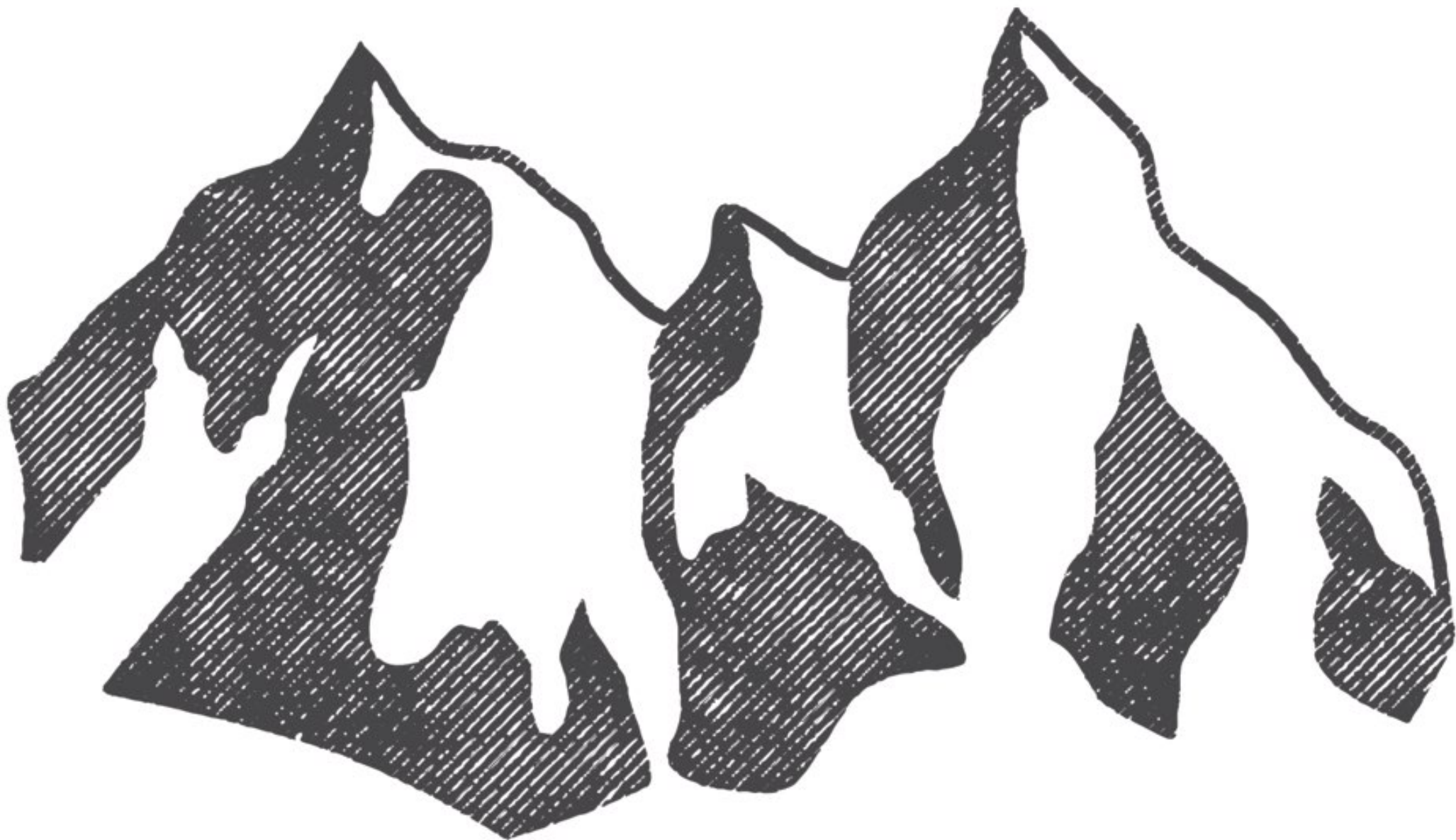
WHAT? WHAT DO YOU MEAN I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO SING?

From Vince Treadway

I am reminded in this crazy time of COVID-19 of what Jesus told the Pharisees who were upset that the disciples were praising God boisterously and throwing down their cloaks and palm branches as he entered Jerusalem. The Pharisees told Jesus, "'Teacher, rebuke your disciples.' He (Jesus) answered, 'I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out!'" (Luke 19:39-40) That is how singers and musicians (and congregants!) feel when they are told they can't sing or play because the aerosolization of their breath travels too far and carries potential germs! Yet, we also are in a time when we are asked to "consider others better than ourselves" and serve the community in a spirit of love. So, for a time, we are wearing masks, sitting farther apart, and singing in groups less, but in our hearts, we can still rejoice in the Lord!

I would encourage you to continue to sing, even if it is in your own home with your family or

alone. Play your favorite hymns or spiritual songs on your computer, iPad, or other device and sing along with gusto! Another powerful way is to meditate on God's Word with music, either in song or silently. In the *Trinity Hymnal*, there are more than 80 Psalm texts set to music as well as other Scripture texts! If you don't own a *Trinity Hymnal*, you can order one from Great Commissions Publications (www.gcp.org) to have one at home for your own devotional time and family worship. You may also have some favorite songs or choruses that are Scripture set to music, and you can sing and meditate on God's Word with those. No, we do not have to stop singing, and I don't know about you, but I don't think I could! We will just have to be creative in how and when we sing and look forward to the days ahead when we can sing freely; if not in this life, in the next! ■



High School & Middle School

REFOCUSING

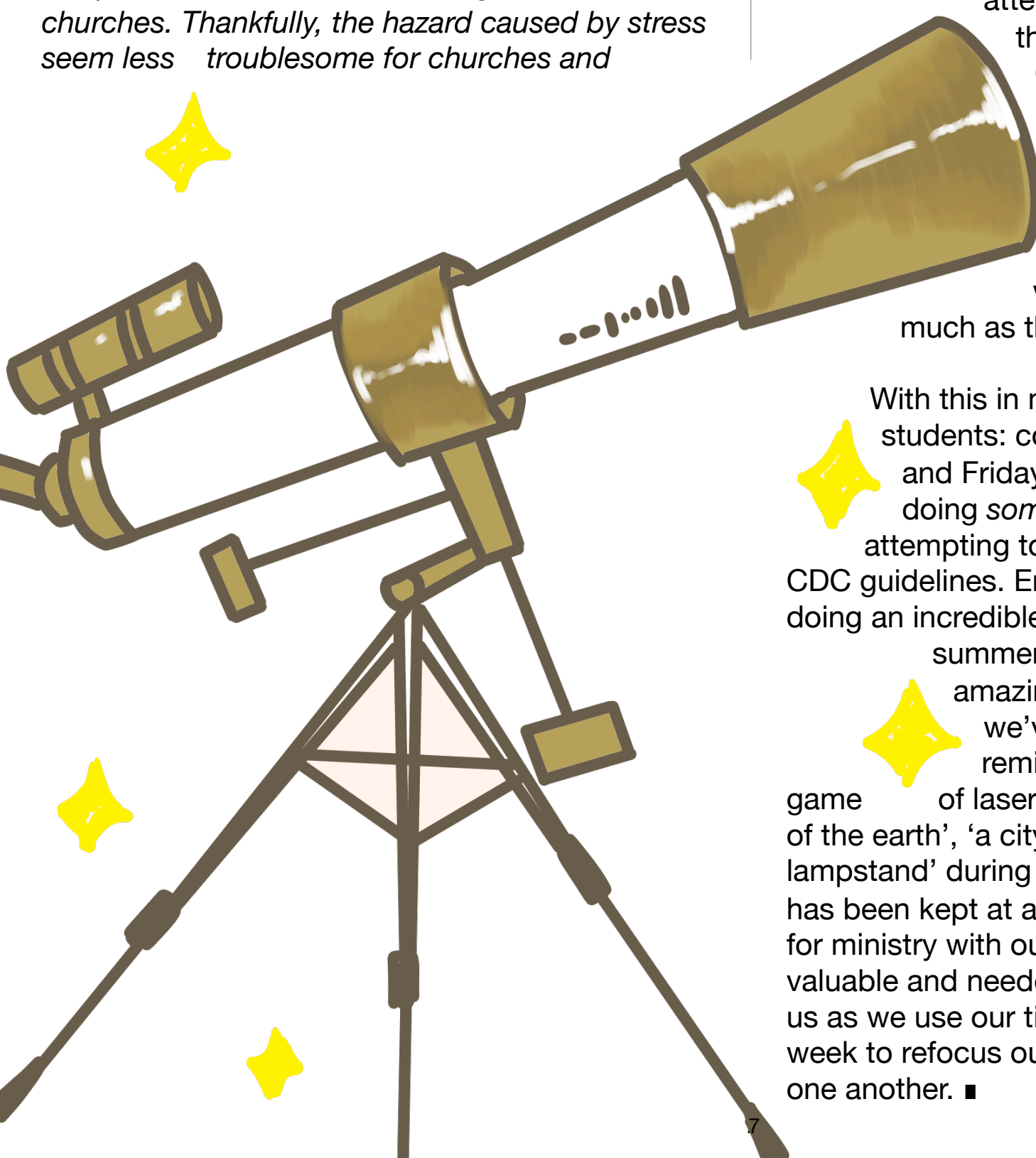
From Shane Miller

This might be selfish, but I love it when good research supports the ministry we do with the youth at First Pres. In the book 'Growing Young', Kara Powell, Jake Mulder, and Brad Griffin present the findings they obtained from interviewing 250 churches across the country who have been successful in discipling young people. One of the things they discuss in the book is the stress put on young people in our current culture as they are given tremendous workloads and responsibilities from school, sports, activities, etc. One might be tempted to see church activity as an added stress, a potential straw that could possibly break the camel's back. Interestingly enough, the 'Growing Young' research has discovered quite the opposite phenomenon. Speaking to this thought, they write, *"Although the typical young person is steeped in stress, there is some good news for churches. Thankfully, the hazard caused by stress seem less troublesome for churches and*

parishes that grow young. Over 80 percent of the young people in the congregations we surveyed agree that their church involvement decreases their stress. Even though church activities and leadership often make young people busier, there's a significant upside. Congregational involvement seems to lessen anxiety by reminding young people of what's important and inviting them to step away from the chaos of their lives to refocus on loving God and others."

I love how the authors of this work use the term "refocus." In a day and time in which it seems as if the world and the church are facing insurmountable troubles, we can sometimes lose sight of how Jesus, his life, death, and resurrection, sheds light and hope upon every sin, sorrow, and trial. Like Peter, our center of attention is drawn to the wind and the waves and we begin to sink. Christian community, then, is absolutely necessary to be a means to redirect our focus, even for young people as they themselves are in the throws of processing the weight of our times just as much as the adults of our congregation.

With this in mind, I encourage parents and students: come join us! Every Wednesday and Friday, our youth ministry has been doing *something*, of course all the while attempting to do so in accordance with CDC guidelines. Emma Harrington has been doing an incredible job in coordinating events this summer and we have been having an amazing time with one another. As we've joined together, I've been reminded of how even a simple game of laser tag can be an example of 'salt of the earth', 'a city on a hill', and 'light upon a lampstand' during a time in which social activity has been kept at a minimum. These opportunities for ministry with our young people are so valuable and needed. Please continue to pray for us as we use our time together throughout the week to refocus ourselves upon loving Christ and one another. ■



Children's Ministry

PATIENCE FOR RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT

From Kelly Harrington

Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

-Romans 12:12

Remember the game of Red Light, Green Light? One lucky kid stands downfield from all the other kids and starts the game by quickly turning her back on them while shouting, "Green light!" All the other kids take off and run toward her as fast as they can while she is not looking until she spontaneously turns back around while shouting, "Red light!" As the field of rushing bodies comes to an immediate standstill at her command, the leader scans the area for any sneaky movements forward. This stop and start game continues until eventually, one quick and agile kid makes his way to his authoritative commander and overthrows her with one touch!

Although it is a fun and exciting game for recess, there has not been anything fun or exciting about feeling like we live in some life-sized version of it. Since mid-March, when the first big "red light" halted all of our schedules, it has felt like all of us are trying to push forward, in many different ways, without getting caught. Progress has felt slow, and it is nearly impossible to plan for the next "turn around" when we are allowed to move, or we have to stay put again. It has been no small exercise of testing our patience.

"Patience is one of the rarest virtues in today's insta-everything world. And yet patience has rarely been more needed, as many of us are antsy to break free of "stay home" isolation and get back to normalcy as soon as possible" (McCracken, B., 2020). We long to do the things we always have: gather for summer holidays, go out to eat in busy restaurants, chat with our neighbors in the middle of the aisle at the grocery store, and worship together at church without masks, to name a few. But it still isn't time for that, not yet. We need to be patient.

In a list of commands for the Christian life in Romans 12, we find specific instruction to be "patient in tribulation" (v. 12) as a part of a much bigger picture of what it means to live as a "living sacrifice" (v. 1) and not be conformed to the world (v. 2). More specifically, when we read to "be patient in tribulation" (v. 12), which is wonderfully (and not accidentally) bookended in this verse to "rejoice in

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hope" and "be constant in prayer," necessary practices to help us be patient through difficult times. These days, a study of Romans 12 would do us all well to reaffirm the attributes of Christian living, strengthening our faith in Jesus Christ and yielding to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives to help us be patient.

Even in the real, recess-time game of Red Light, Green Light, patience has its place. If one very eager player acts too quickly before the next green light, he will lose his place on the field and be sent back to the beginning. I know this disappointment firsthand, both from recess and real life.

As a second-grade teacher, from time to time I would appoint myself as the leader of this game when it was time to return to class. Near the end of the last round, I would turn around one last

time when all my students were just a few steps away from me, and while shouting, "Green light!" I would take off running as fast as I could. As they chased after me, I enjoyed hearing their screams of surprise and delight as they chased me further down the field and eventually back to the door of the building. Changing the game, in the end, was always a big surprise for my students. Doing something unexpected and "countercultural" brought unity back to our group from the otherwise self-promoting, self-asserting, one-winner game. Christians, be patient in this climate of constant change and present one another with a countercultural surprise we can offer our neighbors to God's glory! ■

Ref: McCracken, B. (2020) Church, Don't Let Coronavirus Divide You. The Gospel Coalition Website. Retrieved from <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/church-dont-let-coronavirus-divide/>.



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY UPDATE

While we are still unable to provide face-to-face children's ministry classes and activities, we encourage you to use the children's discipleship resources that are provided on the Children's Ministry page of our website at www.fpclw.org. Each week, a new Sunday school lesson and children's bulletin is matched to the sermon text of the worship service. Together, with your children, you can continue exploring the message you heard during morning worship. If you have questions or need assistance accessing or printing resources, please contact Kelly through the church office.

KIDZ ZOOM MEETING

Spread the word! Elementary kids can join Kelly for a weekly Kidz Zoom Meeting every Wednesday at 10 a.m. Kelly and the kids are learning about the evidence that shows up when your life is filled with the Holy Spirit! That's right, it's the fruit of the Spirit, and it is not an apple!

MILESTONE CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

July 1, Trent Jackson
July 1, Keaton Kohl
July 1, Kevin Kohl
July 2, Marguerite Bacon
July 2, John Beck
July 2, Pat Frankenburger
July 2, Sasha Friend
July 5, Tami Estes
July 5, Maggie Clare Hixenbaugh
July 6, Whitney Brewer
July 6, Tom Galloway
July 7, Chip Carter
July 7, Caroline Swanson
July 8, Bob Brookes
July 8, Doug Pace
July 10, Troy Hershberger
July 10, Becky Jahna
July 13, Bob Meeker
July 13, Nikki Sealey
July 16, Joshua Roe
July 16, Julia Roe
July 17, Cash Cockrell
July 17, Alison Freeland
July 17, Maya Hershberger
July 17, Faith Treadway
July 20, Chuck Loveless
July 21, Jack Brandies
July 21, James Ebel
July 22, Chad Reynolds
July 23, Wanda Bryan
July 24, Dick Bailey
July 25, David Kennedy Nelson
July 25, June Ullman
July 28, Ellen Horn
July 28, David Nelson
July 29, Carol Bourdette
July 29, Charlie Henry
July 31, Dawn McCollum

ANNIVERSARIES

July 1, Jeff & Maria Herman
July 5, Colby & Emma Pike
July 6, Troy & Suzie Hershberger
July 11, John & Laureen Beck
July 13, Jim & Diana Smith
July 19, Chad & Laney Reynolds
July 20, John & Rachel Miller
July 22, John & Luciana Abele
July 24, Julia & Michael Berkau
July 29, Bob & Lynne Hulen
July 19, Chad & Laney Reynolds
July 29, Carl & Joyce McCollum

Church Family

Happy 75th Anniversary!

We wish to extend many happy wishes to Tom and Jean Ingram in celebration of their 75th wedding anniversary which was on June 20th. We give praise to God for his abundant blessings upon them for their many years of marriage!

THE LORD'S SUPPER

We look forward to celebrating the Lord's Supper with you again beginning on July 5 as the elders have approved the reinstatement of the distribution of communion during worship service on the first Sunday of each month. The elders will deliver the elements to each participant to eliminate the need to pass trays from hand to hand. Communion will be prepared with great care to minimize personal contact with the elements before they are distributed to worship participants.



HAPPY
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FOURTH
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
OF
JULY



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 Phone: 863.676.0711
www.fpclw.org

CHURCH OFFICERS

ELDERS

2020

John Dubois
 Stewart Hurst
 Ed Lamb
 Fox Rawlings

2021

Mike Berkau
 Paul Benner

2022

Frank Hunt III
 John Matteson
 Vince Treadway

2023

Scott Crews
 Tom Freeland
 Doug Pace

DEACONS

2020

David Bass
 Lynne Hulen
 Rob McCollum
 David Kennedy Nelson

2021

David Caldwell
 Michael Kahler
 Carl McCollum
 Tony Thomas

2022

Bea Meeker
 Aaron Nelson
 Mary Youmans

Moderator: Rev. Chad Reynolds
Vice Moderator: Rev. Mackay Smith
Clerk of Session: Ed Lamb
Chairman of Deacons: Rob McCollum
Deacon Secretary: David Kennedy Nelson
Chm. of the Congregation: Jake Cockrell
Treasurer: Michelle Hurst (2020-2021)
Asst. Treasurer: Daniel Hunt (2020-2021)