

The First Press

March 2020



“Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.”

John 3:3

TABLE OF CONTENTS	
Birthdays & Anniversaries	3
Message From Rev. Lacy Sellars	4
Lenten Disciplines	6
Session Notes	8
2019 Statistical Report	9
Presbyterian Women	10
Statistics	12
Bargain Box	13
Announcements	14
Easter Lily Order Form	16
Special Care List	17
Memorials	17
Prayer Chain	18
How To Reach Us	19
Calendar	Insert
April Newsletter Deadline: March 27th	
Celebrate Birthdays and Anniversaries!!!	
<p>Every third Sunday of the month the Church provides a cake during fellowship time to celebrate the birthdays and anniversaries that occur that month. This is also the opportunity to contribute a dollar to the "Birthday Fund" for each year you are young! The Birthday Board is exhibited, envelopes and a box are available for your use or you may put your check in the offering plate. Please write on your check "Birthday Fund" so that it will be deposited to the correct account. The Birthday Fund goes towards scholarships for our graduating seniors.</p> <p>Please join us on <i>March 15</i>, after Worship, to celebrate Birthdays and Anniversaries!</p>	

Birthdays & Anniversaries	3
Message From Rev. Lacy Sellars	4
Lenten Disciplines	6
Session Notes	8
2019 Statistical Report	9
Presbyterian Women	10
Statistics	12
Bargain Box	13
Announcements	14
Easter Lily Order Form	16
Special Care List	17
Memorials	17
Prayer Chain	18
How To Reach Us	19
Calendar	Insert

April Newsletter Deadline: March 27th

Celebrate Birthdays and Anniversaries!!!

Every third Sunday of the month the Church provides a cake during fellowship time to celebrate the birthdays and anniversaries that occur that month. This is also the opportunity to contribute a dollar to the "Birthday Fund" for each year you are young! The Birthday Board is exhibited, envelopes and a box are available for your use or you may put your check in the offering plate. Please write on your check "Birthday Fund" so that it will be deposited to the correct account. The Birthday Fund goes towards scholarships for our graduating seniors.

Please join us on *March 15*, after Worship, to celebrate Birthdays and Anniversaries!

March Birthdays

Cheryl Martin	4-Mar	Brooke Hopkins	18-Mar
Joseph Allshouse	6-Mar	John Gardner	19-Mar
Gary Cline	6-Mar	Judy Wright	19-Mar
Gage Gould	7-Mar	Kathy Harst	20-Mar
Linda Rath	7-Mar	Stephanie Sams	21-Mar
Gene Brooks	9-Mar	Kathryn Cattaneo	22-Mar
Margie Florini	10-Mar	Grant Muzny	22-Mar
Fred Fuquay	10-Mar	Robert Raines	23-Mar
Mari Simmons	10-Mar	Ann Hiers	24-Mar
Amy Westmoreland	10-Mar	Sarah Jean Lindsey	25-Mar
Jade Rice Coats	13-Mar	Penelope Westmoreland	31-Mar
Orville Poole	14-Mar		

March Anniversaries

Scott and Randa Couch	4-Mar
Lacy and Darlene Sellars	10-Mar
Mike and Mary Gayle McGibbony	12-Mar
Hiram and Susan Cooper	18-Mar
Bill and Jamie Randall	18-Mar
Daniel and Joan Clinton	29-Mar

God Bless You on Your Special Day!



THE GIFT OF LENT

When we think about the season of Lent, it's only natural to recall the wilderness. After his baptism, the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness where he fasted for forty days and nights. The wilderness reminded him of his ancestors who also were famished in the wilderness outside of Egypt for forty years as they sought God's true Word, more nourishing than bread. When Jesus was famished, "the tempter" approached him, encouraging him to turn the stones to bread, to test God's loyalty, and to compromise his baptism. The wilderness is a place of testing.

Yet, on Ash Wednesday, as I walked some friends to their car after worship, I was also aware of the gift of night. The sky was clear and the glow of the new moon cast shadows on the ground. Yes, the night was cold and dark, but it was also alive and inviting. I stood on the front steps of the church for a moment, looking up. Most of the light I could see was cast long before I was born. Objects that looked so stable were moving and changing at ever-increasing speeds. "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is they name in all the earth" (Psalm 8:1).

Nicodemus came to Jesus by night (John 3), hoping to avoid the judgment of those who would rreject him for challenging the boundaries of his faith. Yet, even at night, he perceived the presence of God. So he asked Jesus about faith.

Jesus was not toying with Nicodemus, as many assume, making fun of his developing faith. He only wanted Nicodemus to keep going, to stretch his faith: "be born from above." Though he stumbled by asking Jesus about being born in the flesh, Nicodemus hung in there as Jesus explained spiritual birth. It was hard to hear beyond the letter of the law, so engrained in generations of tradition.

Jesus told Nicodemus to be looking for a contemporary expression of Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness to save those who were dying (John 3:14). He would not see it that night, but if he kept looking, he would see it soon enough. “God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him” (John 3:17).

We don’t know what happened to Nicodemus that night, but John tells us of another day, some three years later, as darkness fell and Pilate gave permission for Joseph of Arimathea to take away the body of Jesus from the cross. Standing at the foot of the cross, holding a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about a hundred pounds, was Nicodemus. Recalling the gift of Jesus on that night so long before, Nicodemus abandoned his secrecy and acted out of love for Jesus. He now saw the spirit of the law; he now saw the Messiah and became his disciple.

Some people approach Lent as a ritual to be observed—an obligation to be endured. Lent, however, is a gift given by God—a safe place where we may be vulnerable, ask questions, and seek a new relationship with our God. Like the Prodigal Son recognizing his center, Lent is a homecoming where we acknowledge our humanity, confess our sins, and receive the welcome that has never been worn out. Lent is a time to ask God into our lives. And like the Prodigal Father—God is head-over-heels glad to see us and welcome us home.

Welcome home! I hope you enjoy Lent and will use it wisely,

Lacy

LENTEN DISCIPLINES

Lent is a time for the church to journey together toward Easter. Lent is not about being miserable, sad, and dismal in anticipation of Jesus' crucifixion. It's a time to repent and walk more closely to the source of our salvation.

Fasting and "giving up something" can be part of the Lenten disciplines, but so can "taking on something." Lent is a season to learn God's trust and to put that trust into action. With the aid of the list below, you are invited to make a commitment to discipline yourself and grow in God's trust during the season of Lent.

Inward and Personal Disciplines

- Spend time in solitude each day.
- Read a book for spiritual growth.
- Read twice through the Gospel of this year's lectionary cycle.
- Begin to keep a journal of prayer concerns, questions, readings, and reflections.
- In your prayer life, focus on thanksgiving, rather than on asking.
- Give yourself a gift of three hours to do something you say you never have time to do.
- Find a way to go to bed earlier or to sleep in, to get enough rest.
- Make a list of people with whom you need to be reconciled. Pray for them and let Jesus guide you in thinking and responding to them.
- Take control of your life by: _____.
- Participate in the special worship opportunities offered at our church, or another church.
- Give up a grudge or a re-living of a past event.
- Forgive someone who has hurt you.

- Add more movement into your daily routine.
- Dance your prayers to a favorite piece of music.
- Other promptings: _____.

Outward and Social Disciplines

- Listen and respond to Christ's call to a ministry of service—with love and energy.
- Plan to visit a home-bound neighbor or church member each week of Lent.
- Write a letter of affirmation each week of Lent to a person who has touched your life.
- Go to coffee or dinner with someone you want to know better.
- Begin to recycle waste from my home.
- Give blood and concentrate on the cross.
- Say "NO" to something that is a waste of money and time.
- Pray to God to help you resist a prejudice you have, and for ideas in opposing it.
- Talk to the pastor about something you would like to do in the church.
- Rebuke the spirit of criticism and the temptation to speak it.
- Live out your baptismal promise to "turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world" by:
_____.
- Other outward and social promptings: _____.

As a way of being accountable:

- ____ Post your intentions for Lent in a place that you will see each day.
- ____ Share your plan with at least one other person, and tell that person your experiences during Holy Week.

Session Notes

The Session had the opportunity to review the 2019 Annual Statistical Report which we send to the General Assembly of the PC(USA). This report shows that we had 276 active members at the end of 2019. Our average worship attendance on Sunday mornings was 107. A sad activity during the meeting was the removal from the active roll of persons who, for whatever reason, are no longer active in the life of this congregation. An effort had been made to contact all of these people and encourage them to become active again if they are still living in this area and have not become involved in another church.

The church has not sold the property at 411 Sellers which is being used by AA. Oaklawn Park is seeking to obtain the property by trading for another piece of property which would be suitable for AA to use. At this time, no suitable property has been obtained.

A program presented by the Hot Springs Police Department on what to do if an active shooter were in our church is being tentatively scheduled for March (date to be announced). This program will be for the Session and anyone else interested in the training. The program is for the average person, not about establishing a response team.

Other items from the Session reports:

- Linda Glover has regretfully resigned as Sunday School Superintendent. Thank you, Linda, for serving in this position.
- Don't forget to make your contribution to the Birthday Fund for our college scholarship fund.
- Our Annual Congregational Meeting will be during the March Family Night Supper.
- Lacy and Darlene Sellars will be visiting their new granddaughter in Austin from March 12-18.

Kathy White,
Clerk

2019 Church Statistical Report

Church First PIN 10188
 Presbytery Arkansas
 Address 213 Whittington Ave, Hot Springs, AR 71901-3409
 Phone 501-824-5646 Fax 501-824-2938
 Email firstpreshs213@sbcglobal.net
 Web Site www.firstpreshsprings.org



Membership		Average Weekly Worship Attendance	
Prior Active Members	286	Adjusted membership	286
Gains		Losses	
Certificate	4	Certificates	6
Youth Professions	0	Deaths	7
Professions & Reaffirmations	1	Deleted for any Other Reason	2
Total Gains	5	Total Losses	16
Total Ending Active Members	276		
Baptisms		Average Weekly Worship Attendance	107
Presented by Others	0	Female Members	163
All Confirmation	0	Friends of the Congregation	33
All Other	0	Ruling Elders on Session	16
		Do you have Deacons?	Yes
Age Distribution of Active Members		People with Disabilities	
25 & Under	25	Hearing Impairment	23
26 - 40	28	Sight Impairment	9
41 - 55	27	Mobility Impairment	22
56 - 70	96	Other Impairment	17
Over 70	101		
Total Age Distribution	276		
Christian Education		Total Christian Education	
Birth - 3	1	Grade 7	1
Age 4	0	Grade 8	3
Kindergarten	1	Grade 9	1
Grade 1	2	Grade 10	0
Grade 2	1	Grade 11	1
Grade 3	0	Grade 12	5
Grade 4	0	Young Adults	4
Grade 5	1	Over 25	52
Grade 6	0	Teachers/Officers	10
		Total Christian Education	83
Racial Ethnic		Total Racial Ethnic	
Asian/Pacific Islander/South Asian	1	Native American/Alaska Native/Indigenous	0
Black/African American/African	4	White	271
Middle Eastern/North African	0	Multiracial	
Hispanic/Latino-a	0		
		Total Racial Ethnic	276
Financial Data		Mission Expenses	
Annual Income	967,890	Mission Expenses	57,616
Annual Expenses	486,612	Personnel Expenses	320,032
		Facilities Expenses	78,613



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN



The PW Sewing Group are making *Fidget Mats* for dementia patients. Come help cut, sew, crochet, iron, and visit. We meet every 2nd Thursday, 9:00 a.m.– 12:00 p.m. Please join us! Contact Jeanette Cline or Carol Mattson with questions.

The PW Day Circle Bible Study, meets on Tuesday, March 17, 10:30 a.m. Our current P.W. study book is, Love Carved in Stone, by Eugenia Anne Gamble

Women's Wednesday Study, *More Than Enough: Living Abundantly in a Culture of Excess* is a call for faithful and responsible consumerism. Author Lee Hull Moses is Senior Minister of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Greensboro, North Carolina. She states in her introduction, "There is a way to live that honors that gratitude [for life] and moves us to a deeper engagement with the world around us. Let's see if we can find it." Interested women are welcome to join this study group which meets in the church library at **10:30 on Wednesday mornings** for lively discussions of contemporary religious texts.

SAVE THE DATE

Retreat, **August 7– 8th** on Mt. Sequoyah in Fayetteville. The topic is "Preserving Traditions through Workshops, Worship, and Wonderous activities." There is plenty of lodging for you to book your stay. **Phone 800.760.8126 or email Stay@MountSequoyah.org** Once again make plans with your sisters in Christ to attend a relaxing and rejuvenating gathering.

We will not be having a Cluster 3 Fall Gathering in 2020. However, as you check out the above opportunities, you will be able to enjoy God's words and fellowship in unique surroundings during the year.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN OF ARKANSAS PRESBYTERY



SPRING GATHERING

SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 2020 — 10:00 am

Registration Fee: \$10

(includes morning refreshments and lunch)

University of the Ozarks

401 North College Avenue, Clarksville, Arkansas



Rev. Laura Fleetwood
Worship Leader



**'For I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me drink.'**

Matthew 25:35



U of O student working
Food for Thought Garden

An offering will be received for the U of Ozark Food for Thought Garden
Gathering Co-hosted by PW of FPC, Clarksville and PW Presbytery Coordinating Team

Registration Forms are available on the Visitors
Table, in the Fellowship Hall.

Registration deadline: Wednesday, April 1

STATISTICS			
February Attendance:			
Dates	Worship	Visitors	Sunday School
2/2	103	2	21
2/9 Scout Sunday	141	40	21
2/16	107	8	24
2/23	97	4	23
January Financial Statistics:			
	Year to Date	Budget:	YTD% of Budget:
Pledge Income:	33,649	268,176	13%
Other Income:	3,785	56,105	7%
Legacy Income:	10,000	120,000	8%
Total Income:	47,434	444,281	11%
Total Expenses:	32,267	451,365	7%
Income to Expense:	15,166		
COMMITTEES - DIACONATE - SESSION MARCH SCHEDULE			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committees Meet: March 18, 6:30 p.m. or contact your Moderator for specific place, date, and time. • Session Meets: March 25, 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. • Diaconate Meets: <i>March 15 (3rd Sunday of each month) in the Library, immediately after church.</i> 			

BARGAIN BOX	
February Sales and Donations	
2/5	303.00
2/12	286.00
2/19	252.00
2/26	353.00
Total	\$1194.00
February Expenditures	
NPC Nursing Scholarship	1,000.00
Caring Place	400.00
Jackson House	500.00
Total	\$1900.00
<p>Bargain Box is always in need of most items. We can always use clean clothes, working appliances, and unbroken household items. If you are unsure about your donation you can always check with a Bargain Box volunteer. We appreciate your donations. 100% of our sales go to help organizations in Garland county. THANK YOU!!!</p>	
<p>Won't you consider volunteering in the Bargain Box on sales days? By giving your time you would be helping your neighbors, nursing students (scholarships), and children in distress. Please Rosemary Nipper, _____, if you'd like to learn more, or to sign up!</p>	
<p>LIKE us on our Facebook page, "First Presbyterian Bargain Box."</p>	
<p><u>Bargain Box Workers for March</u></p>	
• 4th	Carol DeHut and Gwen Davis
• 11th	Kathy McConkie and Sally Pierce
• 18th	TBA
• 28th	John and Frankie Ochsner

ANNOUNCEMENTS

March Liturgists

- **1st** Bob Pierce
- **8th** Bob Pierce
- **15th** Bob Pierce
- **22nd** Kathy White
- **29th** Kathy White



Family Night Supper Annual Congregational Meeting

Wednesday, March 11, 6:30 p.m.

Join us as we receive the 2019 Year-End Report and hear the goals of the Deaconate and Session Committees for the coming year. You will have the opportunity to ask questions of Committee Moderators about their work, and Lacy will present a "State of the Church" report.

We will enjoy an 'Ole Fashion Chicken Dinner. The Fellowship Committee will furnish chicken and beverages; members are asked to bring a complementary side dish, vegetable, salad and/or dessert. We hope to see you there!

Jackson House Donations in March: Canned soup. First Presbyterian provides two people to bag and hand out groceries every Monday, 1:00-3:00 p.m. **If you'd like to volunteer, please call Jeanette Cline,** [redacted]. Put your faith in action and become part of FPC's efforts to feed the poor!

No More Soup Labels— For many years, you have been bringing in your Campbell Soup labels to support the Goodland Academy in Hugo, Oklahoma, a school with Presbyterian roots. With your help, and that of many other groups, the Goodland Academy was able to purchase a 7 passenger van for use at the school. However, Campbell's Soup has now ended this program, so we will no longer be collecting soup labels. Thank you for your help in this project. Now you can just bring your quarters to support Heifer International!



THANK YOU, LINDA GLOVER!

When you enter the Fellowship Hall on Sunday morning, chances are that the first person to greet you will be Linda Glover. Linda has served as our Sunday School Superintendent for over ten years, checking attendance, counting the offering, and forwarding the Sunday School statistics to the Financial Secretary. Yet, the most important part of her job was also her best: welcoming members and guests into God's house and walking with them to their destination, whether to their class, the choir room, or the Sanctuary. Linda announced that, on March 8, she will be retiring as our Sunday School Superintendent and attending class instead of overseeing their ministry.

The Christian Education Committee invites everyone to a time of thanksgiving honoring Linda Glover during worship on Sunday, March 8, followed by a reception with cake and celebration in the Fellowship Hall. As Linda has sent us cards and prayers through the years, please mail her a card expressing your thanks for all she does and means to us. We will miss her from the job but are grateful that she will continue serving as a deacon in our church.

"Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness."

Matthew 25:21 (NIV)

A Gift Has Been Received In Honor Of

Linda Glover

from

Michael & Barbara Helm

Dear Church Family,

Thank you for the many expressions of love you have shown our family during our time of loss. Your thoughtfulness is appreciated more than you can know.

The Bateman Family