



# The Presbyview

## From Pastor Smit's Desk –August

### Where is God in Natural Disasters?

This last week I have watched with dismay the devastation that is taking place in Northern California with the Carr Fires that are raging out of control. Stefanie and I lived in that affected area for 4 years as we attended college and have many friends and fellow church members that still live in that area. We pray for relief from further loss of life and property.

Natural disasters happen every year in various different forms – tornados, hurricanes, fires, etc. Too often we dismiss them as long as they don't affect us. But we fundamentally recognize that these are tragic events that do affect many. As Christians, it makes us wonder, "If God is sovereign and good, why does He allow for such events?"

Recently I read this portion of Jerry Bridges' book, *Trusting God*, in regard to this issue of natural disaster:

All of us are affected by the weather and the forces of nature at various times to one degree or another. Whenever we are affected by the weather—whether it is merely an inconvenience or a major disaster—we tend to regard it as nothing more than the impersonal expression of certain fixed meteorological or geological laws. Whether it is trivial or traumatic, we tend to think of the expressions of nature as “just happening” and ourselves as the “unlucky” victims of whatever nature brings forth. In practice, even Christians tend to live and think like the deists...who conceived of God as the One Who created the universe and then walked away to leave it running according to its own natural laws.

But God has not walked away from the day-to-day control of His creation. Certainly, He has established physical laws by which He governs the forces of nature, but those laws continuously operate according to His sovereign will. A Christian TV meteorologist has determined that there are over 1,400 references to weather terminology in the Bible. Many of these references attribute the outworking of weather directly to the hand of God. Most of these passages speak of God's control over all weather, not just His divine intervention on specific occasions.

The insurance companies refer to major natural disasters as “acts of God.” The truth is, all expressions of nature, all occurrences of weather, whether it be a devastating tornado or a gentle rain on a spring day, are acts of God. The Bible teaches that God controls all the forces of nature, both destructive and productive, on a continuous, moment-by-moment basis.

Whether the weather is nice or bad, we are never the victims or even the beneficiaries of the impersonal powers of nature. God, who is the loving heavenly Father of every true Christian, is sovereign over the weather, and He exercises that sovereignty moment by moment.

What about the natural disasters that occur frequently in various parts of the world? Many sensitive Christians struggle over the multitude of large-scale natural disasters around the world—an earthquake in one place, famine in another, typhoons and floods somewhere else. Thousands of people are killed, others slowly starve to death. Entire regions are devastated, crops are ruined, homes destroyed. “Why does God allow all this?” we may ask. “Why does God permit all those innocent children to starve?”

It is not wrong to wrestle with these issues, as long as we do it in a reverent and submissive attitude toward God. Indeed, to fail to wrestle with the issue of large-scale tragedy may indicate a lack of compassion toward others on our part. However, we must be careful not to, in our minds, take God off His throne of absolute sovereignty or put Him in the dock and bring Him to the bar of our judgment.

But God brings Himself into these events. He said in Isaiah 45:7, “I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.” God Himself accepts the responsibility, so to speak, of disasters. He actually does more than accept the responsibility; He actually claims it. In effect, God says, “I, and I alone, have the power and authority to bring about both prosperity and disaster, both weal and woe, both good and bad.”

This is a difficult truth to accept as you watch people sift through the rubble of their homes or—more to the point—if you are the one sifting through the rubble of your home. But as the late Dr. Edward J. Young commented on Isaiah 45:7, “We gain nothing by seeking to minimize the force of the present verse.” We must allow the Bible to say what it says, not what we think it ought to say.

We obviously do not fully understand why God creates disaster, or why He brings it to one town and not to another. We recognize, too, that just as God sends His sun and rain on both the righteous and the unrighteous, so He also sends the tornado, or the hurricane, or the earthquake on both...God's sovereignty over nature does not mean that Christians never encounter the tragedies of natural disasters. Experience and observation clearly teach otherwise.

God's sovereignty over nature does mean that, whatever we experience at the hand of the weather or other forces of nature all circumstances are under the watchful eye and sovereign control of our God.

Condensed excerpts from *Trusting God* by Jerry Bridges

# Missions of the Month

The Missions Committee would like to thank our SPC family for their support of Project Nehemiah. Through your involvement and many prayers, we not only met but exceeded our goal! Through the donations, three homes can be rebuilt. In sharing the "news" with Lynne Rienstra of Samaritan's Purse, she said to "thank the saints of SPC". To God be the Glory!

We also want you to mark your calendars now for our Missions Conference which will be September 15th and 16th. This will be a family event. More details will follow.



## Wednesday Night Fellowship

We will resume with our normal Wednesday night activities this month. Our schedule is below:

August 22nd ~ Regular Meal

August 29th ~ Regular Meal

The cost for Wednesday night meal is \$4.00 per person with a \$12 cap per family. Please sign the sign-up sheet in the Narthex to make your reservation or call the church office by 3 P.M. on Monday.

## August Circle Meetings



**Tuesday, August 7th – 10:00 A.M.**

Love Circle- Will meet in the church parlor. Nursery is provided.

**Tuesday, August 7th – 7:15 P.M.**

Gentleness Circle - Will meet at the home of Page Whitfield.

**Thursday, August 2nd – 10:00 A.M.**

Faithfulness Circle - Will meet in the church parlor.

**Saturday, August 11th – 8:45 A.M.**

Kindness Circle - Will meet in the church fellowship hall.

**WIC Council will meet Wednesday, August 29th at 6:00 p.m. in the conference room.**

# WIC UPDATE

Pat Jackson, WIC President, would like to thank all of the women in our church who work tirelessly to serve others. There are always service opportunities and lots of "little projects". If you have an hour or two, we have something for you!

Our next major event will be our annual WIC Kick off which will be September 29th in the Fellowship Hall from 11 a.m.-1:00 p.m. You may remember that Hurricane Irma forced us to cancel last year.

The "Kick off " marks the beginning of a new year for our WIC work with new officers and a new study book. If you have questions or would like to know more about how the "circles" function, please don't hesitate to email me. A special "thank you" to our circle leaders: Martha Shirley, Joy Douglas, Linda Pruett and Ann Marie Kelly - you model Christian love to others!

Pat Jackson

[Ptjackson@bellsouth.net](mailto:Ptjackson@bellsouth.net)

## Mission Committee

The Mission Committee will meet Sunday, August 12th immediately following the evening worship service in the church conference room.

# Nursery Schedule

If you have a conflict with your designated Sunday, please contact Joy Douglas. We ask that all assigned nursery workers report at 10:30 a.m. to relieve choir members. Sign up sheets will be placed in the Narthex for volunteers for SS and Night Nursery coverage.

## August 5th

Infant— Hortense Bediam/Jill Fogarty  
 Toddler— Rose Zang/Howard Campbell  
 2's & 3's—Leah Thomas/Julie Ramsey  
 Extra—Danny Powell  
 Floater—Paige Crooks  
 Children's Church—Paris Garrett/Eryn Ridings

## August 12th

Infant— Ruth O'Neal/Anh (Ton) Phan  
 Toddler— Linda Pruett/Josh Stevenson  
 2's & 3's—Rose Zang/Tansy Ridings  
 Extra—Max Thelen  
 Floater—Stella Fogarty  
 Children's Church—Britta Lee/Gina Fogarty

## August 19th

Infant— Crystal Katrek/Margaret MacGregor  
 Toddler— Ellen Milberger/Jamie Hughes  
 2's & 3's—Amanda Stevenson/Michele Crooks  
 Extra— Mike Becker  
 Floater—Denise Phan  
 Children's Church—Kristin Soileau/Eryn Ridings

## August 26th

Infant— Evelyn Canup/Freida Breazeal  
 Toddler— Shirley Hovey/Brandon Soileau  
 2's & 3's—Kristin Soileau/Scott Crooks  
 Extra— Dervon Doulgas  
 Floater—Adam Crooks  
 Children's Church—Paris Garrett/Lucy Katrek

# Norton Park News

AGAIN this year, as a congregation, we will continue to fill the pantry at Norton Park Elementary School. The next scheduled date to fill the pantry is September 18th. All non-perishable donated items can be placed in the Robe Room. Checks should be made payable to SPC and earmarked "Norton Park". If you have any questions, please see Jim Ogburn.

# August Birthdays

Happy Birthday to:

Minnie Powell .....	2
Hudson Stiles .....	2
Jenny Powell .....	4
Lisa Ogburn .....	5
Jim Ogburn.....	6
Maria Pettas .....	6
Julie Crompton.....	7
Virginia Boyd.....	8
Sis Howell.....	9
Haley Holland .....	9
Amy Stiles.....	12
Alice Smit .....	14
Dan Hall .....	16
Robert Boyd .....	26
David Osborne .....	30



## August 5th

Church Wing— Jill, Gina, & Stella Fogarty  
 School Wing— David & Gail Stallings

## August 12th

Church Wing— Smadja Hart  
 School Wing— Crystal & Lucy Katrek

## August 19th

Church Wing— Tom & Maxine Miller  
 School Wing— Ralph & Evelyn Canup

## August 26th

Church Wing— Julie Ramsey  
 School Wing— Howard & Jean Campbell

## September 2nd

Church Wing— Jim & Janice Pitts  
 School Wing— Smadja Hart

## September 9th

Church Wing— Jill, Gina & Stella Fogarty  
 School Wing— Howard & Jean Campbell

## September 16th

Church Wing— Chip & Sis Howell  
 School Wing— Dervon Doulgas

## September 23rd

Church Wing— Randy & Page Whitfield  
 School Wing— Rose Zang

## September 30th

Church Wing— Dan & Donna Hall  
 School Wing— David & Gail Stallings

# August

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SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2 10:00 a.m. Faithfulness Circle	3	4
5  11:00 a.m. Worship Service & Communion  6:00 p.m. Evening Worship	6	7 10:00 a.m. Love Circle  7:15 p.m. Gentleness Circle	8  CCS First Day of School	9	10	11 8:45 a.m. Kindness Circle
12 11:00 a.m. Worship Service  6:00 p.m. Evening Worship  7:30 p.m. Mission Committee	13	14  6:30 p.m. Session Meeting	15	16  6:30 p.m. Deacon Meeting	17	18 8:30 a.m. Men of the Covenant  11:00 a.m. Baby Shower Luncheon
19 11:00 a.m. Worship Service  6:00 p.m. Evening Worship & Communion  	20	21	22  5:45 p.m. Wednesday Night Meal & Activities	23	24	25
26 11:00 a.m. Worship Service  6:00 p.m. Evening Worship	27	28	29 5:45 p.m. Wednesday Night Meal & Activities  6:00 p.m. WIC Council meeting	30	31	