

Dear Church Family,

As we enter the season of Lent this month, I invite you to reflect on the compassion of Jesus. According to the Gospel of Matthew, as Jesus was going around teaching in synagogues, preaching the good news of God's kingdom, and healing people, he saw the crowds and "he had *compassion* for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matthew 9:35-39). In Luke's Gospel, Jesus comes upon a funeral procession for the only son of a widow, and when Jesus sees this grieving mother, so painfully alone in her world, "He had *compassion* for her and said to her, 'Do not weep.'" Then he raised the boy to life and, as Luke puts it with such beautiful humanity, "Jesus gave him to his mother." (Luke 7:11-15).

This word the NRSV translates as *compassion* is a wonderful word in Greek: *splanknizomai*. Other translations say Jesus was "*moved* with compassion" and the NIV is nearer to the ancient sense when it opts for "*his heart went out*." In its basic meaning, *splanknizomai* has to do with a movement of one's "inward parts": a literal outward moving of the *guts*, the organ where the ancients identified the emotional-psychological center for what we today refer to as the heart. We feel the sensation of a punch to the gut when we see suffering in the world, when we see our loved ones in pain, when we experience deep personal loss. When we feel an empathetic wrenching in our stomachs, that pulls us from the center of our being toward the pain of another person, we feel what the ancient New Testament writers referred to as *splanknizomai*. It's a vital solidarity that we feel in our humanity, and we feel it viscerally in our *bodies*, not just intellectually in our minds or spiritually in our souls.

When we say Jesus had compassion, that he was moved with such inward turmoil out of a connection with the suffering of other people and with us, we say not simply that he had sympathy, that he felt sorry for us, but that he felt *with* us, that he suffered with us. It's in this sense that I like what the word *compassion* suggests. Because when broken down, compassion means "to suffer with": from the Latin, *com*, meaning "with" and *pati*, meaning "to suffer." When the Gospels tell us that Jesus had compassion for the crowds and for a grieving mother, it means he is expressing the same act of suffering-with-us that he will exert in his final hours on the way to the cross—the period of time we traditionally refer to as "the Passion."

As we make our way toward Good Friday this year, we are going to try something. Each Sunday we will focus on a different character who was either near the cross at the time of Jesus' death, or closely related to it in some way during the Passion story. The characters we have chosen to meet this season are Pontius Pilate, Simon Peter, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Jesus, the Roman Centurion, and Simon of Cyrene. In addition to reading the Scriptures that reveal each character's intersection with Christ's path in ministry, we will see these characters appear in worship. Members of our congregation have volunteered to play the roles of different characters and deliver monologues offering imaginative reflections on their perspectives of the Passion. In addition, our service music has been carefully selected to highlight themes from each character's experience, and this will culminate with everyone together at our Good Friday service where the full story will be told.

One more lesson from etymology: the word passion comes from Latin, meaning to suffer, undergo, endure, or experience. In our current usage, though, the word passion has more to do with intense desire, ardent affection of love, or a feeling that overpowers us. Taken with *splanknizomai* I am struck that we don't need to choose between these ancient and modern usages, for it was out of love for us, an intense desire and ardent affection, that Jesus underwent the experience of suffering that he did. This Lent, as we see the Passion of Jesus through the eyes of the people who surrounded him at the cross, I invite us to see with new eyes his love for us, his commitment to be with us and to suffer with us in solidarity with this whole world, so that we might be renewed in our compassion for all.

In Christ,
Dave



DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME

Daylight Savings Time begins on Sunday, March 8th. Don't forget to set your clocks ahead!!

MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST

The Men's Prayer Breakfast will be on Tuesday, March 10th, at 8:00 a.m., at Owens Family Restaurant in Dandridge for a time of study and fellowship. We hope to see you here!



WOMEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST



The Women's Prayer Breakfast and study will meet on Saturday, March 14th, from 9:00-11:00 a.m., hosted by Del Deaton in the Fellowship Hall.

CHURCH STREET CAFÉ DELIVERY



We are in need of volunteers to help with our next delivery of food from Midwest FoodBank on Wednesday, March 18th at 11:30 a.m. We will need help unloading, sorting and stocking the goods. If you have any questions, please contact Linda Noonkesser (865-216-0715).



SIT 'N KNIT GROUP

On Friday, March 20th at 7:00 p.m. we will be having the Sit 'n Knit gathering at the home of Kathy Juroff (1250 Groseclose Rd., Jefferson City). Anyone interested in learning to knit or crochet or come for fellowship is very welcome. Contact Debby (423-581-3135) for more information.

WEDDING INVITATION

Please come join in the marriage ceremony of Max Lupton and Sydney Berg on Saturday, March 21st, at 2:00 p.m., with a reception to follow in Fellowship Hall.

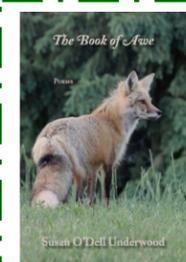


First Presbyterian Church
721 Church St.
Jefferson City, TN 37760

Did You Know?

◆ Did you know that FPC recycles??? FPC uses the recycling service Waste Connections Inc. They offer single stream curbside pickup weekly. The church can recycle mixed paper, cardboard, metal cans, unbroken glass, and plastics 1-7. That's right- glass and number 5 plastics! You can find recycling bins at church in the Fellowship Hall and in the Little P's classroom. Your Creation Care subcommittee has plans to eventually place one on the main level of the church. So, the next time you go to throw something away at church, if possible, please consider recycling instead!

◆ Our Lenten Devotionals have arrived and are now available in the Narthex and back hallway. We are picking up with the same series we used during Advent from Presbyterians Today: "Becoming Beloved Community: A Matthew 25 Journey to the Cross." Illuminated with beautiful mosaics throughout, this devotional offers scripture readings, reflections written by a diverse cast of ministers, and prayers for each day of this season. As Donna Jackson writes in the introduction, "What if this Lenten season, we looked beyond personal disciplines and committed to creating beloved communities in our own backyards—communities reflecting the inclusive and healing love that Jesus modeled as he made his way to the cross?" This devotional is part of our commitment as a congregation to being a Matthew 25 Church (see more about this commitment in this month's edition of Session Highlights).



FAMILY NIGHT SUPPER

The Creation Care committee will be hosting Family Night Supper this month. It will be Wednesday, March 18th, at 6:30 p.m., in the Fellowship Hall. A Tuscan vegetable soup and fresh baked bread will be provided by the committee. You are invited to bring a dessert to share. The guest speaker will be Susan O'Dell Underwood, who will be reading from her latest book of poetry, *The Book of Awe*. Susan is a Professor of English and director of the creative writing program at Carson-Newman. *The Book of Awe* "reminds us through images of the natural world – clover, vetch, chickadees, honey bees, rainbow trout – that awe is rooted in the simplicity of awareness." If you have any questions, please see Sandy Long.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 COMMUNION Sunday School 9:30-10:30 a.m. Worship Service 10:45-11:45 a.m.	2 OFFICE CLOSED	3 Gary & Jennifer Bates	4 Mission Mtg. 4:00 p.m.	5	6	7 Presbytery Meeting @ FPC Bristol Deborah Scarlett
8 Sunday School 9:30-10:30 a.m. Worship Service 10:45-11:45 a.m. Fellowship Meeting 12:00 p.m.	9	10 Men's Breakfast 8:00 a.m. Church Street Café 5:00 p.m. Matt Gowan	11 CSC Delivery 11:30 a.m. Session 6:30 p.m. Dian Wise Alice Pryor Matt & Kim LeClerc	12	13	14 Women's Breakfast 9:00 a.m.
15 Sunday School 9:30-10:30 a.m. Worship Service 10:45-11:45 a.m.	16	17	18 Family Night Supper 6:30 p.m.	19 Arlene Peck	20 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE Sit 'n Knit Group 7 p.m.	21 Berg-Lupton Wedding
22 Sunday School 9:30-10:30 a.m. Worship Service 10:45-11:45 a.m.	23 Annabelle Tilton	24 Church Street Café 5:00 p.m. Doug & Julie Moody	25 Christian Education 6:30 p.m.	26	27	28 Work Day 8 a.m.
29 Sunday School 9:30-10:30 a.m. Worship Service 10:45-11:45 a.m.	30 Martha Sanders Tom Sites	31 Roxanne Moser				

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS (FEBRUARY 12, 2020)

- Session received the officers who were elected at January's annual meeting of the Corporation: Beth McGhee-Folsom as president, John Zirkle as vice-president, Matt Gowan as Secretary, and Lyle Juroff as treasurer.
- Session approved the church's annual statistical report, which is submitted to Presbytery.
- Session is thrilled to announce that we have approved to host the Stated Meeting of Holston Presbytery on March 6, 2021! We are a full twelve months away from that date, so be on the lookout for more information about what it will mean for us to host our Presbytery in the year to come.
- Session approved the request from the Creation Care subcommittee that our guest speaker for the March Family Night Supper, local poet and CNU professor Susan Underwood, will be permitted to make her books available for sale at her evening program on March 18.
- Session approved the proposal from the Building & Grounds Committee to improve our drainage system on the sanctuary's east side, where you might have noticed plastic tubing on the sidewalk that currently directs water away from our foundation to prevent flooding. Have a look at this month's edition of B&G Corner for more information about the plan!
- Session approved that Catherine Bard, who is now an authorized instructor through the American Heart Association, be allowed to use FPC as a site to offer CPR training and certification, as well as a range of other emergency health support training modules. Please be in touch with Catherine for more information!
- For safety reasons, Session also approved a policy that bans latex balloons from the nursery.
- Session approved the use of our facilities for the wedding of Kara-Beth Lyons and Timothy Benson on June 6, 2020, with wedding rehearsal taking place on June 5. Timothy Benson was an active member of RUF, who worshipped in our sanctuary all four years while he attended Carson-Newman. Although he is not a member of our church, we do recognize him as a child of our congregation and an extension of our church family.
- Session is excited to announce that it has accepted the PCUSA's invitation to become a "Matthew 25 Church"! In taking this step, we join 413 congregations, 30 presbyteries, and 5 synods (including our Synod of the Living Waters) that have chosen to embrace the call to 1) build congregational vitality, 2) dismantle structural racism, and 3) eradicate systemic poverty. As the Presbyterian Mission website describes it, "By accepting the Matthew 25 invitation, you can help our denomination become a more relevant presence in the world. We recognize Christ's urgent call to be a church of action, where God's love, justice and mercy shine forth and are contagious. And we rejoice how our re-energized faith can unite all Presbyterians for a common and holy purpose: our common identity to do mission." In the coming months, we will share more information about how we are implementing this initiative in our congregation, but if you would like more information about the Matthew 25 invitation, head to: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/>

MISSION COMMITTEE CORNER

Despite the fact, that as I write this, there is a white-out of snow outside my window, Spring is almost here, and that means your Mission Committee is already gearing up for the year. By now, you have received information about volunteer needs of our church community, and I hope you have found at least one volunteer opportunity that fits your own schedule. A compiled summary of the volunteer list will have been posted on the bulletin board near the parlor if you want to review it. Finally, there is one more thing I want to pass onto you. Each year, your Mission Committee puts out invitations for specific local, regional and international nonprofit/nongovernmental organizations to submit requests for our Mission Endowment Grants. This year we will have \$5,200 to share with selected organizations. Many of you already know most of the organizations who have received invitations or grants in the past. But, just in case, if you have a specific organization that you would like your Mission Committee to consider, who perhaps hasn't been considered in the past, please let us know. We want your input. There are basically only two rules, the grant recipients must be nonprofit and not a state or government organization. So there it is, until next time, God bless.

MONTHLY INCOME

FEBRUARY 2	\$3,798.00
FEBRUARY 9	\$2,078.00
FEBRUARY 16	\$1,016.00
FEBRUARY 23	\$1,913.00
TOTAL	\$8,805.00

(\$16,330 is needed monthly to meet budget)

YEAR-TO-DATE (YTD) INCOME/EXPENSES

	YTD ACTUAL	YTD PRORATED	YTD BUDGET
INCOME	\$56,665	\$25,231.68**	\$31,167.44
EXPENSES	\$28,953.44		\$32,513.60

YTD ACTUAL INCOME OVER EXPENSES: \$27,711.56

YTD PRORATED INCOME OVER EXPENSES: -\$3,721.76

**** Some members pay their entire yearly pledges in January. This number has been adjusted to reflect what actual giving through February would be, if completed yearly pledges, were divided out monthly. If you have questions, please see Heather.**

B&G CORNER

As Spring 2020 approaches, your B&G team would like to fill you in on some updates. Recently, we had another leak on the west-end of the Fellowship Hall during last month's heavy rain period. We've identified at least one issue to address this, but expect that more contemplation and research is needed to find the best solution(s) to mitigate damage.

In other B&G project news, two electric panels (primary outside panel and east saddle room panel) have been/are being replaced March 2nd and 3rd. This will complete the updates required by our recent insurance company audit. Additionally, we have received a quote to reroute the east-facing-downspout pipe currently going across the sidewalk. The plan is to route this beneath the sidewalk as was done years ago on the front-east-facing downspout.

Once again this year as in the past, Easter is coming up and we want to be prepared for a proper showing of the Church interior and grounds. Please show our Church some extra love by participating in our upcoming annual Church Work Day on March 28th. We will have enough coffee, drinks and refreshments for everyone!

If you have any thoughts, concerns or questions about our building and grounds, please bring them up to any member or you can call/text Troy at 423-619-4386.

We are blessed to have such a historic and beautiful place to worship, and our committee is honored with the task of caring for it. Happy March!