

JAMESTOWN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

411 Liberty Street, Jamestown, PA 16134

(724)932-2101

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June 4, 2020

Dear JPC family and friends,

Greetings in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ! Great news! Session has decided to begin in person worship again on Sunday, June 21st at 10:00 am. We have been busy making plans to provide all safety measures suggested by the CDC. More information will be provided next week. Our updates for the week:

- Our guest pastor this week is Dr. David Valentine, Grove City College professor. Pastor Sue will be returning to the pulpit next week.
- ALL donations for next week's worship, June 14, 2020, will go to disaster relief in the United States -offerings received during the second week of June (6/8 through 6/14).
- We will be checking to see if you would like to continue to receive weekly worship materials after we open for in person worship.
- The next free Saturday Supper will be on June 13th - a week earlier than usual. The meal will feature pulled pork sandwiches, baked beans, cole slaw and dessert by take-out with advanced reservations made through the church office (724-932-2101).
- Linda Pinney, church secretary, will be out of the office from June 11- 19.

As we move into the green phase with less restrictions, please continue to use wisdom and discretion as you go out and about. May God's grace and blessings be in your path.

Janeen Mihooi, Clerk of Session

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Pastor Sue has been on vacation and will be returning on June 8. Pastor Sean Hall of Hillside Presbyterian Church is available for urgent pastoral care needs during Pastor Sue's absence. Pastor Sean can be contacted by calling Hillside Presbyterian Church 724-588-4920 or Pastor Sean's cell phone 724-638-7381.

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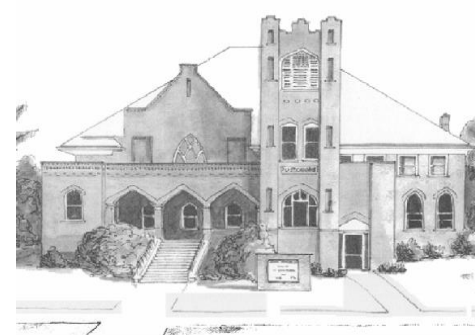
Our next Community dinner will be this Saturday, June 13, 2020. Please call the church office for your reservations.

Linda Pinney will be on vacation June 12-19. *The phone and e-mail will be checked periodically during this time*

Worship Leader: Janeen Mihoci
Solist: Bob Hutchison
Organ/Piano: Cindy Loveridge

Happy Birthday!

06/10 Jan Reese
06/13 Evelyn Ries
06/14 Gladys Melton
06/14 Linda Volosin
06/15 Nancy Fry
06/21 Nancy Reinhardt
06/24 Deborah Bonam



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“Worshipping Together ... Even While Apart”

Trinity Sunday - June 7, 2020

To prepare our hearts and minds for worship, let us take a few moments in silent prayer.

Call to Worship: Psalm 33:1-5

Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous;
it is fitting for the upright to praise him.

² Praise the LORD with the harp;
make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.

³ Sing to him a new song;
play skillfully, and shout for joy.

⁴ For the word of the LORD is right and true;
he is faithful in all he does.

⁵ The LORD loves righteousness and justice;
the earth is full of his unfailing love.

***SONG: “Come, Now Is the Time to Worship”**
(words on inside page)

Call to Confession:

*Trusting in God's love for us in Jesus Christ, let us
confess our sins to the Lord.*

Silent moment of confession

Unison Prayer of Confession: **Holy and merciful God, in your
presence we confess our sinfulness, our shortcomings, and
our offenses against you. You alone know how often we have
sinned in wandering from your ways, in wasting your gifts, in
forgetting your love. Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we are
ashamed and sorry for all we have done to displease you.
Forgive our sins, and help us to live in your light, and walk in
your ways, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon: (1 John 1:8-9)

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the
truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and
just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all
unrighteousness.

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

Include your prayers of thanksgiving and intercession.

*Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy
kingdom come; Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins as
we forgive those who have sinned against us. And lead us not
into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the
kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*

The Presentation of our Tithes and Offerings

*Tithes and offerings can be either mailed to the church or
donated online via the church website.*

Prayer of Dedication (in unison):

**Holy God of mercy, redemption and grace, this morning
we bring our gifts and pray that you will dedicate them to
your work of love and reconnection with all your
children. These gifts seem small when balanced against
what Christ has given us and what you continue to give us
through the Holy Spirit. In our giving, may we grow in
gratitude, trust, and faithfulness. In the name of Christ,
who gave all for us, we pray. Amen**

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Message: "What Are Your Aspirations?" Dr. David Valentine

HYMN: "Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God Almighty" # 323

Benediction

Closing Refrain: God be With You 'Til We Meet Again

Come, Now Is the Time to Worship

Chorus:

*Come, now is the time to worship
Come, now is the time to give your heart
Come, just as you are to worship
Come, just as you are before your God
Come*

One day ev'ry tongue will confess You are God
One day ev'ry knee will bow
Still the greatest treasure remains for those
Who gladly choose you now

Chorus

Willingly we choose to surrender our lives
Willingly our knees will bow
With all our heart, soul, mind and strength
We gladly choose you now

Chorus

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“What Are Your Aspirations?”

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Good morning, my name is David Valentine. I am currently on the faculty at Grove City College, where I teach Computer Science. Before joining Grove City, I taught Comp Sci at Slippery Rock for about 20 years. One of the best things about being a college professor is you get involved in people's lives who are asking those great big life questions – “what do I want to be when I grow up”, “what aspirations do I have for my career, my family, my future” and all the time they are balancing it off with the C- they just got in Calculus. It's a fun time to be part of people's lives. So, I put to you...what do you want to be when you grow up? what are the aspirations you have for your life?

I am mindful of the story of the young boy who went to his dad and said “Dad, I'd like to be a millionaire when I grow up” and the father thought for a moment and said “well, son, that could take a lot of work and effort on your part, but America is that land of opportunity so with hard effort and work I bet you can make it” and the son said “Oh, no, Dad, you don't understand I want to inherit it, so get on the job will ya, chop-chop”!

Maybe there is some secret desire you've had, some aspiration of your life, maybe you've not even spoken it out loud because it's too outrageous and too “out there”. I have a verse I'd like to look at this morning that no matter how “out there” your secret aspirations might be. This verse will simply blow them out of the water, and that verse is 2 Corinthians 5:21. Our verse is 2 Corinthians 5:21, but we will read the whole paragraph starting in verse 16, and I remind us this is the word of the Living God:

“¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

Let's pray:

Lord Jesus Christ, please, by the power of your holy spirit will you quicken our hearts and minds to understand, to absorb and to live out your word in a new way starting today. Amen

My paraphrase of our verse is Jesus has made what he doesn't deserve so that we might become what we can never earn. Let's look at the front half of that: Jesus is made what he doesn't deserve. Literally in the Greek it is the one not having known sin. Jesus alone in all of human history is the only perfectly sinless individual. What was it like to hang out with him? The man never lied, never cheated, never lusted after anything. Without sin what kind of person would that be? Well, we know from the literature that people, the “sinners of the day”, if you will, tore the rooves off houses to get to him. They climbed trees by the thoroughfares to get to him. They stood on the side of the roads and screamed out

his name to get to him. He was #1 on everybody's party list. The only people who couldn't stand him were the religious leaders of the day and that tells us more about the difference between an active living Christian faith and mere religion. That was the kind of guy the perfectly sinless Jesus was. God made this sinless man into sin. There is simply no other way to translate the Greek. Our verse is made up of 15 very simple words and theologians have spilled buckets of ink trying to explain it. Donald Guthrie in his massive new testament theology says of our verse, it is the classic expression of Paul's doctrine of substitution. Theologians have tried hard to understand what does this mean, "a sinless man was made into sin by God". The best of the theologians throw up their hands and bow before the cosmic mystery of our salvation. But let us say what we do know, Jesus was changed. Something hideously concrete and real happened at the cross. Paul writes in Galatians 3:13 that Jesus became a curse for us hanging on that tree so as to redeem us from the curse of the law. This was not some cosmic costume game such as I might play with my children at Halloween and say "oh you nasty little pirate, you", when all the time we know that behind the mask is still the son that I love and we both know I am just simply playing a game with him. Something real happened. Whatever it was, it was cosmic, and it was awful. It caused our Lord to cry out with his last words "my God, my God, why have you forsaken me". The repentant thief on the cross added exactly right when he said to the angry thief "you and I are getting what we deserve, but this man has done nothing wrong". The cost of our salvation is simply beyond our comprehension. Jesus the sinless lamb of God is made into sin itself, is made into a curse and so takes away the sin and the curse of the whole world. We don't understand it, we merely bow in gratefulness before it. Jesus has made what he doesn't deserve so that we might become what we could never earn.

I worked for a while for a fellow who really loved motivational posters, you know the kind I mean, the big glorious picture of the mountain in the sunset with some little blurb on the bottom like 'chase your dreams', or 'you can make your own future', or some dribble like that. So, it was a real joy when my middle son introduced us to the website despair.com. They bill themselves as the anti-motivational poster. Here is one that I think captures the human condition very well 'failure, when your best just isn't good enough'. Doesn't that capture it? Paul is more theological in Romans 7, when he writes *"²¹ So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³ but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. ²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!"* We become what we could never earn. When I look at this verse I think about a big slingshot, at the cross Jesus becomes sin. We can't explain it, we can't comprehend it, we have no understanding of the depths that means. But the equal and opposite reaction to that awful action is that we become the righteousness of God. That is even more outlandish than the first statement, is it not?

Here is a challenge I have for you, say it out loud – "I am the righteousness of God in Jesus", go ahead, say it. Can you? Or does something within you well up and constrict your very voice box? "I can't say that I know this about myself, I know myself, God would strike me down for blasphemy if I was to say that out loud". Well, friends, the scripture says that is exactly what happened at the cross. Because of the work and atonement of Jesus Christ, we become the righteousness of God. These are outrageous statements. Cosmic statements. Monstrously big statements and it is the truth of the gospel. 2 Corinthians 5:21 has been named as the essence of the gospel. He who knew no sin became sin on our behalf so that we might become in him the very righteousness of God. Our best is just not good enough. The Bible is exceedingly clear on this one thing. As Mark Twain once said, "it's not the things in the Bible that I don't understand that worry me, it's the things in there that I do understand". We people took our free will the freedom to choose right or to choose wrong and we blew it. And we are guilty. And we have sin in our lives. And the only way to account for that is through the work of Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul, spirit-filled and anointed by grace to write most of what we call the New Testament, describes his life as wretched and needing to be rescued from himself. There is no self-help plan. There is no 12-step program. There is no herbal diet that can deal with our core problem, which is sin. I know of a Christian counselor who does the following for his clients. He has a whole long list of New Testament statements, but he has re-written them. Let me give you some examples: In John 15:15, Jesus said *“¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”* And the counselor has rewritten this as “I am a friend of Jesus Christ” and challenges them to read it aloud. Romans 8:37, *“³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”* Rewritten it becomes “I am more than a conqueror in Christ Jesus. Hebrews 13:5, *“⁵ Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; nor will I forsake you.”* Rewritten as “God has promised to never forsake me”.

The counselor reports that merely speaking aloud the truths of our identity recorded in scripture for our benefit has transformed people’s lives and put them on the road to recovery. Our own verse here is more outrageous than any of the others I have read, “we become the righteousness of God”. How can that be? George Ladd and his New Testament theology writes “it is an unavoidable logical conclusion that people of faith are justified because Christ’s righteousness is imputed to them”. There’s a word you don’t hear much, imputed. According to Webster’s it means to credit or ascribe something to a person. Perhaps the best example I can think of is that one time my wife and I running late to the airport got bumped to first class on a flight to Florida. Oh, it was very nice. We start with seats that you can actually be comfortable in and then they bring out the little tray with the silver salt and pepper shakers and the bud vase with the little flower and the orange juice before takeoff and all the ritzy treatment. It was very enjoyable. But I must admit that I felt a fraud for most of the flight because I knew, and I knew that the people around me knew, I had not paid for a first-class ticket. It was merely a benefit of the oversight on the airline who overbooked the flight that I got imputed a first class passage they credited to me even though I never paid for it. Well, friends, in the first class of heaven, in the kingdom of God, nobody enters the airplane and turns left to first class unless they have the merits of Jesus Christ imputed to their lives. Unless the truth of 2 Corinthians 5:21 is valid in their life, that on their behalf Jesus Christ became sin and took away the guilt of their righteous punishment and instead transformed them into the righteousness of God. This isn’t some play game, it is a cosmic reality that God looks at us, warts, imperfections, and all and says “you have the righteousness of my son, Jesus Christ, come on in, turn left at the gangplank and enter first class”.

So, what do we say to these 15 little Greek words? First, let me say if you, like me, have 50 different reasons flashing off in your mind of why this statement cannot be true about me, let me offer you a word of perspective that I hope will provide some insight. These 15 little Greek words are organized very carefully, and they begin, and they end with Jesus. The verse literally starts “the one who had no knowledge of sin, Jesus” and the verse ends with “become the righteousness of God in him, in Jesus. So as long as we start our perspective from ourselves and try to understand this cosmic truth, we are doomed. We have no hope of making it our own. But, if we fix our focus on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, then it can make sense, then it can become a reality for us. Because from the perspective of God, it is the righteousness of Jesus that covers our sins. That has made the difference. That is what is so outlandish about 2 Corinthians 5:21.

We started this morning by asking the question “what do you want to be when you grow up? what are the aspirations you have in your life?”, and I said to you that perhaps it is being the righteousness of God that is the aspiration of every child of God, of every disciple of our Lord Jesus. We pick up the ministry of reconciliation because Jesus has declared us to be righteous and forgiven. And so, when we tell our friends and neighbors about Jesus, we are merely and only one beggar telling another beggar where to

find bread. The paragraph surrounding our verse deals wholly with this ministry of reconciliation. Just before our verse, Paul made a plea “I plead with you, be reconciled to God and pick up this ministry of reconciliation”. That’s the joy before us. That’s what we all intend to be when we grow up. Let us all become the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. Amen