

"The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation." Psalm 118:14

May 2020

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The Church: Small Business, Organization, or Organism?

By Pastor Rich McDermott

"If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." -1 Corinthians 12:26-27

As a pastor, I have encountered many different views and attitudes toward the church over many years. Some people see the church as an <u>organization</u> similar to many other non-profits, an organization that should approach its work and its people like the United Way or the Junior League. We can learn a good deal from these well-run organizations: care for volunteers, connection with donors, good planning, and visionary leaders. Many of the churches I have served incorporate these elements into the life of their congregations, and they are helpful. But the model of the church as *simply* an organization like a non-profit leaves much to be desired.

Other folks want to treat the church as a <u>small business</u> that is competing for clients, for dollars, for market share and for vitality. They are especially concerned with the quality of the religious product we are producing, the goods and services we are providing to our "giving units," how we compare to other churches in our niche and market, and, of course, growing our "bottom line" or our income relative to our expenses. Since I majored in Business Administration in college, this language and approach to things is something with which I am familiar and comfortable. But over the years, I have also discovered the significant limitations and erroneous assumptions that tend to accompany this view or model of the church.

I tend to think that a more helpful view of the church is viewing it as a body, or an <u>organism</u>. An organism is a living entity, filled with both life and potential for life. In particular, the Bible indicates that the church is the body of Christ, and Christ is the head of that body, the church (see 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4; Col. 1, etc). This is perhaps the most helpful image and analogy, along with the depth and nuances given us by the Apostle Paul. As the scripture above reminds us, all

Christians are a part of the body of Christ, and when one part of the body hurts, we all hurt together. I know this has proven true for our church in this time of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many people in the church are stepping up to call each other and help one another out, whether the issue is loneliness, groceries, ill-health, spiritual hunger, or lack of resources.

I am reminded that even the coronavirus is an organism, and a dangerous, unhealthy one. The church prays and works to be a healthy body and a well-functioning organism. I am proud of how so many of you are sacrificing, reaching out, and caring for people, caring for Christ and for his church in this crazy time of physical distancing. One day in the not too distant future we will be cautiously gathering again in order that we remain a healthy functioning body and organism, that is proudly living as the body of Christ, following Jesus as the head.

Because our PreSchool has been closed and is not receiving income, and the church is closed and is limited in its income, we have applied for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan/grant, offered by the government and available to churches. This will enable us to retain our teachers and staff and survive this period of financial difficulty for FPCA and FPPS. This is one time that we are richly blessed to be considered a small business! We are doing all that is possible to make it happen. A special "thank-you!" goes to Jeanne Chin, Ron MacLeod, Tina Hanson, and especially Art Peña, for helping us to receive this PPP loan if it happens, or even if it doesn't. We very much appreciate your prayers, your generosity, and your sacrifice for this part of the body of Christ that we call FPCA. Thank you, and may God bless you richly!

THANK YOU!

By Pastor Chris Campbell

I just want to say thank you to Sunday school teachers and other group leaders who have done all they can to adapt to these current circumstances. I know there are some classes that are meeting virtually and for others who that might be a challenge, thank you for keeping in touch with fellow classmates. The Foundations Class has met every Sunday during our usual 9:45-10:45 time. Attendance and punctuality have been quite impressive! (Class members will get that joke.) We wrapped up a study on Philippians in April. Near the end of his letter, Paul encourages his leaders to rejoice! N.T. Wright describes how we interpret that word as something that we feel within as individuals. But in Paul's world and culture, it would have included a public celebration. We wrestled with how we can do that right now when we cannot gather publicly. Some mentioned how social media is the current public gathering space and we can live out our faith there. Other families have used sidewalk chalk to draw beautiful crosses and quote scripture for others to see when they walk by. Find ways to be creative and display a public faith — rejoice!

Children's Ministry

Preschool



MONTHLY OVERVIEW

We are using a lemonade stand theme this month to welcome in the warmer days and introduce preschoolers to the amazing truth that God loves me. We want preschoolers to know that God has put a lot of planning and creating and love into each of them. And, just like you can't separate the water from the sugar from the lemon juice once you mix them, NOTHING can separate us from God's love.

Throughout the month our preschoolers will hear how the Bible teaches us that God made us in His image, has a plan for us, and will never stop loving us. So, think a lot of love and a little lemon – mix it all together and we will get an entire month of God loves me! Our prayer is that every preschooler will walk away knowing that God made them and God loves them. And NOTHING will ever change that!

ONE	BIBLE STORY God Made Me Genesis 1:26; Psalm 139:14	STORY FOCUS God made me, and He loves me.	
TWO	BIBLE STORY Esther Esther 2:2–8:17	STORY FOCUS God loves me and has a plan for me.	
THREE	BIBLE STORY Prodigal Son Luke 15:11-24	STORY FOCUS God loves me no matter what.	
FOUR	BIBLE STORY God Gave His Only Son John 3:16	STORY FOCUS God loves me and sent Jesus to be my friend forever.	
FIVE	BIBLE STORY The Lost Coin Luke 15:8-10	STORY FOCUS God loves me, and I am special to Him.	
MEMORY VERSE	KEY QUESTION	BOTTOM LINE	
"NOTHING AT ALL CAN EVER SEPARATE US FROM GOD'S LOVE."	WHO LOVES YOU?	GOD LOVES ME.	

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Elementary and KFC



MONTHLY OVERVIEW

GOD VIEW: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE DETERMINATION AND GOD'S CHARACTER, AS SHOWN THROUGH GOD'S BIG STORY

Throughout the Bible, we read about all sorts of people who showed determination in the face of hardship and difficulty. They relied on God's strength to get them through it. Even Jesus Himself endured through the pain of the cross so that we would be able to have a forever relationship with God. When it comes to the situations in our own lives, God gives us the Holy Spirit to empower us to keep going, even when life gets difficult.

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BIBLE STORY:

Jesus' Final Orders to His Disciples / Ascension Matthew 28:16-20, Luke 24:50-53, Acts 1:1-11

BOTTOM LINE

Keep going even when it seems impossible.

TWO

BIBLE STORY:

The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost Acts 2:1-41

BOTTOM LINE

God gives you what you need to keep going.

WEEK

BIBLE STORY:

Peter and John Are Taken to the Sanhedrin Acts 3:1-4:21

BOTTOM LINE

Keep going even when it gets tough.

FOUR

BIBLE STORY:

Stephen Acts 6:1-7:60

BOTTOM LINE

Keep going because God knows the end of the story.

WEEK

BIBLE STORY:

Philip and the Man from Ethiopia Acts 8:26-40

BOTTOM LINE

Keep going even when you have questions.

MEMORY VERSE

"LET US NOT BECOME TIRED OF DOING GOOD. AT THE RIGHT TIME
WE WILL GATHER A CROP IF WE DON'T GIVE UP."

GALATIANS 6:9

DETERMINATION

Deciding it's worth it to finish what you started

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We All Made a Giant Pivot, Now What?

There's an episode of Friends (I know, my age is showing) where Ross is trying to get a new couch into his apartment and is attempting to carry it up the steps to move it in, and it isn't going well. As they try to maneuver around the corners of the stairwell, Ross keeps saying, "Pivot, pivot, PIVOT."

These past few weeks have felt like one giant pivot in life.

- Pivot schooling.
- Pivot working.
- Pivot social gatherings.
- Pivot all normal life as we know it.

And the amazing thing is: We did it.

We pivoted; now what?

Collectively, individually, as families and schools and churches—we pivoted. It was like our collective adrenaline got us to what we thought might be the finish line of a sprint.

So many of us are doers. We see a challenge, and we rise to meet it. We see an obstacle, and we make a way around it. We are told something no longer works, and we create something new. Our innovation and creativity and on-the-fly thinking got us here, and we can handle it.

But the other day I found myself thinking, after all this amending to life in the midst of COVID-19, now what?

Because the truth is, there's only so much we can do to pivot. And then we wait. And wait some more. And the waiting is the hardest part. Because we aren't doing. We aren't moving. We are just being.

For a lot of us, even more than the pivoting, the waiting asks more of us. Because now there is nothing for us to do but wait.

I'm not going to lie. The waiting hasn't been easy. In fact, more than the early days of quarantine, the past couple of days have felt more and more like despair. There doesn't seem to an end in sight. We are told things still might get worse before they get better. The days are starting to all resemble one another.

What now?

God works in the darkness

Two years ago, Easter Sunday fell on April 1. And when scrolling mindlessly through social media the other day, what I had posted on the day popped up into my feed. It was a picture of a sunrise—but before the sun had actually appeared above the horizon line.

The sky was various shades of purple orange and pink, the darkness slowly starting to ebb, before the dramatic appearance of a waiting sun. And looking at the picture, I remembered something:

Though the dark seems empty, it's not. It's actually where the most important work begins.

- In the beginning when the darkness was void.
- In Mary's womb while we waited for Immanuel.
- In the tomb, while we waited for life to be breathed back into Jesus' lungs.

God always does His best work in the dark.

And maybe nothing feels more necessary for us to believe today, than that. The dark isn't a place where God has left. But where God is preparing. The dark isn't where God is absent. But where God is moving.

The dark isn't where hope is lost, but where hope is generated. The dark isn't the end of the story. But a necessary part of it.

Waiting and hoping

These days of isolation and change and pivoting all sorts of normal life is dark. In some ways, I'm not sure we will ever return to life as we knew it. Just acknowledging that is difficult.

But I think there is a reason that in some of the most powerful stories from Scripture we aren't just told about what comes from the dark, but we are told the dark exists.

- It's okay to say these days are hard.
- It's okay that there are days when getting out of bed to do another day of this feels impossible.
- It's okay that there are days when the grief of what we thought our plans and relationships were going to look like this season aren't what we thought.
- It's okay to say that the dark feels impossibly long and there doesn't seem to be any sign of light.
- It's okay. All of that is okay.

In the waiting, we acknowledge the dark. And we believe—even when it doesn't feel like it, even when circumstances tell us differently, even when it feels contrary to our current reality—we believe God has not abandoned us in the dark, but is working in the midst of it.

It's the in-between days when we've adapted to the change, when we have already pivoted, but there is no light yet at the end of the tunnel that will be the darkest, when we have nothing to do but wait.

So, let's wait together. And hope together . . . that God is still working.

Parent Cue: Article by Sara Anderson

Youth Ministry

How to Adjust to a New Family Rhythm

Written by: Dr. Sara Anderson

At the start of 2020, I bet our days probably looked like this:

- Wake up
- Get ALL THE COFFEE
- Wake the kids
- Pack lunches
- Load up backpacks
- Drive to school
- Go to work
- Do school carpool

- Come home
- Do homework
- Eat dinner
- Go to bed
- Repeat

It was a comfortable routine, that at the time, in the monotony, felt suffocating.

Enter a new family rhythm

But then, March 2020 came around. And what we used to think was a life-sucking routine became a longing for change from the pace we currently live in. Where all the days look the same—and sometimes the clothes we wear day in and day out, too.

The thing I have seen over and over again in these strange times is the recommendation for people to maintain a sense of routine. It's why we should still get dressed in the morning. It's a good idea that our kids should do their schoolwork at a table and chairs, starting at about the same time every day. Because routine helps us make the most of the day.

At Parent Cue, we've talked a lot about how we can use our daily rhythm to connect in meaningful ways. We specifically talk about 4 distinct times, each one giving us unique opportunities to be more intentional with our kids: when we eat together, travel, go to bed, and when we get up.

- Meal time allows us a chance to have more intentional conversation. Our role as parents is a sort of teacher.
- Drive time gives us time for informal dialogue. Our role as a parent is more like a friend.
- Bedtime is a time for more intimate conversation. Our role as a parent is to be a counselor.
- Morning time is the best time to offer encouraging words. Our role as parents is to be a sort of coach.

So, what does all of this look like in the days of self-isolation and quarantine when our daily rhythm has been significantly altered? How can we still use these times to be intentional?

Here are some tips.

Meal time

I'm willing to bet families have never spent more time around the dinner table than they are spending right now. Take advantage of it!

As a time for more formal discussion and teaching moments, use this time to do a sort of play back of the day.

- How did we do today when it came to driving each other crazy?
- How did we do when it comes to getting what needed to get done, done?
- Where did we crush it today? Where can we get better?
- What would a win look like tomorrow?
- What should we start doing? Stop doing? Continue doing?
- What in our daily routine is working for us, and what isn't?
- When are the times we are more likely to be short tempered with each other? When are the times we are at our best?

Drive time

With no sports, clubs and playdates, drive time has probably been cut back dramatically.

But that doesn't mean you can't still go out for a drive, or exchange time in the car for time spent walking around the neighborhood together instead. Use this time to breathe deeply—literally and metaphorically—as a family.

If leaving the house is out of the question, schedule time each day to work on a puzzle, play a card game or watch some funny YouTube videos together. This is a time to decompress from the stress of our current reality and remember that you like each other and that laughter is always good medicine.

Bedtime

Time tucking in my kids these days has never felt like a bigger deal. Getting through each day and making it to bedtime is more of a win now than ever. Why not let your kids know that?

As you are tucking them or saying goodnight, let them know how proud you are of the family and them. Use this time to check in with them emotionally—how are they doing? Are they feeling scared, frustrated, anxious or overwhelmed?

For younger kids, maybe help unpack what those feelings are and how they might show up in their bodies and behavior. Scratch their backs and remind them of the things that are true no matter what in this strange season.

Remind them that God is good and He is close, and that as hard as this time might be on everyone, we can do hard things together.

Morning time

For me, morning times have always been a challenge—even before a worldwide pandemic. But these days, mornings are even harder.

The idea of facing another day at home, in close quarters with work for me and my husband to do and the kids to do, and no end in sight . . . it's enough to take me to a dark place. Which is why our role as a coach offering encouraging words is so important.

Set the tone for the day. Give a pep talk (to yourself and your kids). Offer a sense of structure for what the day holds. Even if you aren't a "to-do-list" person (I'm not), create a list of things to accomplish that day. Brushing teeth and getting dressed count as list items.

Set predetermined "breaks" for responsibilities. Give the kids and the whole family as much a vision for the day as possible, and then encourage everyone that they have a part in making it happen.

One of the unexpected gifts of this season is the time we get to spend together. But like all things, too much of a good thing can still be too much. So, why not look for ways to make the moments count? Having the time these days isn't the issue. But making the time count is a bit more of a challenge.

So, make it count. It won't be perfect. There will be days we will be glad to see end. Days where we phone it in. Days where we aren't sure we can take another 24 hours in this scenario. That's okay. That makes us human.

But why not try for something more than survival? Why not go for intention in the midst of survival? We might be surprised at what we find when we do.

Sarah Anderson is a writer and communicator who has been involved in ministry since 2003. She is a lead writer and content creator for Orange's XP3 High School curriculum. Sarah lives in Roswell, Georgia, and is a big fan of her husband, Rodney, her two boys, Asher and Pace, and, in her weaker moments, McDonald's French fries. Read more from Sarah on her blog, www.sarahbanderson.com.

Blessings in Christ,

Adrian Rodriguez

Finance Update

For the month of **February 2020:**

Budget (Operating and Funds Released)

Income: \$84,003 Expense: (\$75,548)

Income - Expense for month: \$8,455 Income - Expense for 2019 Year to Date: \$5,216



Comments:

Session Discretionary Funds (not designated or reserved) - \$ 17,527 Cost to operate church for one month - \$ 93,320

PreSchool News

Even though the preschool has been closed since March 16, teachers have maintained contact with their students. Some teachers have adapted their lesson plans so they can be implemented electronically. Ms. Margaret has circle-time through videos, and the Pre-K class continues to get ready for Kindergarten. Ms. Erica surprised her students, and read a book in person while adhering to social distancing requirements. Several teachers and staff created a Happy Easter parade. We drove by each student's home with posters, bunny ears, honks, and lots of love. It was wonderful to see the sweet little faces we've been missing and it was interesting to see where everyone lives.

We are working on Summer Camp curriculum with high hopes. There's a good chance for record-breaking enrollment, after being quarantined for months!

Pentecost Offering

A gift to the Pentecost Offering helps the church encourage, develop, and support its young people, and also address the needs of at-risk children. 40% of the Pentecost offering can be retained by individual congregations wanting to make an impact in the lives of young people within their own community. The remaining 60% is used to support children-at-risk, youth, and young adults through ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

A Praise and Prayer from the Shidelers

Happy 2020!

Hard to believe March is nearly over, and this is our first update to you. We've been in a whirlwind of activity the past six months, with the last three weeks having been particularly intense. This whirlwind shows no signs of abating anytime soon.

A brief summary of our current news:

- Brett and Marla are doing well, as is Marla's dad, who lives with us.
- Like so many in the U.S. and around the world, we are under a stay-at-home order with exceptions for essential activities. Brett's had to cancel several planned trips.
- Wycliffe USA has closed its U.S. headquarters, with most Orlando-based staff now working from home.
- Because we already work from home, we're doing "business as usual." COVID-19 has refocused our attention, and our workdays have been longer than usual.
- Some of our overseas-assigned members have returned to the U.S. with little notice because of COVID-19. Marla has been busier as she provides the member care services they need to transition into a country that's quite different from the one they left to go overseas.
- Brett has been working with Wycliffe leadership as response plans are developed and supporting the nine teams in his V.P. area as all of those teams are directly involved in member support.

In the midst of all the busy-ness of life, we remain grateful for the gift of His presence with us. So many people around the world don't have the hope that we are clinging to right now because they don't have access to God's Word in a language that speaks to their hearts. Thank you for your partnership which makes it possible for more people to experience the hope that can only come through Jesus. We appreciate you! Join us in praising God for these Scripture dedications that took place in January and February! Pray that the Scriptures will be used and result in transformed lives.

- Mudaba* New Testament in South Asia on Jan. 17. Population: 70,000.
- Rama* New Testament in West Africa on Jan. 25. Population: 100,000.
- Gbaya New Testament in South Sudan on Feb. 1. Population: 16,000.
- Nyungwe New Testament in Mozambique on Feb. 22. Population: 420,000.
- Daan de Paguh* New Testament in Southeast Asia on Feb. 23. Population: 50,000.
- Yok* New Testament in Southeast Asia on Feb. 23. Population: 15,000.
- Vwanji New Testament in Tanzania on Feb. 29. Population: 28,000. (*Name changed)

More than **300 translation projects** are within three years of completion. Would you like to pray for them? Prayer is especially critical during the final stages of the Bible translation process.

Would you **pray with us as** ...

• We serve not only those Wycliffe USA members who have returned to the US but also those who have remained in their countries of assignment. We praise God that He knows where each of His children are as He holds each close in His loving arms.

• Pray God would allow our trust in Him to grow as we face the uncertainties of this world. May He be glorified in our lives.

"... Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine. When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown" (NLT) Isaiah 43:1-4

Vacation Bible School

We are working on a plan for our Vacation Bible School for children 4 years old to 6th grade.

The theme is focus: Take a Closer Look.

The theme verse is Hebrews 12:2a "Let us keep looking to Jesus. He is the one who started this journey of faith. And He is the one who completes the journey of faith.



This Month

All activities are postponed until further notice.



Men's Bible Study

The Men's Bible Study group meets every Wednesday morning at 8:00 a.m. in the parlor. Men of all ages meet and enjoy great fellowship and a prayer session. All men are invited to join this study.

Women's Bible Study

The Women's Monday Night Bible study is open to all women. The next meeting is at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, May 18, in the parlor.

Tuesday Morning Bible Study

Men and women of all ages are invited to meet in the Bride's Room every Tuesday morning at 10:00 a.m.



Music Ministries

Chancel Choir

This is the primary worship leadership ensemble for the 11:00 service. The choir also sings for special services around Christmas and Holy Week. It is more than just a great choir; it is a caring fellowship. Rehearsals are on Wednesdays from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. Nursery care is provided during rehearsals.

Ring of Praise Handbell Ensemble

This intergenerational handbell group rehearses Wednesday evenings from 6:15 until 7:15 p.m. If you are interested in ringing, please contact Russell Farnell (fpcamusic@yahoo.com or 817-274-8286).

Youth Choir

During the school year, this group of youth in grades 6 to 12 meets on Sunday, 12:45 to 1:45 p.m., in the choir room.

Children's Music Ministries

The children's choirs meet from 12:45 to 1:45 p.m. on Sundays during the school year. Children ages 4 (when school starts) through grade 5 participate in activities including music/singing and bells/chimes, instruments, and listening activities. There are two sections, divided by age, and both participate in the 11:00 worship service twice per year, usually in December and April.



Church Leadership

Deacon Meeting

Thursday, May 7, at 6:30 p.m., the Diaconate meets in the parlor to oversee the Congregational Care, Hospitality, and Fellowship ministries.

Team Meeting Night

Thursday, May 14, at 6:45 p.m., all teams meet for worship in the chapel with subsequent gathering into respective teams for ministry planning and coordination.

Session Meeting

Thursday, May 28, at 7:00 p.m., the Session meets in the parlor to oversee the ministry of the church. The work of the Diaconate, church administration, and all Discipleship, Worship, Facility Management, and Mission and Evangelism ministries will be discussed.

Discipleship ...



Library Team

The library team works the first Wednesday of each month, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Anyone interested is welcome. No particular skill is required, the work is easy, and we always have a good time as we process books to be added to our inventory. If you would like to be involved in library work but cannot come at that evening time, please contact Sandy Thomlinson (at 817-460-8050) and special daytime work sessions can be arranged.



Happy Quilters

This group meets Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. to quilt, sew, knit, crochet, embroider, and just enjoy being together. Bring your project and join in!

Saints Alive!

Church seniors will meet for a potluck lunch on Thursday, May 21, at 11:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Bring a casserole, salad, or dessert and enjoy a fun and interesting afternoon.

Contact Bev Koch (817-261-3202) for details.



First Presbyterian Church 1200 S. Collins Street Arlington, TX 76010

Deadline for the June issue of The News is May 15!

Prayer Ministry

Prayers for those with health and other concerns: Apana Agha, Elaine Bahn, Jack Bos, James (Andrew) Bridges, Carol Browning, Vannah Caylor, Frank and Allena Coburn, Edna Collins, Lee Carol Copeland, Michael Deardorff, the Farnell Family, Don Farrell, Yvette Fielder, the Gifford Family, Joe and Lila Glenn, Olivia Gottmann, Andrew Hydock, James Irons, Bob Johnson, Tim Karnes (Pat May's son), Gary Lindley, Pat May, Barbara Mooers, J.D. Paulk, Nita Price, Jim L. Quick, Jillian Reynolds, Joan Reynolds, Donna Vickers, Nancy Welborne, and Karl Winter

Prayers for our family serving in the armed forces: Ben Boughton, Riley Curnutt, Austin Curran, James Dailey, Jeff Grimes, Nathan Haerer, Damien King, Mike Manci, Amie Murtha, Stephen O'Neil Sosa, Colin Peden, Jason Polk, Ryan Powell, Ryan Regalado, Peyton Steeno, Christopher Young, and Robbie Wallace

Prayers for our homebound members: Esther Albright, Suzette Armstrong, Shirley Bragg, Tom and Bobbie Fowler, Jack Gray, Marge Harrand, Barbara Hughes, Barbara Kraemer, Jeanne Malone, Allen and Charlene Miller, Cary and Ruth Moore, Carrie and Cosme Pacot, Ann Pitstick, Jack and Betty Snowden, Lorraine Swanson, Brooks and Connie Taylor, Dee Uhri, Richard Whitenight, and Mary Jane Wright

Pray for those who do not know Christ!

If you have any congregational care needs, please contact Pastor Rich McDermott at 817-274-8286.