

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

John 3:16



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Newsletter Team

Finishing the Race

By Pastor Rich McDermott

"As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully. As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." --2 Timothy 4:5-7

The Apostle Paul writes an earnest pastoral letter from a veteran missionary to a younger colleague in 2 Timothy. Paul is facing the end of his career and, in this letter, demonstrates his Christian faith and fortitude in the face of near certain martyrdom. The quotation above is a moving testimony of this remarkable apostle showing his affection and concern for Timothy and the churches he oversees. Timothy is urged to rekindle the gift of God within him (1:3-7); he is not to be ashamed of bearing witness to the Lord (1:8-18); and he is to take his share of suffering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (2:1-13). He must handle God's Word rightly in facing false teachers (2:14-19), purify himself as a fit vessel for the Lord's use (2:20-26), and learn from Paul's example (3:10-17).

While I do not pretend to compare myself to the great apostle Paul, and while my retirement in January 2021 does not mean that my ministry is at an end, I can relate to his sense that the end of his "race" is before him, of having "fought the good fight," and in believing that in my 41.5 years of pastoral ministry, I have "kept the faith." The affection he feels for Timothy is especially comparable to the affection I feel for you all, for Chris, for the staff, for our volunteers and for our wonderful congregation. <u>Thank you all so</u> <u>much</u> for fighting the good fight, keeping the faith, and enduring suffering in this past year with COVID and at other times before this. I am grateful to God for you and for your commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church.

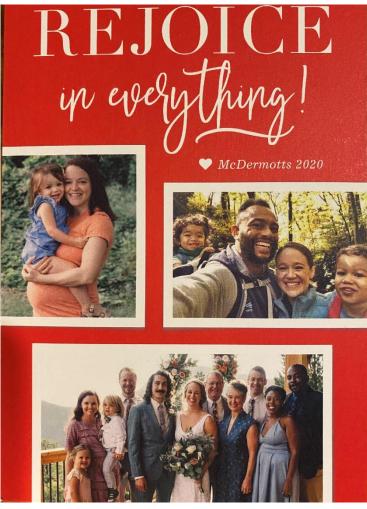
I have now been at FPCA for nearly six years, and I believe the Lord has accomplished a few things through us and for us: 1) by God's grace, we have witnessed a new stability in the leadership, the staff, the worship and the ministry of FPCA, after a difficult period; 2) by God's grace, we have remained focused on being faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ, to orthodox Biblical teaching, to passionate discipleship, and to compassionate mission and ministry in Christ's name; 3) by God's grace, we are genuinely committed to our mission of transforming life by glorifying God, following Jesus, and loving our neighbor; 4) by God's grace, we are committed to maintaining the unity of God's Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3), and to avoiding senseless controversies (2 Tim. 2:23); and 5) by God's grace, we are more committed to generosity as a way of life, sharing abundantly in every good work (2 Cor. 9:6-8).

That is not to say that we have arrived where God wants us...far from it. We have a long way to go (even in our capital campaign, \bigcirc). Hopefully, though, we are on the right path and headed in the right direction...by God's grace.

The most important person I can thank is my wife, Betsy, whom many of you know. Without her, I could not do what I do. Betsy did her best to be at almost every service we held so she could know

the people at both the 8:30 and 11:00 services, and she often knew them better than I did! She served as a deacon, assisted in worship, loved being with others, attended Book Club, visited the homebound, welcomed the stranger and the new guest, visited those in the hospital, and helped grow and lead a community of friends from her "Boot Camp" exercise group. She is truly amazing! She does all the work, and I usually get all the credit. (Please listen to what I say, and please follow what Betsy does!) Please let Betsy know if you have benefitted from her ministry and friendship. I am richly blessed to be her husband.

Betsy and I are so grateful to the Lord for calling us here, and for the members of the PNC through whom He spoke and who made it happen (Judy Northup, Ken Floyd, Larry Stephenson, Mary Spencer, Bob Watkins, Michelle Craig, and David Sparks). All of these fine people are amazing servants of the Lord, as are all of those who have served on Session, Deacons, Trustees, Congregational



Nominating Team, and all of our ministry teams. Thank you all for your ministry to the Lord!

I also want to thank my friend and colleague, Rev. Chris Campbell. We are very richly blessed to have had him as our associate and co-pastor for 4.5 years and now as our lead pastor beginning in 2021. It is rare to find a pastor with Chris' vision, humility, commitment to Christ, and character. Let me urge you not to be a thorn in his side but to be a caring, supportive and loving colleague in ministry to Chris, and give yourself to the Lord's work alongside him. He will be without an associate pastor for a time, and he will need help equipping the saints for the work of ministry, and for building up the body of Christ (Eph. 4:11-16). Pray for him always.

Betsy and I will be living in south Denver, Colorado nearer Betsy's dad and my mom, near two of our children and their spouses (Matt and Alex McDermott who have our g-kids, Finley and Gus,

and Leo and Ellen Anglin-Alonso) and several of our siblings and their families. Our new temporary address will be:

32 Glenmoor Dr.

Englewood, CO 80113

In the future, you can use these email addresses:

Rich's email: richmcdermott7@gmail.com	970-218-3689
Betsy's email: betsymcd23@gmail.com	970-219-9232

May the Lord continue to bless you and yours here at FPCA.

Rich and Betsy

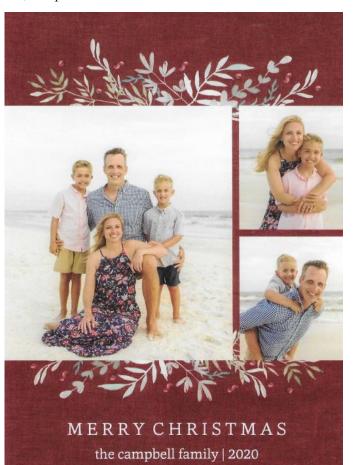
Continuing Education Reflections

Last month I spent some time studying and planning for 2021. I had accumulated a stack of books and I finally set aside some intentional time to plow through as much as I could. To be honest, some of the plowing was quick and easy – good information, but confirmation of much I already knew and not too challenging. So I as I worked through my stack, I picked up another book and immediately had to slow down my pace. For one, the print was much smaller. But more

importantly, I sensed God working to stretch my spirit and my level of comfort which is always good reason to slow down and think, "Uh oh!"

I love our congregation. We are not monolithic. There is diversity theologically, politically, chronologically, socioeconomically, and ethnically. We intentionally strive to reflect that in our elected leadership and our worship leadership. And that is important to do so because our church should reflect our community and to be honest, that honors and celebrates God's incredible creativity. We are all formed in his image and therefore we honor and celebrate who God is as we recognize him in each of us.

In Mark Demyaz's book Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church, he writes from his experience of intentionally forming a church that reflects God's rich and diverse creation. As I was reading, it was easy to think that the mission of their church was to serve as an example of how to reconcile racial divisions and struggles. And while



they are doing that, it is not their mission. First and foremost, they recognize that before reconciliation and healing can occur among God's people, people need to first be reconciled with God.

As a congregation of the PC(USA), we proudly stand in a tradition that has stood against racism and discrimination. It is a biblical stance and it is reflected in our confessions – perhaps most notably in the Confession of 1967. It too begins with first discussing reconciliation with God and the church's role in response. A portion of the conclusion states: "[The church] does not identify limited progress with the kingdom of God on earth, nor does it despair in the face of disappointment and defeat. In steadfast hope, the church looks beyond all partial achievement to the final triumph of God." In other words, we cannot grow complacent nor can we become cynical. We will remain steadfast as we strive to reconcile God's people with him, and then with one another. And just because we will not achieve on earth as in heaven overnight, or maybe ever before Jesus' return, we will not stop trying.

Pastor Chris.

Drive-in Christmas Carol Sing

We will have a carol sing in the church on Saturday the same format as September. You "what is a drive-in park in designated their cars. Our old hymnals will be be able to keep the If you already have Saturday, December 5, 4:00 p.m.



drive-in Christmas South parking lot of the evening, Dec. 5, with our last hymn sing in may be asking yourself, carol sing?" People will spaces and remain in 1990 Presbyterian provided, and you will hymnal for home use! a hymnal, please bring

it. If you need another, just ask!

Carols will be played live, and there will be a vocal group to help lead the singing. The music will be amplified on speakers and broadcast so that you can listen on your car radio and sing along. This will be a participatory event, so we encourage you to sing along in your car with your windows open, so that you can hear others around you, or windows closed if it is too cold! This is a wonderful and safe way to be able to gather and worship together in song as we prepare for the Christmas season.

Finance Update

For the month of October 2020:

Budget (Operating and Funds Released)

Income: \$ 57,849 Expense: (\$ 81,343)

Income - Expense for month: Income - Expense for 2020 Year to Date:



\$ (23,494) \$ (23,908)

Comments:

Total Operating Income is under budget for the year by (\$146,030). Funds Released is under budget for the year by (\$35,545). Donors – Under budget for the year by (\$88,226). Total Expenses were under budget for the year by (\$128,824).

Session Discretionary Funds (not designated or reserved) -\$ 17,580Cost to operate church for one month -\$ 93,320

The CARES Act for Donors in 2020

There are Two New Tax Benefits for Donors in 2020

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act created two, temporary changes to the tax treatment of donations.

For those who do not itemize their charitable giving, the CARES Act will allow these individual taxpayers to deduct cash donations to a qualified charity (FPCA is a qualified charity) of up to \$300 on their 2020 federal tax return, even though they take the standard deduction. Married-filing-jointly taxpayers will get an above-the-line deduction of up to \$600. Above the line" means it reduces taxable income before it is "adjusted".

For those donors who are able to itemize their deductions, and directly write off gifts to charity, the CARES Act lifted the deduction cap from 60% of AGI (adjusted gross income) and raised it to 100% of AGI for individuals and joint filers. For individuals, it could theoretically mean zero taxable income if someone gives large gifts. The percentages relate to adjusted gross income (AGI). For 2020, a person who itemizes (uses Schedule A) may take a charitable deduction of up to 100% of adjusted gross income (AGI - the amount of income eligible to be taxed). In 2021 it will only be 60% of AGI.

The deductibility cap for donations to donor-advised funds, gifts of appreciated stocks, and gifts to private foundations are not included and remain subject to the 30% AGI rule.

Please note: This information is not intended as legal or tax advice. For such advice, please consult an attorney or tax advisor. Figures cited in any examples are for illustrative purposes only.

FPCA's Two Special Offerings in December

Our church supports two special offerings during the month of December. One is the Christmas Joy Offering which goes directly to Presbytery. The other goes to Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services (PCHAS). Offering envelopes are in the office, chapel hallway and the narthex or designate on your check which offering you are supporting. If you want envelopes mailed to you, please contact the church to make your request.

A Presbyterian tradition for almost seventy years, the Christmas Joy Offering is designated by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church to provide congregations a direct way of supporting specific causes that help those in need. The receipts from the Joy Offering are distributed equally to the Board of Pensions for assistance programs and to the National Ministries of the General Assembly Council to support Presbyterian racial ethnic education. To read a brief account of how one family benefited from the Christmas Joy Offering, visit: https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/story/arms-church-around-us/.

Our church continually supports PCHAS but especially at Christmas. During FPCA's Christmas Eve services the undesignated offerings will benefit PCHAS. To find out more about PCHAS, visit: http://www.pchas.org. You may also speak to Marge and Bob Dawson, PCHAS Ambassadors and volunteers, about this very worthy organization which supports many children and families in a variety of ways throughout Texas.



Christmas Giving Tree



Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services

PCHAS - Christmas Giving Tree

We Need You Now	PCHAS Christmas Giving Tree
More Than Ever!	Your gift will provide necessary items and additional services for our children such as:
As families who were already struggling face record unemployment rates and uncertainties caused by the recent pandemic, PCHAS is stepping up to provide them with the Christ-centered care and support they need. That means we need you now more than ever.	One school backpack
This Christmas children need us to help them through this crisis, and one way you can facilitate those efforts is by supporting our work financially. PCHAS works with children and families to address their needs and set goals for the future. Our staff help children reduce anxieties, improve	Food for a child for a week \$50
behavior, and feel loved and healthy while helping parents increase their employability, self-sufficiency and parenting skills. This Christmas your gifts can provide hope, healing and bright futures to vulnerable children and families.	Clothing for a child for one season
As we strive to serve like Jesus by welcoming all those who need our help, we ask that you join our mission of faith by considering a generous donation today.	Six months of counseling
giving.pchas.org	from our homes to yours!
800.888.1904 info@pchas.org	Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services [®] Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services [®] Senior Development Officer kathy.dodson@pchas.org 254.230.4517 PO Box 140888, Austin, TX 78714-9981

Dove Tree 2020

If you are interested in "adopting "one of our shut ins for the church for the Christmas season, please call or text Marge Dawson and she will set you up with one or two. Email: mdawsonarltx@gmail.com or call 817-980-6825.

Mitten Tree 2020

FPCA will not be setting up the Mitten Tree for donations this year. We are not using the portion of the church that houses the tree, and we have a reduced number of members coming physically to the church services. Typically, warm clothing items such as mittens or gloves, socks, scarves, etc. are donated. If you would like to contribute this year, please donate directly to Mission Arlington. You can learn about what they need most, along with other information, on their website: missionarlington.org

Gifts of Hope 2020

FPCA will not be setting up tables for the Gifts of Hope donations this year. We have a reduced number of members coming physically to the church during Covid-19. Typically, members would give a donation for a non-traditional gift (for example, a duck or a chicken through World Vision) and would receive a card to give notifying the recipient that a donation was given to a non-profit organization on behalf of the individual. While we will not be standing in the hallway collecting funds for these gifts, members may go directly to the websites for these individual organizations and submit donations.

- World Vision (gift catalog) https://donate.worldvision.org/giftcatalog
- International Justice Mission (gift catalog) <u>https://gifts.ijm.org/</u>
- Voice of the Martyrs donate to provide Bibles: <u>https://www.persecution.com/bibles/</u>
- Voice of the Martyrs donate to provide Action Packs: <u>https://www.persecution.com/actionpacks/</u>
- Arlington Charities online donation: <u>https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/WebLink.aspx?name=E254039&id=7</u>
- Presbyterian Children's Home and Services participate in the FPCA Christmas Eve Offering via online giving, or sending a check to the church office

Christmas Word Search

s	Н	R	R	Y	М	G	Z	S	в	Z	s	D
L	H	т	R	I	в	H	Т	В	Z	Ε	G	Т
Е	H	S	С	М	G	A	J	A	J	S	Ν	Н
М	Z	Y	A	L	R	A	J	D	М	Ν	I	R
A	0	R	т	L	υ	E	М	V	I	E	S	E
С	Y	Н	W	I	S	Е	М	E	N	С	S	E
E	J	Y	P	υ	v	Т	K	N	F	N	E	K
L	P	Е	s	Е	R	I	K	т	A	I	L	I
С	W	D	М	E	S	в	Т	P	N	K	в	N
А	L	E	G	Ν	A	0	L	A	т	N	A	G
R	H	N	N	s	т	х	J	Z	N	A	т	S
I	A	R	E	J	0	I	С	E	М	R	S	J
М	в	E	т	Н	L	E	H	E	Μ	F	х	S

INFANT

JOSEPH

MANGER

MIRACLE

JESUS

MAGI

MARY

ADVENT ANGEL BETHLEHEM BIRTH BLESSINGS CAMELS FRANKINCENSE MYRRH NATIVITY REJOICE STABLE STAR THREE KINGS WISE MEN

Children`s Ministry

Preschool



MONTHLY OVERVIEW

Merry Christmas! We are going to have an incredibly sweet month as we combine the Christmas story with Christmas cookies! It is going to be so much fun!

While cookie cutters, decorations, and excitement will fill this entire month, the focus will be Jesus specifically, Jesus is God's Son. We want every preschooler to know that what we are celebrating this time of year is the wonderful truth that God loved the world so much that He gave us His only Son, Jesus.

We pray that we will all enter this month with the same wonder the shepherds had as they heard the good news for the very first time—a wonder that will inspire us all to go and tell everyone, everywhere that Jesus is God's Son.

ONE	BIBLE STORY The Angel and Mary Luke 1:26-33, 38, 46-49	STORY FOCUS God told us He would give us Jesus.		
TWO	BIBLE STORY Jesus Is Born Luke 2:1-7	STORY FOCUS Jesus is born.		
THREE	BIBLE STORY The Shepherds Luke 2:8-20	STORY FOCUS The angels tell about Jesus.		
FOUR	BIBLE STORY Wise Men Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11	story Focus The wise men come to see God's Son.		
MEMORY VERSE	KEY QUESTION	BOTTOM LINE		
"GOD LOVED THE WORLD SO MUCH THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY SON." WHY IS JESUS SPECIAL?		JESUS IS GOD'S SON.		

GOD LOVES ME.

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JOHN 3:16, GNT

Elementary and KFC



MONTHLY OVERVIEW

GOD VIEW:

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN CHRISTMAS AND GOD'S CHARACTER, AS SHOWN THROUGH GOD'S BIG STORY

Christmas can be filled with all sorts of emotions. Some people easily experience the joy of the season. Some rest in the hope that God is making all things new. But others struggle to find peace due to life's circumstances. With all that's going on this time of year, we thought it'd be great to go back to the basics and simply celebrate Christmas.

The truth is Jesus is best gift God ever gave. Jesus was proof that God loves us and we can trust God no matter what. Because of Jesus, it's possible for us to have a relationship with God that will last forever. As we remember the Christmas story, we take time to celebrate the greatest gift the world has ever known and rediscover, joy and hope and peace as we rest in the unconditional love of God.

O N E	BIBLE STORY Jesus Is Promised Isaiah 9:6	BOTTOM LINE We can have hope because God keeps His promises.
TWO	BIBLE STORY Gabriel Appears to Mary Luke 1:26-56	BOTTOM LINE You can have joy because God has a plan for you.
THREE	BIBLE STORY Jesus Is Born Luke 2:1-7	BOTTOM LINE God loved us so much that He gave us a Savior.

MEMORY VERSE	"TODAY IN THE TOWN OF DAVID A SAVIOR HAS BEEN BORN TO YOU. HE IS THE MESSIAH, THE LORD." LUKE 2:11, NIRV
CHRISTMAS	CELEBRATING JESUS, GOD'S GREATEST GIFT

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Youth Ministry

A Letter to Parents Who Hurt During the Holidays

by Leah Jennings

Hey, friend:

Yes, you. The one who's dreading the upcoming holiday season. I know you get this pit in your stomach whenever you think about it, but you try to put on a cheerful face for your kids and your family. You try so hard.

I know the holiday season for you isn't all pumpkin spice and scoring great deals on gifts. For you, the holiday season is a source of sadness, disappointment, loneliness, and maybe even a little anger. It reminds you of what you've lost, that there aren't enough paychecks between now and Christmas, and how this is just one more thing that isolates you from everyone else.

Did you know you can do the holiday season differently this year, friend? Did you know that you can stop putting pressure on yourself, draw hard lines in the sand about what you will and won't do? Did you know your holiday season can be a bit more tolerable this year? Maybe not perfect, but not soul-suckingly awful either. Here's how:

Feel free to grieve.

The holidays are supposed to be joyful and it's sad when they're not. Putting on a brave face isn't a requirement. If you're hurting or angry, honor and make room for those feelings.

Be okay with minimizing stress in whatever way you need to.

That may look like saying no to things that used to be yeses. Maybe it means skipping out on family functions that make you feel uncomfortable. Maybe it's enforcing a strict spending limit. Maybe it's boundaries.

Prioritize what matters.

What are the things that matter to you most during this season? What are the things you actually like, not the things that you're obligated to enjoy? Make time for those things. Those things should be higher up on your list.

Do something for you.

Maybe the holidays aren't your favorite, but that shouldn't stop you from doing your favorite things. Why not reframe this season as a time when you focus on the things that also make you happy?

I hope this season turns out to be a better one for you this year. Are the holidays usually hard for you? How do you cope?

Blessings in Christ,

Adrian

This Month

Some activities are postponed until further notice. The Activities marked with * are happening.



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, 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

U

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, not in December, at 6:30 p.m., the Diaconate meets in the parlor to oversee the Congregational Care, Hospitality, and Fellowship ministries.

Team Meeting Night

(Mostly Online) Thursday, December 3 & 10, at 7:00 p.m., all teams for ministry planning and coordination.

Session Meeting

(Two nights, off-schedule) Wednesday, December 2, and Monday, December 14 at 7:00 p.m., the Session meets online to oversee the ministry of the church. Indoor worship, Budget, Generis, and other matters. The work of the Diaconate, church administration, and all Discipleship, Worship, Facility Management, and Mission and Evangelism ministries will be discussed.



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, , 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)



details.

for

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

Deadline for the January issue of The News is December 15!

Prayer Ministry

Prayers for those with health and other concerns: Apana Agha, Richard Ankele, Jack Bos, James (Andrew) Bridges, Carol Browning, Vannah Caylor, Frank and Allena Coburn, Edna Collins, Lloyd Counts, Cheri Evans and family, the Farnell Family, Don Farrell, Yvette Fielder, the Gifford Family, Joe and Lila Glenn, Beth Henkel, Andrew Hydock, Bob Johnson, Liana Leathem, Tim Karnes (Pat May's son), Gary Lindley, Pat May, Barbara Mooers, Bodil Overtree, Robert and Tina Paulk, Jim L. Quick, Jillian Reynolds, Joan Reynolds, John and Donna Vickers, and Nancy Welborne.

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 Moore, Carrie Pacot, Ann Pitstick, Betty Snowden, 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.

