



For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NRSV)

May
2021

The News

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Newsletter Team

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Ups and Downs

April truly was a rollercoaster month. We started the month giving livestreaming a try with our Maundy Thursday and Good Friday worship services. While they were not perfect, it was a great first try and has given us some hope of what we can do with our worship services in the future.

Easter Sunday is always one of the high attendance marks for the church any year. But that is something none of us took for granted this year. Just to compare 2020's attendance to 2021: 0 (2020); 168 in person (2021) plus over 200 views online! Each week through the month, we have had the pleasure of seeing beloved faces return to worship primarily because members and friends have completed the vaccination process.

Also in April, our ministry staff completed the rediscovery phase for our capital campaign renovations. We met via Zoom and in person with Tim Cool as well as the architecture team from BlueLine. While we confirmed our ministry needs for the campaign remained the same, there was some rearranging of the puzzle pieces improve the layout of our areas as well as the Sunday morning flow. The session voted unanimously to proceed with this slightly revised direction. We are beginning to take the next steps of better defining the project cost as well as explore funding options to secure a construction loan.

So far, these are all great and exciting developments! But during all this, our Preschool was struggling mightily with hiring teachers. As my letter explained, this has been a tough time for any economic sectors, especially preschools and daycares, to hire and retain employees. After valiantly working as hard as possible through this pandemic year, the Preschool board made a unanimous recommendation to close the Preschool. This action was regretfully approved by the session. We are so appreciative for the efforts of the director, Dana Jefferson, and the office manager, Cynthia Devin, for giving it their absolute all.

With that grief-filled event all on our minds, we were presented with our first Transform capital campaign update in worship. Larry Stephenson shared our collective commitments which is just a hair short of \$2 million! Not only that, since the conclusion of our campaign in October, we have received close to \$1 million in contributions to the fund! That is nothing short of outstanding. The potential lenders we have begun conversations with are very impressed with the success of the campaign and the great initial follow-through.

Friends, this is the life of the church. It is the life of discipleship: ups and downs. Throughout it all, God remains faithful each and every

day. There are signs of hope as we resume familiar activities at the church: our senior flexibility group; reopening the nursery for the 11am service; resuming KFC (Kids for Christ) at the 11am service; as well as offering a weekly summer drive-in worship service at 8:30 in the north parking lot. I am excited for us as well because the session has approved our very own Rev. Jim Shroyer to fill the pulpit at the end of the month! What a blessing to have he and Jamee as part of our church family.

Keep the faith y'all. I look forward to reconnecting with more and more of you each week.

God bless,
Pastor Chris

Finance Update

For the month of **March 2021**:

Budget (Operating and Funds Released)

Income: \$68,314
Expense: (\$81,117)

Income - Expense for month: **\$(12,803)**
Income - Expense for 2021 Year to Date: **\$(26,523)**



Comments:

Thank you for your generous donations. Because of your support we:

- Were able to worship and celebrate through our Lenten Services for Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday.
- provided opportunities for serving our community by volunteering to help Arlington Charities sort and pack food, and load it in cars for the drive through pantry.
- continued to provide opportunities to serve by helping distribute food through the Mobile Food Pantry.
- had the Children's Ministry Picnic/Takeout Luncheon, sharing pizzas with families.
- The Capital Campaign fund balance continues to grow. As of March, the balance is \$830,087.

We are doing well and, because of you, we are able to carry out the ministries that are calling to our FPCA family. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns, at jeanne@firstprestexas.org.

Children's Ministry

Preschool



MONTHLY OVERVIEW

Some choices are easy—wearing the red shirt or eating the apple instead of the banana. Then, there are the not so easy decisions. What do we do when the decision is hard and we are struggling to know which way to go?

We believe the first step to making wise choices is trusting that God's way is perfect. Our prayer is that we can help make many of the 35,000 choices a day our preschoolers will be making one day a whole lot easier. They will know to jump, jump and go God's way, because God's way is perfect!

WEEK ONE	BIBLE STORY In The Garden Genesis 1:31, 2:8-3:24	STORY FOCUS God's way is perfect.
WEEK TWO	BIBLE STORY Jonah Jonah 1:1-3:10	STORY FOCUS I should go God's way.
WEEK THREE	BIBLE STORY Naaman 2 Kings 5:1-14	STORY FOCUS I can go God's way even when it's hard.
WEEK FOUR	BIBLE STORY Josiah (Young King) 2 Chronicles 34	STORY FOCUS I can tell others about God's way.
WEEK FIVE	BIBLE STORY Gideon's Army Judges 7:1-8	STORY FOCUS God's way is always perfect.
MEMORY VERSE	KEY QUESTION	BOTTOM LINE
"GOD'S WAY IS PERFECT." 2 SAMUEL 22:31, NIV	WHOSE WAY IS PERFECT?	GOD'S WAY IS PERFECT.
GOD MADE ME.		

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Elementary and KFC



ELEMENTARY

MAY 2021

MONTHLY OVERVIEW

GOD VIEW:

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

Growing in faith is not something that happens by merely cramming more information about the Bible into a child's brain. All of that knowledge in their head means nothing if we don't help kids experience what that knowledge can do in their hearts. To fully experience faith, we want kids to practice their faith. And that takes commitment.

WEEK ONE	BIBLE STORY Training to Win the Prize 1 Corinthians 9:24-25 <i>(supporting: Matthew 22:36-40)</i>	BOTTOM LINE Keep practicing what matters most.
WEEK TWO	BIBLE STORY The Wise and Foolish Builders Matthew 7:24-29	BOTTOM LINE Practice hearing from God.
WEEK THREE	BIBLE STORY Model Prayer Luke 11:1-4	BOTTOM LINE Practice praying to God.
WEEK FOUR	BIBLE STORY Peter Says That Jesus Is the Messiah Matthew 16:13-20	BOTTOM LINE Practice talking about God.
WEEK FIVE	BIBLE STORY Widow's Mite Mark 12:41-44	BOTTOM LINE Practice living for God.

MEMORY VERSE

"TRAINING THE BODY HAS SOME VALUE. BUT BEING GODLY HAS VALUE IN EVERY WAY. IT PROMISES HELP FOR THE LIFE YOU ARE NOW LIVING AND THE LIFE TO COME."

1 TIMOTHY 4:8, NIRV

COMMITMENT

Making a plan and putting it into practice

Children's Ministry Dates to Remember

May 2: Children's Ministry Luncheon at noon

May 30: Children's Ministry Zoom at 4:00 p.m.

July 26-30: Virtual Vacation Bible School

Youth Ministry

Will This Ever Get Easier?

By Leah Jennings

In full disclosure, I felt like a fraud when I started typing this blog post. And maybe I am.

As the title suggests, I'm supposed to be giving some insightful words of wisdom about if and how you can survive whatever season of parenting you're in. But the truth is, I'm right there in the trenches next to you, mirroring your shell-shocked look and matching your lack of energy reserves, all while coated in someone else's bodily fluids. I am you, and you are me.

But then I said to myself, "Now, wait a minute, sister! Maybe you can add some value here because you have survived every single one of your worst days." And I have. Survived, that is.

On the best days, I have survived toddler temper tantrums and a baby whose crying can't be pacified.

On the worst days, I've found myself curled around my kid in her hospital bed.

On the unimaginable days, I've stumbled through the darkest days of postpartum depression and figurative and clinical mental breakdowns. And wouldn't you know, my kids survived it all. So, maybe I can impart some wisdom after all.

1. **Just hang on.** As a fresh, young newlywed, I once received some of the best marital advice that still rings the truest of the true now that I'm a parent: "When you want to give up, just hang on for one more day." Simple advice, right? But before you roll your eyes at how trivial it is, think about it for a second: How many impulsive decisions or words you shouldn't have said out loud could've been but a mere cautionary tale if you had just waited one more day? The bad days won't always last. They can't. There can be no darkness without the existence of its counterpart — light. So, just cling to these words like the life raft they are.

2. **Call anxiety what it is: A liar.** Anxiety is a bully. It shoves you around late at night, causing your mind to contemplate all the what-ifs. It grips you by the collar and mutters menacingly in your ear that every fear of yours will come true. It threatens to make you spend your days looking over your shoulder in fearful anticipation. There are many acronyms out there for the word, "fear." My favorite? "**F**uture **E**vents **A**ppearing **R**eal." I am not here to delegitimize your fears. Sometimes, your fears do come true. But a lot of times? A lot of times, we work ourselves into a TV drama in our minds that even television producer, Shonda Rhimes, would lift an eyebrow at. So, push back against anxiety. Defend yourself against it with a one-two punch of truth. And if that doesn't work . . .

3. . . . **go talk to someone about it.** Ask any of my friends or family what I usually bring up in any conversation — it's therapy. Oh, sweet therapy. Where would I be without you? Oh, I know! In the darkest of dark places, that's where — a spot I've been that I never want to return to again. There will be times when you just cannot get out of the weeds of whatever you're feeling — rage, despair, or a healthy helping of both. That's when you need to call in reinforcements. Therapists should be your first line of defense. They'll help you process flawed thinking and past traumas that influence your mindset and parenting today. Everyone needs a therapist, just like everyone needs a doctor. Things going well? Great! I'm sure your therapist would love to hear about it. Things going horribly wrong? Never fear! Your therapist's calendar has an opening.

4. These may be ramblings of an overtired, overworked mom living through a pandemic. But I've seen the ebbs and flows of life enough to know the better days lie just ahead. So, whatever you're going through, just know . . .

. . . you will feel like you again.

. . . you will be less stressed again.

. . . the dark circles will roll from underneath your tired eyes and the sun will shine again.

And when the seasons of easy come around — and they will, my friend — promise to pay it forward and encourage someone who is in the spot where you are right now.

Easter Worship Pictures





Pentecost Offering

This year our Pentecost Offering is received officially on the Day of Pentecost, May 23, 2021. As with all Special Offerings, times before and after this date are appropriate for donations also. On Pentecost Sunday, we join Christians around the world to celebrate God's gift of the Holy Spirit to the church.

The Pentecost Offering unites us to support young people in Christ. Forty percent of the offering stays locally and this year will go to our First Presbyterian Preschool as decided by the Mission and Evangelism Team with Session approval. The other percentage will support General Assembly ministries for youth development.

Stay up to date on the Pentecost Offering on www.pcusa.org/pentecost, twitter.com/pcusa or facebook.com/spoecialofferings.__

Offering envelopes are available outside the chapel and sanctuary several weeks before the offering and after for several weeks. Please use the Pentecost envelopes or designate on your check or other envelope if you are giving to the Pentecost Offering.

Please help aid youth programs in our church as well as our country and world. The Pentecost Offering helps our youth begin life with a strong start and a solid foundation of faith from childhood through young adult.



PENTECOST
SPECIAL OFFERINGS

This Month

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



Bible Studies

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 Monday Night Women's Bible study is currently not meeting. Normal meeting time is the third Monday of each month at 6 p.m.

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 6, 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 13, at 7:00 p.m., all teams for ministry planning and coordination.

Session Meeting*

Thursday, May 27, 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.



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.



Fellowship

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) for details.



First Presbyterian Church
1200 S. Collins Street
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Deadline for the June issue of The News is May 15!

Prayer Ministry

Prayers for those with health and other concerns: Apana Agha, Jack Bos, James (Andrew) Bridges, Janet Birkhoff (Ann Turney's daughter), Carol Browning, Vannah Caylor, Frank and Allena Coburn, Edna Collins, Lloyd Counts, the Farnell Family, Don Farrell, Yvette Fielder, the Gifford Family, Joe and Lila Glenn, Andrew Hydock, Bob Johnson, Liana Leathem (Jane Leathem's granddaughter), Tim Karnes (Pat May's son), Gary Lindley, Pat May, Barbara Mooers, Jim L. Quick, Jillian Reynolds, Joan Reynolds, Beth Rotert, Kathy Rotert, 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 Mancini, 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, 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 Chris Campbell at 817-274-8286.

