



New Sermon Series! "Resources for Difficult Days"

Throughout April and May we are focusing on the resources of faith. We strive to rely on God who gives his enduring love and uplifting hope in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. In this Series we will study and seek the sources of strength, which God provides in the scriptures and in the followers of Jesus.

The New Testament church knew seasons of hardship. The early Christians followed Jesus through some incredibly challenging chapters in their world.

Just as hope and life prevailed on that first Easter morning over fear and death so too will hope in Jesus sustain us in this time. As he said so long ago, Jesus speaks to us today, "Do not be afraid." When Love Endures, Fear Fades and Hope Lives.

Sunday, April 26- "Three Anchors to Keep You"
John 11, The Lazarus Story (Faith, Family & Friends, Vision)

Sunday, May 3- "Life on Pause"
Psalm 46, Philipians 4:6-8, Mark 1:35-39 (NIV)

This Sunday I am preaching on the story of Lazarus from John 11. Time and time I am amazed at the how powerful and meaningful the Scripture is, and how a story like Lazarus can be so real to everything that is going in our lives now.

As we look towards Sunday I want to encourage you to ask yourself the following Questions: How does my FAITH keep me grounded? How do my FAMILY and FRIENDS keep me grounded? How does my VISION for those around me keeps me grounded?

I would also encourage you to continue to pray for all the things going around us at this time, that we can see what God is doing around us, even in the times that when everything seems to have come to a full stop. Be blessed! See you Sunday.

Bo M.

e-News

April 22, 2020

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Midweek Teen Bible Study:

As the days together with our families keep getting longer, it's easy to get frustrated and want to say some not so nice words. That's why we're going to look at Ephesians 4:29 tonight: Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs that I may benefit those who listen.."

Confirmation:

This week we will be talking about the books of Galatians and what it means to be free in Christ!

Sunday Night Youth Group:

Our favorite Laura Wakefield will be teaching us on the Fruit of the Spirit: Gentleness! We're so excited!

****All Zoom links will be given to you via Remind. If you don't have you in Remind, please let Karissa know ASAP: karissa.fleming@gmail.com**

We have **one worship service online** with both traditional and contemporary songs in the service. Look for it online, on YouTube (firstpresjoliet), facebook, our website, or check the email sent each Saturday afternoon.

And this is even better. If you have a Smart TV, Roku, Amazon Fire or Chromecast you can watch it on your TV.

April 19, 2020

Attendance - 359 unique views combined from Facebook and YouTube

Stewardship Report

2020-2021 Budget	734,307
Year to Date Income	\$68,335
Year to Date Expenses	\$37,034
Year to Date for Angel House	\$3,246
Received for bathroom renovation—	\$10,925

You may text your gift to FPJ at (815)205-3044 or go

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Congratulations to Meredith and Aaron Palmer on the birth of their son Eli!

THE PASTOR'S CORNER... Craig Herr, Head Pastor

Sunday, April 26, Celebrate and draw strength from the Risen Christ is this Easter Season as you worship with us. Join us as we seek to live in the love and affirmation of God, even in this trying time.

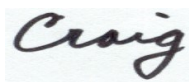
It is with mixed feelings that I let you know that **Mary Lynn Keir has resigned as our Pastor of Visitation**. I will miss Mary Lynn's caring ministry for our older members who are at home or in nursing homes or members who are in the hospital. But I can celebrate her opportunity to be the Interim Pastor at the Elwood Community Presbyterian Church. She is excited about this new opportunity and it was great to see her, online through Zoom, being commissioned at our Presbytery meeting last week. I am happy for Mary Lynn and sad for us.

A **Zoom Online Bible Study** taught by Pastor Carrie Kapral is meeting on Thursday evenings at 6:30 p.m. Look for the details on Facebook and in the E-News. There were sixteen participants the first night, last Thursday.

This Sunday, April 26, we will have a **Drive-thru Bags of Love** time from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Kendall Fris and her family will be set up in the back of the parking lot for you to drop off groceries and items for Bags of Love. You can leave them on the parking lot and drive off. They will load them up and prepare them for delivery. We invite you to prepare items for Bags of Love for this last Sunday of the month.

For Pastoral Care please call the office to leave a message to talk with a pastor or call us on our cell phones. We will be available and can access our messages from home.

Each day we have opportunities **to pray** for each other and our church, community and world. I encourage you to lift up your prayers for the goodness and grace and healing power of God to permeate our world. May the Lord lift us up as we pray and strive to love others in this time.



All of our virtual Worship Services are available on our YouTube page, you can just search for FirstPresJoliet. Audio-only recordings are still available on the Sermons page of our website as well.

The Second Sunday of Easter, April 19- "Love and Affirmation" Mark 1:9-12

This Sunday I wanted to focus on both the Love and Affirmation of God. There's a significant difference between Love and Affirmation. So, I invite you to consider what it means to love and be loved and what it is to affirm others and have experiences of affirmation.

We are in the Easter Season and when we live in the love and affirmation of God know that Hope lives in us. Love is so significant in life, so much so, that the Bible tells us God is love. We see it in Jesus' life at his baptism.

Here, Jesus experiences the marvelous embrace of God in Baptism. The One who called all things into existence names Jesus the beloved. You are my Son, whom I love... That's a gift and reward without comparison.

It's a wonderful moment of insight into the unconditional love of God.

You are my Son, whom I love... the verb is in the present tense; that suggests continuous action. It means forever. I will always love you. You are mine, you are in my heart, you are my son, whom I love.

It's an unconditional love; the commitment of the God who is love to love.

When you look into the fabric of your life can you point to those moments when you sensed you were loved unconditionally, by someone? Do you remember your experiences of God's unconditional love? Do you ever bring into your consciousness joyful memories of Christ's love shining into your life, coming fresh and surprisingly new to you? If there ever was a time to do this it is now, in our COVID-19 world.

We need to do this from time to time and then give thanks for the extravagant, amazing, and gracious love from God. There's power in the present from creating within us a storehouse of God's amazing love and tapping into it. We all need to experience the "I will always love you no matter what"

Next in this blessing of Jesus by God we see another kind of love at work.

Jesus receives praise based upon making faithful decisions, "with you I am well pleased."

God says to Jesus, You are my beloved Son- that's unconditional love. With you I am well pleased goes beyond that to choices and lifestyle. It's a praising love based upon the faithfulness of Jesus. It's a provisional love that affirms obedience to certain standards.

With you I am well pleased.- this verb is in the past, at a particular point or decision. Paul will use that tense to refer to the death of Jesus or Resurrection.

At a particular time and place in the past, at one point Jesus died, then was buried, and then was raised to new life.

With you I am well pleased may refer perhaps to Jesus' choice to enter the world and come as a suffering servant Or perhaps it refers to Jesus' choice to go out into the wilderness and begin his ministry with baptism.

And Jesus' coming up from the water is answered by the coming down from above of the Holy Spirit of God.

Here we see a love from God that rewards the faithful choice of Christ Jesus. With you I am well pleased; it's an expectation kind of love that we see. Here God Affirms what is right and faithful.

We need both the Love of God and Affirmation of God. We need to hear

You are my Son, [my Daughter], whom I love, with you I am well pleased.

Do you need a Mask for going out for supplies?

Nicole Long, with one of her neighbors, is making masks for others. She will make you a mask if you text her at 815-409-5933 (or call her). There are two designs, one for women and one for men. Once she is done, she will text you so you can pick up the mask on the front porch of her home in New Lenox. So, give Nicole a text if you need a mask!

Stay Safe!

A Life of Giving Thanks Bible Study

Hi, friends! There is still time to join the A Life of Giving Thanks Bible Study! We will meet via Zoom on Thursdays at 6:30 pm. This four week study will include the joy of being content, modeling gratefulness, simple living and recognizing our blessings based on the beloved hymn "Come Thou Font of Many Blessings." You can see a little more information on our church Facebook page!

If you are interested in joining this study, please email me at clkapral@gmail.com. I will send you more information and the study guide to your email.

May peace be with each of you as we continue to adjust to these unusual times.

-Carrie