



e-News

January 13, 2021

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“Seek Life” Sermon Series

We have choices within our reach as we move into 2021. We can move in the direction of what is good and choose to “Seek Life.” We do not know all that will unfold, in this new year. The Covid-19 Pandemic is still very much with us, although vaccines are on the way. Political polarization and estrangement are, unfortunately, still a powerful reality. The economy is demanding and there are hardships for too many. Who knows what the surprising developments of 2021 will be, whether they will be good or bad. And of course, we long for something better than 2020.

Even with all of the challenges we face, there are some things in life over which we have some control, some say. We can choose to “Seek Life” and move toward what is good, right, and true in this new year. We can ask the Lord Jesus Christ to mold and shape us more fully into the people we were created to be and seek to bring life to our corner of the world.

This Sermon Series focuses on the faithful, positive, and hopeful choices we can make to “Seek Life” and choose the good as 2021 takes shape.

Sunday, January 17- “Brave in the Middle of the Storm” Mark 4:35-41

= This passage has been one of my to go texts whenever I feel overwhelmed by everything that goes around me. It is a beautiful reminder of who Christ is in our life and how easy is for us to lose our focus in the middle of the storm. I would like to ask you to meditate on that passage over the next few days and maybe answer the questions:

Who is Jesus to me? Where do I find my strength?
What does it mean to be brave?

I look forward to share with you the promise of God’s word this Sunday. Be blessed

We have **1 worship service online** with traditional and contemporary songs in the service. Look for it online, (YouTube (firstpresjoliet), facebook, our website) or check the email sent each Saturday afternoon.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Prayers for the family and friends of former member Bill Reiss who passed recently.

Prayers for recovery for Mary Haas who is at Alden in Naperville.

STEPHEN MINISTRY

Reminder: If you are experiencing emotional hardship (depression, grieving etc.) you can reach out to our Stephen Ministry to receive help from a trained team. Everything is confidential. These are hard times but you are not alone, please contact Pastor Craig to be put in touch with Stephen Ministry.

The birthday calendar for January is available on the homepage of our website.

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Stewardship Report

2020-2021 Budget	\$734,307
Year to Date Income	\$502,140
Year to Date Expenses	\$502,550

Northern II Food Pantry \$4,346.50 (thanks!)

2020-2021 Bequest/Gift Income Received	\$4,200
Bathroom remodel	\$11,850
Christmas Joy	\$1,890 (thanks!)

Per Capita: \$38.47

You may text your gift to FPJ at (815)205-3044 or go online to use a credit card
You can give by mail, by online giving through our website using the “Give” tab, and through electronic giving.

THE PASTOR'S CORNER... Bo Mircea, Pastor

Sunday, January 17, Worship with us as we seek the presence of God, our Rock, Sustainer, and Redeemer. In these times more than ever, we need to remember that God is a present help in any time of trouble. It's good to worship together and be united in the Holy Spirit even if we are not physically together.

Prayer are much needed. The chaotic events that transpired in Washington, D.C. within and around the Capital building were most unsettling and troubling to see; as were the weeks after the election leading up to that shocking Wednesday. Now there are threats of violence as the nation anticipates the inauguration. Violence is simply an unacceptable means to solve disagreements, estrangement and societal problems in our country, and especially on the part of anyone who is a Christ-Follower. We need to pray for peace and reconciliation where there is deep seated hatred of the other. Please keep our leaders, the American people, and nation in your prayers.

Please pray for the **Interim Senior Pastor Search Committee**, which has been formed. There are six members of the search committee: Don Caisley, Sue Lee, Reed Mott- chair, Barb Rodgers, Jill Strimel, and David Zang- assistant chair. The Ministry Information Form (MIF), which provides a brief job description for an Interim Senior Pastor at our church and lists the leadership competencies expected of an Interim Pastor was completed. The MIF is in essence the churches resume to attract interested candidates. The Search Committee will recommend a candidate to the Session and is working to have that person at First Pres. by May 1, 2021.

Angel House Mission is alive and well, serving Christ in Tanzania and surviving the covid-19 pandemic. We recently received a mailing with new pictures of Rhobi, Bhoki, and Lucia. We will be sharing them with you and you can see how they have grown and are teenagers now. Please keep Angel House and these young women and the children and school in your prayers.

Craig

It's not too late to join in on our Virtual Sunday School !

Miss Kaleigh and Miss Ellen have all sorts of fun activities and lessons available for kids pre-K through 5th grade!

Even if you're not able to follow our lessons we both want you know that we miss everyone, we hope everyone is keeping safe, and we can't wait to see you again!!

Sunday, January 10- "Compassion: Cultivating a Good Heart"

Matthew 20:29-34, Micah 6:6-8, Proverbs 3:3-6, 4:23

When Melissa Tidwell's daughter was in junior high school, she had a social studies unit on the world religions, and for weeks Melissa and her daughter discussed the various beliefs of Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians.

Melissa said, Suddenly I found myself defending the Christian position the central beliefs. The daily ride to school with my daughter became the daily religious debate.

And I began to feel the prickly defensive fear that I had not done an adequate job of presenting the beauty of the Christian story and so was losing my child to the Buddhists.

My daughter was bringing home books by former members of other faiths who had found more peace as Buddhists.

Well I harrumphed, it's easy to be popular when all you talk about is something easy like compassion and identifying with human suffering.

I am surprised here that compassion was somehow missed in the daughters experience of Christianity; that the connection was not made.

How can you out compassion the God of all compassion who so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son.

Scripture doesn't say, God so hated the world, God so loved.

And Look at Jesus, how can you miss compassion? For Jesus choose to come into our world, be born, grow, live, suffer and even die on the cross for all.

Review the ministry of Jesus and over and over again you see compassion

Jesus met a leper and out of compassion touched and healed him. He saw the people who were like sheep without a shepherd and had compassion on them and feed them. He met a widow mourning her only son, his heart went out to her and he raised up her son to live again. And Jesus had compassion on the two blind men we read of a few minutes ago.

The Greek word here for compassion is a significant one.

Splognizomai- it means that from the core of ones heart there is a strong, strong, authentic feeling of mercy, love. It's the unbounded mercy of God at work.

It communicates the willingness to use all means, time, strength, life to help at a crucial moment.

Out of his heart, out of his very character Jesus has compassion on these two blind men. Again I say, Look at Jesus, look at the life, ministry, mission of Jesus how can you miss the compassion?

How do people miss compassion when they look at Christianity?

When people don't see compassion in his followers...

All of our virtual Worship Services are available on our YouTube page and website.