



# e-News

January 27, 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. 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 31- “Purpose: What’s Your Why?” Isaiah 42:1-9

As we have rolled into this new year (which, so far, anyway) feels much like the last year, we have chosen to “Seek Life”. Throughout this sermon series we have been focusing our hearts and energy on moving toward what is good, right and true. We can always choose to turn more toward Christ. We can choose to immerse ourselves in God’s word. We can make decisions that lead us closer to joy and further from despair.

This Sunday we will be thinking about purpose. God has given us a purpose in this world - as a worldwide group of Christians, as a church and as individuals. Jesus has a defined purpose, as did the early disciples. There is purpose because God has a plan. There is a plan for Jesus in the Old Testament book of Isaiah 42:1-9, which we can see carried out in the New Testament. Jesus’ life and ministry fulfilled God’s promise, our life work is used by the Holy Spirit to further God’s plan.

Just as Jesus and the disciples had a purpose, a “why” for their lives, so do we. Some are teachers, some are healers, some are outgoing, some are quiet, some are good with their hands, and some are better suited to books. Yet we all have part to play in this world, and we are equal in God’s sight and love. We can choose to live out our purpose, with eyes fixed on Christ, doing all the good we can with the gifts and skills God gave us. We can choose to seek life.

## OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Prayers for the quick recovery of Reed Mott and Maureen Fumagalli.

Sympathies and Prayers to Kayla Hartman on the passing of her mother Barbara Liles.

## 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.

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.

### January 27, 2021

#### Stewardship Report

<b>2020-2021 Budget</b>	\$734,307
<b>Year to Date Income</b>	\$508,940
<b>Year to Date Expenses</b>	\$513,727

Northern II Food Pantry \$5,346.50 (thanks!)

2020-2021 Bequest/Gift Income Received \$4,200  
Bathroom remodel \$12,000  
Per Capita: \$38.47

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You can give by mail, by online giving through our website using the “Give” tab, and through electronic giving.  
**Thank you for your generosity.**

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

**Sunday, January 31**, The last day of January 2021 is nearly here! What a great day to worship with God's people who love the Lord Jesus Christ. Come and worship with us!

**Watch** for our mailing to you in early February of a **Lenten Season Devotional**. It's an opportunity for us all to examine the same scripture and focus on the Lord Jesus in Lent, as we make our way to Easter. It's called "Places of Passion" and uses passages from the Gospel of Matthew each day. The Season of **Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 17**. That's less than a month away. We are planning for an Online Worship Service for Ash Wednesday. We are hoping things will improve for us to be open for live worship sometime after Ash Wednesday.

**Take the opportunity to thank Tracy Norris for her ministry to First Pres.** Tracy Norris has served, working part-time, as our Church Treasurer for 23 years. She has accepted a full-time position and will continue to work for us until we find a new treasurer. We will miss her very much and want to thank her for all of her faithful and caring service as our treasurer. Included in our recent mailing you received an envelope with a blue return address label with "Thank You Tracy" on it for you to provide a gift and say thanks.

**I hope you saw and read last week's e-mail that focused just on Angel House Mission**, which continues to make a wonderful difference in many children's lives. It was sent out last Thursday. Because of a recent mailing you can see the current pictures of Rhobi, Bhoke, and Lucia. They have grown so much over the years. Angel House Mission is serving Christ in Tanzania and surviving the covid-19 pandemic. Please keep the children, the three young women, and the school in your prayers.

May the Lord bless you to be a blessing!

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!!**

**Last Sundays Sermon- "Seek Life" Series  
Sunday, January 24, "Forgiveness: Peace with the Past"**

Nearly 3 yrs. ago, during my Sabbatical time I visited 8 different churches and it was a great gift & learning experience; there was a lot to see and think about.

At one of the eight churches, during what became an import part of the sermon, one Pastor, in a matter of fact sort of way, said,

"Some of you don't like each other, don't want to be near each other, or work together, but you're here and that's good."

And for those moments there was a deafening silence, you could have heard a pin drop.

Yet, in that silence, you heard the sounds of a demilitarized zone of unforgiveness.

It reminded me of how difficult a thing forgiveness can truly be.

Impetuous Peter, quick to speak voices that very reality.

"Lord, how many times shall I forgive? "

Peter, filled with a generous spirit, says, up to 7 times?

The Rabbi's taught 3 times, but a 4<sup>th</sup> time you did not forgive,

"He who begs forgiveness from his neighbor must not do so more than three times."

"If a man commits an offense once, they forgive him; if he commits an offense a second time, they forgive him; if he commits an offense a third time, they forgive him; the fourth time they do not forgive.

Three times was the standard; Peter was generous, 7 times.

But Jesus says 77 times; there's no reasonable limit to forgiveness. Peter's face falls, and the disciples are stunned.

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray he teaches them the Lord's Prayer. And in that prayer, Jesus prays,

Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Forgive to be forgiven.

Matthew 5:7 Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

James 2:3 "For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy."

Divine and human mercy go hand in hand; inextricably linked.

Forgiveness is the deepest secret that characterizes the love of a follower of Jesus.

There's more on forgiveness in this sermon. Check it out online.

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