



e-News

February 3, 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, February 14 “Reflection: Providence Favors the Prepared Mind”

Romans 12:1-2, Matthew 5:13-16, Mark 12:28-31

Henry Nouwen once taught, “The farther the outward journey takes you, the deeper the inward journey must be.” This Sunday we think about our inward journey; that is our spiritual connection to Christ and our reflection upon the life Jesus calls us to live. Living in the continual awareness of God prepares us for our present and future moments. We might ask how well we prepare for seeking the life that is truly life.

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.

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.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Prayers of healing for Henry Province who is having surgery on Friday.

Kim Belfield would like to thank everyone for their thoughts wishes and gifts for her recent retirement as nursery supervisor.

FOOD PANTRY HELP

We are looking for more people to help keep the Micro Pantry stocked/managed. If you are interested at all please email Sherry Jones at we1plus1@live.com and she will share more info with you! This can be each week, twice a month, once a month, whatever works best to keep up regularly that can be arranged.

Micro Pantry’s are meaningful in our community, and extra important in these days where more are living in financial instability.

February 10, 2021

Stewardship Report

2020-2021 Budget	\$734,307
Year to Date Income	\$541,548
Year to Date Expenses	\$ 531,402
2020-2021 Bequest/Gift Income Received	\$5,200
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.
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THE PASTOR'S CORNER... Craig Herr, Pastor

Sunday, February 14, We will join together in worship to experience God's love, grace, and guidance that we might live to the delight of our great and wonderful God. Our children have been thinking about Jesus' love as we approach this Sunday of February 14th. They have some things to share with us in worship. The insights of children touch our hearts as they see in ways we can too easily forget, as adults.

Lent begins next Wednesday, February 17th, on Ash Wednesday! It's exciting to begin our spiritual journey focusing on the life and ministry of Jesus culminating in grand celebration on Easter. We are planning for an Online Worship Service for Ash Wednesday. If things go well we just may be open for Live Worship again on the first Sunday of Lent, February 21. Watch your E-News to find out.

The mail has been problematic at some of our homes lately. Nevertheless, I hope you receive the **Lenten Season Devotional "Places of the Passion"** later this week or early next week. This is an opportunity for us all to examine the same scriptures in the Gospel of Matthew and focus on the Lord Jesus together. **A Lenten Mailing will be coming to our children as well,** with some really special activities and a devotional booklet, "My Holy Week Journey."

We are raising our **yearly support for Rhobi, Bhoke, and Lucia** at Angel House Mission. We support their journey of faith and education, as well as provide for their housing and food. Each year we send \$1,560 for each one. If you would like to contribute to their support use one of the envelopes you recently received.

A **New Lenten Sermon Series** begins on Ash Wednesday, **"Team Jesus: Who Are You in the Church?"** In this series we will think about all of the various kinds of people we need to be the church today. We need those who depend upon the Good Shepherd. We need people who will provide resources, act on their faith, and show appreciation. The church needs servants who will stand with those in need no matter how difficult the situation. We need members who will teach and mentor others, and more. During the Lenten Season as we anticipate Easter, we will look at those who followed Jesus in the New Testament and see what we can learn about ourselves and about the Church of Jesus Christ. The first Sermon in the series is, "Real Talk: John the Baptist."

Let us live in Hope!

Craig

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

Sunday, February 7 "Hope: Beyond Wishful Thinking" Psalm 130, I Peter 1:3-9

We have places within our lives that we can access. We have places of hope, trust, and faith inside of us, but we have other places as well—places with names like anxiety, discouragement, and fear.

We can choose to lead and live from any one of those places. But sometimes we choose to live in that place called fear.

That's understandable, for we live in a profoundly disruptive and disorienting age.

We stand on ground that is riddled with the fault lines of fear, and move toward others from a place of anxiety instead of hope.

So, what are the fault lines of fear that run through your life?

What does fear look like for you?

We can live in that place named fear.

But today we are going to focus, not on our fears, but on hope.

We can stand on the ground that is stable with the strength of hope.

We move toward others from a place of promise instead of anxiety and fear.

"Hope is about standing on firm ground that is not riddled with the fault lines of fear," writes Parker Palmer.

What does it mean to stand on the firm ground of hope, to choose hope?

Hope is an integral part of our living and not reserved just for dying, the next life. Hope is more than optimism, it allows us to dream, to move forward but not as grinning hapless fools unaware of the risks inherent to everyday life.

Hope does not encourage us to ignore reality.

Ultimately hope is grounded in the experience of Resurrection and in the presence of the risen Lord in the ongoing life of the church.

We face life with the living hope of Jesus Christ within us.

"In his great mercy God has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead..."

Jesus was crucified, dead, buried, but he resurrected and lives again.

That changes everything.

Dead things come back to life.

The Resurrection of Jesus is our foundation for hope.

Christ Jesus is our hope. (I Tim. 1:1).

Christ in us is the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:27)

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