

July 22 & 29, 2018

MARK'S MESSAGE

Blessed to Be A Blessing

The Bible is not an ancient collection of snappy slogans. There are few bumper sticker-length sayings that accurately represent what the Old and New Testaments are all about. But "*Blessed to be a Blessing*" just might be an exception – even though that exact phrase never appears in the Bible.



At the beginning of Genesis 12, God selects Abram – who will become known as Abraham – and declares that he is going to bless him. But there's a second part to this announcement: Abraham's blessing is not for himself alone. His call is to share God's blessing with the rest of the world.

Abraham was not to be accumulating God's best stuff and holding onto it for his own purposes. But Abraham's life looked like this: (A) I am blessed (B) to be a blessing. It can truthfully be said that the Bible is a call to action concerning that simple (A) + (B) formula. So how do people respond to that call? In one of four probable ways.

First, there is the response of the *Cynic*. According to the cynical person, neither (A) nor (B) of the Bible's blessing formula is true. There is no blessing because there is no God, or at least a God we can trust. Therefore attempting to bless others is a monumental waste of time.

Second, there is the *Idealist*. Idealistic people believe that statement (B) – being a blessing to other people – stands alone. However, history has demonstrated that even the best efforts of idealists are often disastrous. When statement (A) is left out of the equation – when we attempt to serve others from spiritual emptiness instead of spiritual fullness – we almost always do damage to others and to ourselves.

The third response is that of the *Contented Consumer*. Statement (A) stands by itself. I was born into this world to enjoy the blessings of God. It's all about me. The tragedy of all too many individuals, families, faith communities, and nations is that they fail to cultivate a vision larger than self-maintenance.

The only option that is faithful to the biblical formula is the fourth one. Our experience of (A) – being blessed by God – should lead us to the fullest possible expression of (B) – offering our lives as a blessing for other people.

It's incredible that God shares His treasures with us. But's there something even better than that. God's treasures have come to us because they are on their way to someone else.

In Christ,

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LINCOLN WORK DAY

First Presbyterian Church — Lincoln Work Day:

Sunday, August 12, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

Join us to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the community.

We will have worship in the chapel at 8:15 a.m., but there will be no W@9 or 10:30 a.m. worship that day.



SESSION SNIPPET

After taking a June hiatus, the Session met for a marathon meeting on Monday, July 16. The Vacation Bible School had the first successful meeting last week with 11 children attending. It will be on consecutive Wednesdays, ending on August 8. Plans are being formulated for a new approach to mid-week activities for grade schoolers this fall. Logos will be replaced by Power Club. Many adults have already volunteered to assist, but more are needed. Contact Mimi Meredith or Julie Kimmel if you are interested.

Finances continue to be at an acceptable level for summer, which is generally a slower time for income. Already planning for 2019, the Stewardship schedule is in place with a dinner on Tuesday, October 2 and Commitment Sunday on October 21.

There was considerable discussion on several issues which are facing our congregation. The HVAC system is aging and will need to be updated. The challenge of keeping our worshipers safe and comfortable through possible security changes is also a significant concern. If you wish to share your thoughts on this (or any other) topic, please visit with any elder or Pastor Mark.

KEEP IN PRAYER

For those in the hospital or hurting

- Doxie Keller and family, on the death of Les Keller

For all FPC shut-ins

For Chase Community Church, Chase (7/22/18)

For First Presbyterian Church, Hutchinson (7/29/18)

BIRTHDAYS

22	Olivia McLain	29	Chris Barnes
23	Bonnie Baker	29	Ted Ronen
23	Wayne Unruh	29	Joyce Sunner
25	Greg Meredith	31	Maggie Starr
26	Tonya Cline	1	Jay Lane
26	Doxie Keller	1	Steve Mills
28	Marla Eriksen	2	Graham Fluck
28	Kathleen Fee	2	Tim Lackey
28	Sylvia Quint	4	Al Albright
28	Jackson Swearer	4	Paul Dillon



I hope that you are all having a great July! Well for me, this month is such a great time with VBS at church and of course the Ulster Project teens have invaded Hutchinson once again. As President of the Project I am thrilled to have such an army of supporters to make this amazing project happen. This truly is a program that changes lives, shapes thinking and equips young people with the skills and confidence to be leaders in their schools and communities here in America as well as in Northern Ireland.

This year we have the biggest group of teens ever to visit Hutchinson and the largest group across all the cities hosting the Ulster Project. 21 teens and 4 counselors have joined with 14 teens and 2 counselors from Hutchinson to make up this huge group of 41 people. People will ask me how do they know which ones are from Portadown and I tell them look for the ones who are pure white or have a red glow and then listen for the accent. This has been a great group to work with and you have been able to read about them in The Hutchinson News and on Facebook. If you like the Facebook page of Ulster Project of Greater Hutchinson and Portadown you will find updates and pictures of their month of adventure.

Each Friday the group arrives at FPC for their Time of Discovery Sessions. They start at 9am and go through till 2pm and lunch is provided by different people and churches. These sessions are the anchor of the Ulster Project. Sure we are all about fun experiences at the Lake, the rodeo, dive-in movie at Prairie Dunes, mud volleyball, dances, The Alley, All Star Sports and too many other things to list. We also involve them in community projects with Tech, Boys & Girls Club, Reins of Hope, Circles of Hope as well as feeding the homeless and giving them survival packs. But the learning outcomes from Time of Discovery opens their minds to the world around them and lets them see they have a voice and influence on their world. We are equipping young leaders to help make our world a better place.

This month in Hutchinson is the culmination of six months work in Portadown and Hutchinson with these young people. It is an experience that takes root in their hearts and stays with them for a lifetime. Please pray for this month and for this group of young people who are having the time of their lives but also discovering that they matter, they can make a difference, they can be the peacemakers and the leaders who can make our world better as they speak out on racism, poverty, injustice, religious division and so much more. There is hope and it is found in the lives of young people who say enough is enough.

SHIPWRECKED VBS

Our Shipwrecked VBS got off to a good start last Wednesday. It was fun, we played games, sang really cool songs, heard stories and made slime with jewels, coins and glitter through it. But the important lesson we learned was that Jesus never leaves us and he is always there to rescue us.

VBS is on each Wednesday July 18, 25, August 1 and 8 from 4pm to 6pm. Please encourage any kids you know from K through 6th grade to join us each week.



*We make a living by what we get;
we make a life by what we give.*

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Sunday Morning Adult Education Opportunities — 9:30-10:15 a.m.

Come and join us for "*The Wired Word*" in the Cornerstone Room

"*Witnesses of the Faith*", Facilitated by Pastor Mark Miller, Large Conference Room

Ephesians Study

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, July 24, at 1:30 p.m. at David & Carol Weidensaul's house. We will continue our study of Ephesians with Chapters 4 and 5. All are welcome.

CHURCH OFFICE NOTES

***Chimes* Note**

Deadline for next issue of *Chimes* will be **10:00 a.m. Monday, July 30**, for the issue covering August 5-18.

**Chancel Flower Calendar**

August 5, 19, September 9, 16, 30 and October 7 are open on the Chancel Flower Calendar. If you would like to provide flowers for worship one of these days, please contact Janice in the church office: janice@fpchutch.org or 665-5549 (afternoons) by the preceding Monday.

PARISH PERSONALS

- Our sincere sympathy is extended to Doxie Keller and family on the June 21 death of Les Keller.
- My thanks to deacons Margie Miller Dick and Martin Miller for bringing a beautiful bouquet of yellow roses, mums and hydrangea given in memory of Roonie Sellers. Bless the deacons for all the good work they do. — Margaret Parks
- Dear Church Family,
I just want to say a thank you for the pretty flowers that I received after my car accident. They were very bright and cheerful. They help cheer me up. — Randy K. Wood
- Matthew 25:40 "*The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'*" (NIV). God's love was shared by FPC at the Soup Kitchen on Thursday, June 21. Ninety-two meals were served and 82 were delivered, costing \$220.43. Cooks were Jim Cunday, Denise Hallman, Martin Miller and Kirk Johnson. Servers were Donna Kelly, Julia and Winston Johnson and David Weidensaul. Deliverers were Anne Sellers, Kriss Fee, Martin Miller and Patty Crews. Thank you so much! Serving with you, Melody Cole



The 223rd General Assembly

St. Louis, MO, June 16-23, 2018

Reflections by Pastor Mark Miller

I was honored to serve our Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) denomination as a commissioner to the 223rd General Assembly held at the America's Center in downtown St. Louis, just a few blocks north of the Gateway Arch. Attending the General Assembly as a commissioner has always been on my bucket list. Before arriving in St. Louis I read and studied over 500 two-sided pages of GA reports, recommendations and overtures. Attending as a commissioner was a great experience.

More than 2,300 participants attended the General Assembly meeting including 538 voting commissions (269 teaching elders and 269 ruling elders elected by 170 presbyteries), as well as young adults, theological students, missionary advisory delegates, ecumenical advisory delegates, corresponding members and many others.

Brass and organ, sounds from a flute and voices of a mass choir of more than 200 St. Louis area Presbyterians blended together at the opening worship service on Saturday morning. That evening Ruling Elder Vilmarie Cintron-Olivieri from First Spanish Presbyterian Church in Miami, FL and the Rev. Cindy Kohlmann, serving as Resource Presbyter for the presbyteries of Boston and Northern New England were elected as new GA co-moderators.

On Sunday morning, commissioners attended one of 32 St. Louis area Presbyterian churches. I worshiped at New Hope Presbyterian Church in St. Charles, MO. The congregation is only 15 years old. During Sunday afternoon the commissioners heard reports from the Vision Team, The Way Forward Commission and the All-Agency Review Committee. A new denomination vision statement was adopted: *"God calls the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be Prayerful, Courageous, United, Serving, Alive."* (P.C.U.S.A.) The six agencies of the Presbyterian Church (USA) were reviewed and it was recommended that adaptive changes were needed so congregations, presbyteries, and synods can better do the work they've been called to do making the national church more nimble and responsive to the needs and concerns of the world.

I was appointed to one of the 14 assembly committees: Peacemaking, Immigration and International Issues (less the Middle East). The committee began its work Sunday evening. Throughout the 2½ days the committee met we focused on the difficult situations in Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, South Sudan, the Korean peninsula, Yemen, Madagascar, Syria, Nicaragua and Puerto Rico, as well as seeking God's peace through nuclear disarmament and families not being separated at our southern borders, concerns about gun violence and much more.

The General Assembly began its plenary work Wednesday morning by approving a consent agenda of some 80 actions by the unanimous vote of assembly committees. However, nearly 100 items were presented, discussed, amended and voted on the floor of the General Assembly over the next 3½ days.

We got a break Thursday evening as jazz saxophonist Kirk Whilom, who toured with Whitney Houston and other artists, shared a concert for the GA participants. We needed that break because Friday's meeting beginning at 8:30 a.m. did not end until 12:15 a.m. Saturday morning. Thank goodness the voting was done electronically instead of paper voting or the meetings would have taken much longer.

Saturday morning the General Assembly affirmed a \$1.25 increase in the GA portion of per capita for 2019 and no per capita increase for 2020. This increase was significantly lower than the projected increase of \$3.00 over the next two years.

For more information, a three-page written report is available in the church offices.

CALENDAR — JULY 22 – AUGUST 5

Sunday, July 22, 2018

DEACON OF THE WEEK: Anne Sellers, 663-4998
*Preacher Mark Miller (8:15 & 10:30): Psalm 116:12-14;
 Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 5:8-10*
Preacher Keith Neill (9:00): 2 Peter 1:10

8:15 am Worship service Chapel
 8:45-10:15 ReFresh Café open Refresh Café
 9:00 am Worship service/Kidz Church Sanctuary
 9:30/9:45 Adult Christian Education
 10:30 am Worship service Sanctuary
 11:30 am Fellowship time Parlor

Monday, July 23

8:30 am Exercise class Kids' Cave
 11:00 am Poverty Simulation Large Conf Room

Tuesday, July 24

1:30 pm Bible study Weidensaul's house

Wednesday, July 25

8:30 am Exercise class Kids' Cave
 9:00 am Staff meeting Conference Room
 4:00 pm VBS — Shipwrecked
 7:00 pm Financial Peace University Lg Conf Rm

Thursday, July 26

7:00 am Men's Bible study Parlor

Friday, July 27

9:00 am Walk-a-mile class Kids' Cave
 9:00 am Ulster Project Basement, Calvin Hall

Sunday, July 29

DEACON OF THE WEEK: Kriss Fee, 727-2271
Preacher Keith Neill (8:15, 9:00 & 10:30): John 13:34-35
 8:15 am Worship service Chapel
 8:45-10:15 ReRefresh Café open Refresh Café
 9:00 am Worship service/Kidz Church Sanctuary
 9:30/9:45 Adult Christian Education
 10:30 am Worship service Sanctuary
 11:30 am Fellowship time Parlor

Monday, July 30

8:30 am Exercise class Kids' Cave

Wednesday, August 1

8:30 am Exercise class Kids' Cave
 9:00 am Staff meeting Conference Room
 4:00 pm VBS — Shipwrecked
 7:00 pm Financial Peace University Lg Conf Rm

Thursday, August 2

7:00 am Men's Bible study Parlor
 12:00 pm Congregational Connections Conf Rm

Friday, August 3

9:00 am Walk-a-mile class Kids' Cave

Sunday, August 5

DEACON OF THE WEEK: Heidi Schultz, 669-7956
*Preacher Mark Miller (8:15 & 10:30): Proverbs 25:28;
 Galatians 5:22-23; 2 Timothy 3:1-5*
Preacher Keith Neill (9:00): Acts 20:35
 8:15 am Worship service Chapel
 8:45-10:15 ReRefresh Café open Refresh Café
 9:00 am Worship service/Kidz Church Sanctuary
 9:30/9:45 Adult Christian Education
 10:30 am Worship service Sanctuary
 11:30 am Fellowship time Parlor

CARE PORTAL



Care Portal has had a little "mid-summer" slow-down, but this week we answered a need for two more mattresses and springs for a single mother with three children. We worked with Crestview Bible Church who provided the toddler bed for the youngest child, and we also bought bedding for all three new beds.

St. Francis Family Services is asking churches to commit to provide meals for their workers and children who are waiting for emergency placement on an overnight basis. This would be for 12-15 adults and children on a Monday or Thursday. FPC has done it one time last month. Call Marj Johnson (663-5697) if you are interested in helping.



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God gave you a gift
of 86,400 seconds
today. Have you
used one to say
"thank you?"