

The Pipe Line

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October 28, 2020

FROM THE PASTOR

Some of my friends and I had a really good high school teacher for four years in a row, and he taught us a lot and was funny and interesting. We knew him long enough to know and expect a couple of rants he would repeat every once in a while.

He would talk about how we weren't farmers like his parents had been. "You people are one generation removed from the soil and you'd starve to death if Harris Teeter went out of business." I don't think there are any Harris Teeter stores in West Virginia, but it's a pretty big grocery chain in North Carolina and some other states and the District of Columbia. Jennifer and I lived in Washington for a while and our neighborhood had a two-story Harris Teeter and you'd push your grocery cart onto an elevator to ride from one floor to another. I remember calling Mom and Dad and telling them about the two-story Harris Teeter like it was one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Imagine a two-story Kroger, and your teacher saying, "You people are one generation removed from the soil and you'd starve to death if Kroger went out of business."

The other rant he'd get on would be when final exams were rolling around and people were worried about them and wanting to get them over with and behind us. He would tell us, "You people are wishing your lives away." We were 14 and 15 and 16 and 17. I have a leaf blower older than that now.

We thought of our teacher fondly and we smiled when he would get on one of his rants. We may think of a rant as a negative thing, but it isn't necessarily negative. The definition of a rant is to talk in a noisy or excited or declamatory manner. I had to look up "declamatory," and it means "expressing something with strong feeling, especially in a loud voice or with forceful language."

I might borrow the last rant from my teacher, and adapt it as an encouragement to say with strong feeling, if not a loud voice, "Don't wish your life away."

2020 has been a bad year for many people. We have been faced with scarcity, but Kroger and other stores were re-supplied and most of the shortages passed relatively quickly. We've had to do simple things like wear masks and maintain a bit of distance to try to stop an infection from spreading. We've had to do very difficult things like say goodbye to loved ones in this congregation, not because of the Covid 19 pandemic, but because of the reality of being human with limited health and lifespans. Those who have lost loved ones know all too well the frailty and fragility of life. This weekend is All Saints Sunday and we'll remember those congregation members and friends of the congregation who have passed away this past year.

I say all this to encourage you to not grow weary in these times, to not wish your life away that all would be behind us, but to honor those who have gone before us by meeting your challenges in these days with grace and strength and courage.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and

the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of God. Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart... Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed." (Hebrews 12:1-3,12)

There will come a time that things will be more normal, and we'll look back at the things we said and did during these trying days. How did you respond when you were faced with a great crisis of our generations? Did you pull your weight in doing the things that had to be done? Did you give up and wish it over? Did you help someone?

As we enter a season of Thanksgiving and then Advent and Christmas, things won't be as we would like them to be. Be grateful for your blessings. We are bountifully blessed. Don't wish your life away.

I remember when Dad was in the last months of his life, and he came to stay with Jennifer and me. He couldn't walk and someone always had to be with him. We were trying to keep him safe and well until he could have surgery he needed. It was exhausting. But in the trials of that were also great joys and happiness that I look back on fondly: the times we took him for pancakes at the little restaurant in the laurels beside the Blue Ridge Parkway, the sports we would watch on TV or the evenings we sat talking. I wish that he was still here so that we could become tired in helping him. Did I want the trials and difficulties to be over? Yes. Would I like those days back? Yes. Am I grateful? Yes. Have I learned to live in the now and to always treasure these days no matter what, to never be discouraged, to run with perseverance the race set before me? I'm working on it.



All Saints Day will be this **Sunday, November 1st**. Please join us virtually at our 11 a.m. worship service as we celebrate the lives of our members and friends of the church who have passed away during the year. We will celebrate communion during the service also.



OFFICER ELECTIONS

Work is still being done on the upcoming Elections. The final slate of candidates will be sent to you by letter. The details for voting will be in the letter.



PER CAPITA

In 2020, our Presbytery of WV Per Capita rate is **\$30.00 per (active, confirmed) member.**

While the cost for each of us individually is minimal, the total impact on the church budget is substantial. **If you feel you can assist with this expense for the current year,** please make your checks payable to Beckley Presbyterian Church, with the notation, "Per Capita," on the memo line. Contributions can be received at any time during the year.

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED

MEMORIAL GIFT FUND

We are grateful for the following Memorial Gifts:

--In Memory of **Leslie Cox:** by Ms. Betsy Gilmer

--In Memory of **Cheryl McGill:** by Ms. Ann Harkins, Ms. Betsy Gilmer, Mr. & Mrs. Donald Goodson

--In Memory of **Lannie Gillenwater:** by Ms. Ann Harkins, Mr. James Songer



Stewardship Sunday will be **Sunday, November 8th.** If you need a card contact the office and one will be mailed to you. You can return your card to the Church at the address listed below:

203 S. Kanawha St.
Beckley, WV 25801



The Session met this week and voted unanimously to continue our online worship through November. Please continue to participate in our worship on Facebook live at 11 a.m. Sundays. The worship service will then be posted to Facebook and to YouTube. You can also hear it on the radio at 7 p.m. Sundays on WJLS 99.5 FM.

We will also continue to post Time with Children and other videos throughout the week. Thank you to all who contribute your time and talents to make it possible to continue our worship and teachings during this time.

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|----|--------------------|----|---------------|
| 01 | Lena S. Cox | 11 | Will Stamper |
| 02 | Drema Davis | 19 | Jane Sutphin |
| 04 | Jennifer Mitchell | 21 | Brett Sutphin |
| 06 | Aaron Aubrey | 22 | Jody Clowers |
| 06 | Edgar E. Bibb, III | 23 | Kay Hoover |
| 06 | Richard Bland, II | 23 | Makayla Wykle |
| 07 | John Walker | 24 | Luke Feldhake |
| 09 | Lea Bridi | 27 | Marie Lewis |

LECTIONARY READINGS

November 1

All Saints Day

Rev. 7:9-17;
Ps 34:1-10, 22;
1 John 3:1-3;
Matt. 5:1-12

November 8

Josh. 24:1-3a, 14-25;
Ps. 78:1-7;
1 Thess. 4:13-18;
Matt 25:1-13

November 15

Judges 4:1-7; Ps. 123; 1

Thess. 5:1-11;

Matt. 25:14-30

November 22

Christ the King

Ezek. 34:11-16, 20-24;
Ps. 100;

Eph. 1:15-23;

Matt 25:31-46

November 29

Isa. 64:1-9;
Ps. 80:1-7, 17-19;
1 Cor. 1:3-9;
Mark 13:24-37

NURTURING FAITH IDEAS

November 1: Read Matthew 5:1-12 All Saints Day In Matthew 5:1-12, Jesus teaches his disciples the joyous thrill and radiant gladness of the Christian life described in the Beatitudes. On this All Saints Day, remember saints you have known who have faithfully served the Lord as Christians.

November 8: Read Psalm 78:1-7 Psalm 78 instructs us to "tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done." Can you remember stories your parents or grandparents told you about how God was active in their lives? Will you pass these stories on to future generations?

November 15: Read Matthew 25:14-30 The Parable of the Talents teaches us to use our God-given gifts, be they little or great, in service to God. What are your gifts, and how can you use them in your church and to help others?



November 22: Read Matthew 25:31-46 Christ the King Sunday is celebrated on the last Sunday of ordinary time, the Sunday before Advent. Read Matthew 25:31-46, and reflect on Jesus's commission to help others with a loving heart. Think of ways you or your church can show love by feeding, clothing, visiting and welcoming God's children.

November 29: Read First Sunday of Advent "Advent" means "coming" or "arrival." During the season of Advent, we celebrate Christ's coming into the world and watch with expectant hope for his coming again. As we journey through Advent, remember God's promises of "hope, peace, joy, and love," and think of ways you will keep Christ as the center of your Christmas preparations.