

The Pipe Line

Beckley Presbyterian Church
203 S Kanawha Street
Beckley, WV 25801
304-252-6289

Email: office@beckleypres.org
Website: beckleypres.org
www.facebook.com/BPC.PCUSA.WV



August 25, 2021

FROM THE PASTOR

A couple of months ago, I decided I was going to stop talking about the COVID-19 pandemic, as things seemed to be easing back into normal. Then, Wham-O! I got sick with COVID on my first day of vacation a couple of weeks ago. I asked Jennifer to rate which was the worst vacation: the time we went to Atlanta and the car broke down on the highway on the Fourth of July and we couldn't get a tow truck or the time we planned to visit the Shenandoah Valley and instead wound up in quarantine at home with a deadly illness. She said the narrow decision on worst vacation ever went to our COVID-19 quarantine.

But thankfully, I wasn't terribly sick – I've certainly been sicker – and I keep comparing it to a sinus infection. I'm well aware that the consequences have been terrible for so many: more than 4.3 million have died of COVID-19 worldwide, including more than 622,000 in the United States. Among those who died was the brother of a friend in North Carolina. He hadn't been vaccinated and wound up in the hospital on a ventilator. After he died, his family went on television to plead with people to get vaccinated and wear masks. I was vaccinated and wore my mask, and still got it. It bothered me that I had been so careful so long and still got sick, but when Brian, from the Raleigh County Health Department, called to document my case, he told me that the intent of the vaccine is to reduce the seriousness of the illness and to reduce hospitalizations. From that viewpoint, it worked. My biggest fear through the pandemic has not been that I would get sick, but rather that I might pass it along to someone at the church, and so I was glad this happened on my vacation, and I had the kindness you extended me to be able to stay away and not worry during my quarantine. I also very much appreciate all the well wishes and offers of help. Thank you.

If the length of the pandemic, and the fact it seemed to have abated only to roar back again, has gotten you discouraged, take heart. We know that God loves us in the midst of all that happens, and God gives us strength to meet our challenges.

I've read a couple of things that I've thought about these last weeks.

One article is from General Presbyter Ed Thompson, who wrote recently to encourage pastors and elders, but I'd extend the thought to everyone:

"My advice: Be gentle with yourself. We're all tired. A stressful presidential election would have been enough to deal with. Figuring out how to make worship services available online would have been enough to deal with. Being quarantined and bombarded with conflicting advice about a potentially fatal disease would have been enough to deal with. Dealing with the financial uncertainty caused by a pandemic would have been enough to deal with. We've had to face all of that and more.

"So make sure you get enough sleep. Take a nap occasionally. Get outside. Take a walk in the woods, in a park, in your neighborhood, or along the river. Consider a sabbatical from the news. Eat more fresh fruits and vegetables. Enjoy some ice cream... I wish I knew when this was all going to be over, when the coronavirus will be no more of a threat than the flu. At this point, though, it looks like the pandemic is going to last for the foreseeable future. So pray for patience, wisdom, and strength. Look around for signs of hope and grace. Find joy in beauty and laughter. And again, be gentle with yourself. We're in this for the long run, and we're in this together."

I also stumbled across a letter from a pastor to his congregation in North Carolina. I don't know the pastor and don't know what is going on in the church, but it made me think there must be some difficulty and tension there:

"I have said throughout the pandemic to myself and to some of you, 'None of us are at our best' This has been my way of encouraging all of us to acknowledge that we have lived and are living under the loneliness of isolation, the stress of change, the pain of illness, and the sting of grief. 'None of us are at our best' for me hasn't been an excuse for me or others but an invitation to compassion, kindness and forgiveness towards everyone.

"As life opens back up, we are each surveying our lives, our community, and our church. We are trying to get a hold of what has changed and what has stayed the same. This gives us new insights into the places that people have stepped on our toes or sinned against us. We are seeing where we and others haven't been at our best."

He goes on to ask for forgiveness. Again, I don't know the circumstances.

But I would embrace both thoughts of these two Christian leaders. Let's try to enjoy life as best we can. Let's not deny isolation and stress, but use our sense of upheaval and anxiety to be even more compassionate, to be even more kind, and to be even more forgiving to everyone. Be kind to yourself. God has a plan and purpose for your life, and for this church.

I wish I could have said it as well as did the Apostle Paul, "I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ."

(Philippians 1:3-6)

God bless you!
Monte



SESSION MEETING

The Session is continuing to monitor the situation regarding the COVID-19 cases in the local community. Worship will continue in person for now, and the Session will meet if needed. Get the vaccine, wear your mask and practice social distancing.



MEMORIAL GIFT FUND

We are grateful for the following Memorial Gifts

--In Memory of Pamela Keyser: by Ms. Glenna J. Ferguson, Mr. & Mrs. Jay P. Scherer
in loving memory

--In Memory of William Hartling: by Mr. & Mrs. Jay P. Scherer, Mr. & Mrs. John Thomas

--In Memory of Johnny Walker: by Ms. Glenna J. Ferguson, Mr. & Mrs. Jay P. Scherer

--In Memory of Albert "Mac" Tieche: by Mr. & Mrs. Jay P. Scherer



Ladies Luncheon

The ladies of the church are having a luncheon at The Black Knight on **Thursday, September 9th at 10:30 a.m.** They will have a bible study and lunch following. Please call the church by September 6th, if you wish to attend. We hope to see you there.



PER CAPITA

In 2021, our Presbytery of WV Per Capita rate is \$30.00 per active, confirmed member. This is a set amount of money per member that Presbyterians pay to share the costs associated with operating, coordinating and ecclesiastical functions of our General Assembly, Presbyteries, and Synods.

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 the expenses 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

Beckley Presbyterian Church
203 South Kanawha Street
Beckley, WV 25801



Return Service Requested

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Beckley, WV
Permit No. 114



SEPTEMBER

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 01 Pam Lawrence | 11 Paulette Buzbee |
| 02 Danielle Williams | 20 Nancy Cameron |
| 03 Marian Hopkins | 23 Julienne Smith |
| 04 Robert T. Gardner | 25 Michael Hastings |
| 06 Ray Richmond | 26 Ryan Wilson |
| 11 Barbara Daniel | 29 Nancy Estep |

LECTIONARY READINGS

September 5

Prov. 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23
and Ps. 125
Isa. 35:4-7a and Ps. 146;
James 2:1-10(11-13) 14-17;
Mark 7:24-37

September 19

Prov. 31:10-31 and Ps. 1;
Jer. 11:18-20 and Ps. 54;
James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a;
Mark 9:30-37

September 12

Prov. 1:20-33 and Ps. 19;
Isa 50:4-9a and
Ps. 116:1-9;
James 3:1-12;
Mark 8:27-38

September 26

Esth. 7:1-6, 9-10:9:20-22
and Ps. 124;
Num. 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29
and Ps. 19:7-14;
James 5:13-20;
Mark 9:38-50

NURTURING FAITH IDEAS

September 5 – Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost/Proper 18: Read James 2:1-10 When we treat people based upon their appearance or how much wealth they have, we fail to follow the command to love our neighbor as ourselves. Where do you do this in your life? What action(s) can you take to remedy this situation?

September 12 – Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost/Proper 19: Psalm 115: 1-9 The psalmist gives thanksgiving for his/her recovery from illness after describing his/her supplications to God. How often do we receive the benefits of prayer, yet forget to give thanks in return? Begin or continue a practice of thanksgiving for prayers answered, whether small or large.



September 19 – Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost/Proper 20: James 3: 13 – 4: 3 James tells us when good works are done with wisdom and not selfish ambition, we will sow a harvest of righteousness and peace. Conflicts and disputes arise when we want it all 6 our own way. What can you do to become more gentle, honest, and merciful in a world filled with conflict?

September 26 – Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost/Proper 21: Read Mark 9:42-50 Mark warns us of all the ways we are tempted to sin or cause others to stumble due to our actions. What do you think it means when he says, "Have salt in yourselves?" How can that give you peace with one another?