



UPPER PATH VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

February 2020 Newsletter

Dear Covenant Partners, Active Supporters, and Friends,

Eighty-five. Yep. Eighty-five paperback Daily Chronological Bibles (New Living Translation) are in the hands of people in our congregation so far this year. I just ordered 10 more. There are several others who are using the E-book version, and there are others who are following along in their own Bibles using the printed daily reading plan. I am so grateful to God for stirring up within us a hunger to know Him and to know His Word. His Word is a lamp to our feet and a light on our path! Psalm 119:105

Sometime in the next several months we will have a visit from some folks in our presbytery – Heritage Presbytery. The purpose of the visit is to talk to me and to our elders about what steps we are taking to flourish in our mission of being and making disciples of Jesus. I think we already have our answer. We are committing to reading God's Word in a new way in 2020, trusting that as we do, God will show us what the flourishing next step will be. As a member of the MPT (Ministry Partnership Team) for our presbytery, I will have the opportunity to visit several other churches to come alongside them as they seek their own answer to the same question. "What is your flourishing next step?" I am looking forward to listening to and learning from what God is doing in our sister congregations in ECO.

And speaking of ECO, on Saturday April 25th, we will be the host location for a presbytery meeting. We will need many helpers to welcome our brothers and sisters from Delaware, New Jersey, and the lower portions of PA into our church building for worship, conversation, learning, lunch, and fellowship for the day. Please mark that date on your calendar as a day to serve others in Jesus' name! Just think, it will be Spring by then!

Please also mark on your calendar the 23rd of February as the date for our annual congregational meeting and meal after the 11 a.m. worship. As part of our meeting we will elect the nominating committee for 2020 and receive the 2019 Annual Report. Please pray for your staff as we compile this important report. I always pray that the annual report would be an awe-inspiring window into what God has done in and through his people in the year just past. I pray that it pushes us to press on! I pray that it serves as an exciting introduction and invitation to those not connected to a church family. Too soon we forget what God has done. The annual reports help us remember and give thanks and praise to God!

Thank you all for being such a great, lively, loving, prayerful, committed, and fun congregation to pastor. Thank you for your generosity to John and to me at Christmastime. The gift that you gave to us was used to purchase a new mattress. We've been sleeping on it for about a week and already some of our aches and pains are diminishing! So, when I'm falling asleep and when I wake up, I'm thanking God for all of you! May God continue to draw us closer to hear his words of love and mercy as we read his Word and do His will.

With love & gratitude, Rev. Meagan

February Celebrations!

Please pray a blessing over each person as their special day arrives!



Birthdays

Tammy Adams	February 1
Jama Hampson, Kay Perry	February 2
Kendyl Horn	February 3
John Ciarrocca	February 4
Kelly Hart	February 6
Lori Showers	February 7
Bob Myers	February 8
Jacki Cook, Travis Seibert	February 14
Aaron Rupert, Steve Shoop	February 16
Tom Gardner	February 17
Mark Hart	February 18
Gene Carbaugh, Tripp Carbaugh	February 20
Noah Naugle, Bob McClure	February 22
McKenzie Gamble	February 23
Bob Baker, Leslie Baker	February 24
Monique Parsons, Joan Shoop	February 24
Ben Walters, Butch Flood	February 24
Wanda Ruby	February 25
Jack Beaumont	February 26
Marlene Shearer	February 27
Katie Waite, Jackie Best	February 28
Lori Greenland	February 28

Anniversaries

Hubert & Phyllis Burns	February 3 (70!)
Bill & Jen Harris	February 20
Mark & Marlene Shearer	February 24
Bill & Barbara Baker	February 25

If your birthday or anniversary wasn't listed or was listed incorrectly, please let Rev. Meagan or Laurie Parsons know!

School Good News Club Bible Release Update

John & Ruth Mitchell

Did you pick up a prayer card on the tables at the entrances to the Sanctuary? Each prayer card lists the first name of a student from FM Elementary along with the first names of Good News Clubs teachers, helpers, bus driver, and /or teacher from the school. Prayer is such an important part of our ministry. We have been blessed for over 45 years to share the

Good News with children in the valley through CEF, and it is all made possible through time spent in prayer. Please pick up a card and join us in prayer!

Path Valley Shoebox Project News

Wow! It's hard to believe but it is time to start collecting items for another year of Shoebox packing! But first we have news to celebrate. In 2019 – the Path Valley Shoebox Project packed, prayed and sent out an amazing 4,808 shoeboxes, and when the numbers were in, the final tally for all of Path Valley is 5,218! And worldwide 10,569,405 shoeboxes were packed! Each of these numbers represents a child that will now be able to hear the Good News – possibly for the first time ever! Isn't God amazing! Thank you all for your support of this ministry. What a privilege we have on this side of the box to share a little bit of what we have, letting a child know that someone far away cares about them. And so, we have a suggestion for you. This year as you do your routine shopping – would you consider purchasing an item for in your shoebox or for the shoebox project? Items such as soap, toothbrush, washcloth, pencils, paper, erasers, sharpeners, markers, glue sticks, socks, hat, stuffed animal, small toys... the list goes on and on are always needed. The shoebox project is always in need of snack bags, sandwich bags, quart storage bags and contact paper. If you are a clearance sale shopper – post-holidays are an excellent time to pick up items. We are excited to see where the Lord takes us on this journey – and we are excited to have you join us on this adventure!

Words to Ponder with Dr. Bonnie Cornelious

I believe we can acknowledge that we are oftentimes our own worst enemies. We think and believe negative thoughts about ourselves, and those thoughts can hinder us from becoming who God wants us to be. We are going to look at four areas in which we send ourselves unhealthy messages, how to change those messages with “self-talk,” but, more importantly, what God says about the four areas.

Four of the buzz words in psychology today – both researched concepts and what I call “Cosmopolitan magazine” worldly opinions – are self-worth, self-esteem, self-acceptance, and self-confidence. None of these terms is specifically mentioned in scripture using these words but all are addressed.

Self-worth:

Message to self: No one cares about me. I don't have friends because I'm so unlovable. Everybody I know

has more Facebook friends than I do and they're having fun and have perfect lives.

Healthy message to self: I know there are people who care about me. I need to spend more time with them than try to be something I'm not and don't want to be. I know who God calls me to be.

God's message: Psalm 139:14 "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."

Self-esteem:

Message to self: I'll never amount to anything. I've made some horrible choices that I can never live down. **OR** There is no job too big or too small for me. I'm highly educated and very capable.

Healthy message to self: I have made some poor choices and have repented. I do have skills and need to apply them to God's work for me. **OR** I can do some things well but whatever I do needs to be dedicated to God and his work.

God's message: 2 Timothy 3:16-17 "All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Self-acceptance:

Message to self: I look at the way others dress, talk, act to try to copy them so I'll feel and look better then I'll be cool and like myself.

Healthy message to self: I know God looks at my heart, not my appearance. I trust him.

God's message: Psalm 16:2 "I said to the Lord. 'You are my Lord; apart from you, I have no good thing.'"

Self-confidence:

Message to self: I can't do that. I'm afraid even to try something like that.

Healthy message to self: I'm going to pray about it, and, if God says go ahead, I'm going to do it with his help.

God's message: Jeremiah 17:7 "But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him."

Self-talk is healthy to recognize and address negativity. God talk heals our spirits and makes us whole.

Heavenly Father, the flaw in these terms and in our human approach is that too often the first word is "self" when the first word should always be your holy name. Please help me to see areas of improvement but to evaluate the need and the methods in light of your words. I thank you for always keeping your covenants and promises, for the gift of Jesus Christ and the salvation His death brought, and for the Holy Spirit who lives inside of me. Amen

Children, Youth, & Family Ministry

The first month of 2020 is coming to a close and planning for the upcoming year is in full swing. I am excited to see where God leads us in the rest of 2020! At the beginning of January, I wrote down three main goals: 1) Create consistent children's ministry and youth ministry teams, 2) partner more consistently with parents (meetings, updates, resources, etc.), and 3) continue family events to connect and build fellowship with one another. Thus far meetings and fellowship opportunities are scheduled to take the first steps in accomplishing these goals for the year.

One step to move towards the first goal is the renaming and revamping of the Christian education committee. In previous years, we have combined adult and children education into one committee. This year we are trying something new by separating the two. Children and youth education will now be led by a Children & Youth Discipleship Team. This team is comprised of leaders of children and youth groups on Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights. This team will focus on how we can all work together to fulfill our mission of "being and making disciples of Jesus Christ." I personally am looking forward to working with this wonderful group of people to plan, pray, and encourage the discipleship of the youngest hearts and minds in our UPVPC family. Please pray for us as we discern the best way to move forward.

In an effort to work towards accomplishing the second goal I have started to send out weekly emails to parents of our youth-aged students (grades 6-12). These emails briefly summarize our theme for the month (January's theme was: Follow. How can we follow Jesus in 2020?), provide an updated calendar of events for the month, ideas to engage with students, and a brief update on the Daily Bible reading plan since 2020 is the year of the Bible. If you currently do not receive these emails but would like to be added to the group, please let me know.

Finally, stay on the lookout for more family events in the upcoming months. Our first family event is snow tubing at Whitetail on Sunday, January 26 with 58 people signed up! We also have scheduled a Duckpin bowling excursion for students in grades 6-12 on Saturday, February 29 (time is to be determined). More information to be announced soon! May we continue to be faithful to what God has called us to and may we bear fruit for the Kingdom!

Blessings, Laurie R. Parsons

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Seminary Update

Laurie Parsons (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Master's in Christian Leadership): I am taking two courses focusing on Christian leadership: Managing Conflict and Church & Non-Profit management. These courses both have a residency portion to them where I will need to travel to Charlotte, NC for a week in April. The first half of the week will be focused on one course and the second half will be focused on the remaining course. I am excited about what God will teach me in these courses and excited to meet others who feel called into ministry.

Please pray for Nick and me as we adjust to a new routine and schedule, for me that I would prioritize well, and for participants in both classes. This semester will be a time of stretching for me, but I know that God is faithful and thus far has helped me in this journey. Thank you for your support and prayers! - Laurie

Gary Rebok (Regent University, Master of Divinity Degree): As a new year begins, so does a fresh slate of seminary classes. Each year I say to myself, "If I could only see the light at the end of the tunnel." Well, this year is it. The year 2020 will find me finishing my final six classes before my internship begins at this time next January. Already two weeks into the Spring semester, I am continuing with a sixteen-week concentration of Greek II, my final Greek class which will end around May the 5th.

In the second half of this semester, which begins in March, I will be taking Church History II. A little bit behind this class: Church history is the story of the most significant community the world has known and an enormous movement in world history. Yet, just as the biblical record of the people of God is the story of a mixed people with great acts of faith and significant failures in sin and unfaithfulness, so is the history of the people who have made up the church down through the ages. The class unpacks the account of the ups and downs, the triumphs and struggles of the Christian movement just before the Reformation and through the next five-hundred-plus years into the present-day. As part of this class, the study will also examine John Wesley, a significant leader in the eighteenth-century Evangelical awakening whose theology and practice continue to influence the church today.

Already scheduled for the summer, I am taking Intercultural Communications and Unity of the Bible. Pastor Meagan asks; how can the church pray for me? Well, quite honestly, that I can remain steadfast while at the same time asking the Lord how to best serve you here at UPVPC and the world outside of the church. You see, next year I begin my internship. I am always in prayer, asking God how to serve him best. I am so thankful for this church, so please pray for God's continued guidance so that I may continue the race to the best of my ability. Thanks be to God. - Gary