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2020

Pastor's Pen

"Being Together"



There is a saying that goes something like this, "You don't know what you have until it's gone." This adage usually refers to relationships with friends and family members, but perhaps it can also apply to the church during this pandemic. These past seven weeks of social isolation and distancing has made me realize how important you are in my life. I feel that our church has made the needed adjustments during this pandemic with technology by offering a greater online presence. I appreciate the help that I have received with this adjustment. We have been able to offer online classes, live stream our worship services, and provide daily devotionals—all with the intention help provide a constant and steady message of encouragement and hope. But the truth is, I miss you and having people in worship, around a Sunday school class discussion, and committee meeting.

Even though I am growing used to doing a short daily devotional through my cell phone and preaching to a camera, it is the interaction with people that I miss...the laughter, conversations, feedback, and joking. I miss the verbal and non-verbal responses, the conversations about family and profession, school and trips. I miss seeing your bright and smiling faces in worship and sharing the peace of Christ with one another. I miss greeting you after church and asking about your family and summer plans. I miss seeing the preschool kids walking by my office and saying, "Hi Pastor Dave" and the interaction I have with many in our Bible Study Fellowship (BSF) and reFuel Ministry programs.

I'm not the only one who feels this way. God has these same feelings and expresses them throughout the Bible. God reminds Adam in the Garden of Eden in the opening chapters of the Bible, "It's not good for us to be alone" (Genesis 2:18). Moses receives support from two of his friends as his body grew tired and he was losing energy (Exodus 17:8-13). Jesus tells of a prodigal son who wanders off in his own version of social distancing, who comes home to a great celebration with family and friends (Luke 15).

Let's pray for the health of our community and the encouragement of our souls. Let's continue to pray for our world and those effected by the coronavirus and for their families. We think of those who are on the front lines in health related and first responder settings, providing care and support for many.

I look forward to being back with all of you again. And when we do gather again, may we realize just what we have...a wonderful congregation who shares a goal to know Christ more, who desires to worship and grow together, and who collectively works toward reflecting the love of Jesus Christ in the church, community, and world.

Stay healthy and encouraged,
Pastor Dave

Memory Joggers for May 2020

We plan to have limited participants in worship for the time being. We will let you know when decide to resume to our normal Sunday volunteers with greeters, ushers, worship assistants, sound booth technicians, and communion servers.

We want people to be safe and not be put into a position where you feel like you have to come to church because it is your assigned Sunday to volunteer.

We look forward to gathering back together again!



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Coming Attractions:

(watch for any notices about these upcoming events)

- Church clean up day will be rescheduled
- Summer worship schedule changes to 9:30 AM on Sunday, May 24
- FPC Golf Tournament at Par 3 has been rescheduled for Saturday, September 12
- Young Adult trip to Zambia, Africa is rescheduled for the summer of 2021

Church Info

Office Hours: Mon—Thurs
8:30 am— 4 PM
406-252-3434
mainoffice@fpcbillings.org
www.fpcbillings.org
Sunday School 9:15 AM
Worship @ 10:30 AM

STAFF

Pastor: Dave Thompson
Youth Director: Russ Dornisch
Office Manager: Jeanne Raney
Accompanist: Sandi Rabas
Choir Director: Janie Sutton
Custodian: Kent Fellingham
Bus Driver: David Sanderson

SESSION MEMBERS

Clerk of Session: Marlene Spencer

Class of 2021

Janet Brown
Jim Hummel
Bud Leuthold
Sandi Schoenberger

Class of 2022

Dick Bailey
Kristy Catlin
Heather McLean
Bruce Phillips

Class of 2023

Robyn Bauer
Carla Bracken
Don Cole
Dan Ehleng

Food Bank Sunday

Our church was one of the first churches in Billings to designate a monthly Food Bank Sunday. We invite you to bring some non-perishable food items with you on the first Sunday of each month as we help local people in need. Our next Food Bank Sunday will be held on Sunday, May 3. Thanks to all who brought in food last month!

Session Notes:

The session met online for our session meeting in April. Easter lilies were ordered through the worship committee. Approval was given to the property committee to have the parking lot repaired and resealed by Wharton Asphalt. The Christian Education committee is working to make online resources available to parents and youth throughout this period of social distancing. Pastor Dave continues to teach classes online and offer worship on Sunday mornings through our church's Facebook page.

We hope to be able to meet for our next meeting on Tuesday, May 12, but watch the Sunday bulletin and weekly e-news for updates.

Financial snapshot

2020	Income	Expense	Net
April	\$ 27,854	\$ 23,055	\$ 4,799
Year to date	\$ 165,886	\$ 151,739	\$ 14,147

We appreciate your continued financial support of our church during this pandemic. Financial gifts can be mailed to our church or on-line on our church's website at www.fpcbilling.org and go to the "online giving" tab.

APRIL	2020
5th	No services
12th	No services
19th	No services
29th	No services
APRIL Ave	N/A

Church Mice:

In times of crises we are extremely fortunate to have our God and our faith to sustain us. In these situations, we are also blessed to have friends and special individuals to support us and see us through the difficult times. It is impossible to name every who has been there for us, but the church mice want to thank those in our congregation who have reached out to each other through phone calls, notes, e-mails and care packages.



A special note of gratitude to our intrepid pastor who has provided endless support, inspiration, and encouragement to all of us in many, many ways. Thanks to Jeanne for keeping our church running. We appreciate Russ for providing online activities for our Sunday school and youth programs. Kent Fellingham has done "extra" cleaning and has shampooed many of the carpets in the past month. Special thanks to Sandi, Janie, Kerry, Randy, John, and Therese who have provided music during our online worship services. And a special thanks to Dave's outstanding side kick, Ebin Gormley who has helped Dave with the production on his daily devotional videos and online classes.

Many people have pulled together to help during the pandemic and we are very grateful for the capable and willing congregation we have!

Flower Sponsorship Opportunities

Our flower sign-up sheet is located on the back table in the narthex. We invite you to sign up for a particular Sunday to sponsor the flowers either in honor or memory of someone or a special event such as an anniversary, birthday, etc. Suggested donation is \$25. Special thanks to those who donated flowers during the month of April. They are: Trina & Bill White in celebration of Easter and Trina's 60th birthday; Betty and Joe Roy in memory of their parents Thelma and Dub Turner; and Peggy J. Wilson in honor of faith, family, and friends. After worship each Sunday, the flowers are distributed to church members and friends in the hospital, nursing homes, or among those who are unable to attend church.

Our Church's Leadership Team

Session: Moderator- Pastor Dave Thompson
Clerk of Session: Marlene Spencer

Class of 2021

Janet Brown
Jim Hummel
Bud Leuthold
Sandi Schoenberger (2)

Class of 2022

Dick Bailey
Kristy Catlin
Heather McLean (2)
Bruce Phillips

Class of 2023

Robyn Bauer
Carla Bracken (2)
Don Cole
Dan Ehleng

Deacons:

Class of 2021

Jo Ausk
Sharon Brady
Charlie Pinnick (2)
Jean Schneider

Class of 2022

Peggy Cluff (2)
Pam Harr
Len & Bonnie Richards
Janice Ward (2)

Class of 2023

Jeri Lamerton
Karen Morrow
Alicia & Erica Nelson
Lorrie Rimpe (2)

(2) denotes a second consecutive term that is currently being served



Christ caring for people through people

**STEPHEN
MINISTRY**

Stephen Ministry Update

Michelle Lee, Rhonda Stennerson, and Pam Harr recently returned the national Stephen Ministry Leadership Training in California. This training enables them to assist with our next round of training a new class of Stephen Minsters this fall.

Our congregation is blessed with a very active group of Stephen Ministers who support the church in providing care and concern to those in our church and community. Stephen Ministry supervision is scheduled for the fourth Tuesday of each month at 6 PM and includes time for continuing education and support.

Worship time change

Our summer worship time change begins on Sunday, May 24 at 9:30 AM. Our summer schedule will continue through Labor Day weekend and then will revert back to our 10:30 AM worship on Sunday, September 13. Worship services will continue to be available on our church's Facebook page for those who would like to stay connected even when you away or on vacation during the summer months.

Health support group postponed until Friday, June 19

A new group which is geared to promote healthy lifestyles has been postponed until Friday, June 19 at 10 AM in the Conference Room. Co-lead by Dr. Heidi Duncan and Dr. Don Harr, this group is intended to help people look at their health from a physical and mental perspective and offer support for people in a number of areas. Not intended to diagnose or treat issues, this group is offered to provide support and encouragement to those desiring good health and to promote healthy living. Heidi is a family practice doctor with the Billings Clinic and Don is a retire psychiatrist with extensive experience in the area of mental health. This group meets the third Friday of each month at 10 AM in the Conference Room.

Support groups continue to meet monthly

Two support groups meet at our church on a monthly basis. They are:
1. Our Grief Support Group meets the first Wednesday and the third Tuesday of each month at 10:00 AM and provides help, hope, and healing to those dealing with grief and loss.
2. Our RLI Group deals with "Real Life Issues" and meets the second Wednesday of every month at 10:00 AM This group meets to discuss issues pertaining to a wide range of issues



Both groups are open to anyone in the church and community and maintain a high level of confidentiality. Both of these groups meet in our new conference room.

For questions about any of these support groups, please talk with Dr. Don Harr or Pastor Dave. Dr. Harr is a retired psychiatrist with a lot of years of experience in helping people cope and grow through their loss. Both groups are on hold right now due to Covid-19.

On a Personal Note

Congratulations to Coryn Martinez who will be graduating from West High School on Sunday, May 24. Please let us know if we have missed any other high school graduates. We extend our condolences to Jim and Jill Irwin and their family upon the recent death of Jim's mom, Myrna. She passed away on April 27 in Bend, Oregon.

Congratulations to Earl and Sharon Henderson who will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Saturday, May 23! They were married right here in our church in 1970!

Linda Broderson is recovering from recent back surgery and appreciates all of your thoughts and prayers.

Pam Harr was diagnosed with breast cancer last month and wants to express her appreciation for all of your prayers and well wishes during this time.

Thanks to everyone who have reached out to others during this pandemic though various means and ministries. This includes those in our church, youth group, Congregational Care Team, Deacons, and our Stephen Ministers.

Pastor Cathy McLean has been hospitalized at the Billings Clinic with a reaction from chemotherapy.

Marian Shehein, one of our members who now lives in Colorado, was recently diagnosed with Covid-19.

Therese Dickey's mother, Irene, is recovering from the coronavirus in South Carolina.

Bonnie Grosshuesch remains under hospice care at Tender Nest Assisted Living. She is our oldest member at 103.



Presbyterian Women's Ministry

Although most PW circles and activities have been on hold, we want to mention the ingenuity of Deborah Circle which has managed to meet through "zoom." It has been reported that a great time was had by all.

Watch for updates about the PW groups in the bulletin and e-news. It is unlikely that the groups will meet again in May. We hope that all of the group will resume in the fall, when things get started back up in September.

Adult education opportunities

Special Class for Adults:

Pastor Dave will continue to offer on-line Sunday school classes as long as the pandemic continues. Here are two classes that he is currently offering online:

1. Hopeful Stories: The series "Stories of Hope" continues on Sunday mornings at 9:15 AM in the Fireside Room. Taught by Pastor Dave, this series is looking into some of the stories surround the resurrection appearances of Jesus. We need stories of hope during this time of pandemic, and this class is intended to do just that. This class will also be offered online at www.facebook.com/fpcbillings and will continue through Sunday, May 17.

2. Moses Class: Pastor Dave continues his class on the life of Moses titled *Moses: From Basket Case to a Man of Faith*. This class continues on Tuesdays from 12-1 PM in the Fireside Room and will also be offered online at www.facebook.com/fpcbillings. This series will run through Tuesday, May 19. This five week class will explore the fascinating life of Moses, one of the main characters in the Old Testament. Join us for this special class that corresponds so well from the last class we just finished on the life of Joseph.





Church and Society Class has been canceled for the remainder of the spring season due to the coronavirus. The class will resume in the fall. If you have ideas for topics or speakers, please talk with Shari Dayton.

A prayer during the pandemic

May we who are merely inconvenienced remember those whose lives are at stake.
 May we who have no risk factors remember those most vulnerable.
 For we who have the luxury of working from home remember those who must choose between preserving their health or making their rent.
 May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close remember those who have no options.
 May we who have to cancel our trips remember those that have no safe place to go.
 May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult of the economic market remember those who have no money at all.
 May we who settle in for quarantine at home remember those who have no home.
 As fear grips our country let us chose love.
 During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other, let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbors.

Property Committee Updates

The Property committee continues to make updates to the church even in this time of pandemic and social distancing. A new carpet cleaner has been put to good use by Kent Fellingham as many of the carpets in the church have been cleaned in the past month. Wharton Asphalt came and repaired the church parking lot and sealed the cracks last month. A small group of volunteers have been working to restripe the parking lots with new paint. Look for a date for our spring clean up. It was scheduled for Saturday, May 2, and will be rescheduled to another date. Watch for updates in the church bulletin and e-news.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
2020					1 Church Closed	2
3 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	4 No Billings Child Care Meeting	5 12 Lunch & Learn 12 Property Committee meeting online	6 No Grief Support Group 12 BLT 6 Youth Group online	7 7 Christian Education Committee meeting	8 Church closed	9
10 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	11 10 Worship Committee Meeting 12 Men's group meets in the Fireside Room	12 12 Lunch & Learn 12 Finance meeting 7 Session meeting	13 No RLI Group PW Board Meeting 12 BLT 6 Youth Group online	14	15 Church closed No Health Support Group	16
17 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	18 6 Deacons Meeting in the Fireside Room	19 No Grief Support 12 Lunch & Learn 11 Fellowship Committee	20 12 BLT 6 Youth Group online	21 12 Congregational Care Team	22 Church closed Newsletter Due Deadline	23
24 Summer Schedule begins 9:30 Worship	25 	26 11 Fellowship Committee 6 Stephen Ministry Supervision	27 12 BLT 6 Youth Group online	28 7 Mission Committee	29 Church Closed	30
31 9:30 Worship						

Youth News: April continued with our quarantine and isolation. The youth and myself have continued meeting three times a week for youth group, Bible study, and a fun game night. The kids have definitely appreciated the game nights as a break up of boredom and getting to have some fun with their friends. Luckily technology is where it is at in order for us to continue meeting with video conferencing during this time. It has taken some adjustments but the kids have adapted and enjoyed the time that we get together throughout the week and the different things we offer to them.

We have also started to get volunteers and assignments for our kids connection program. As we have gone on with both kid volunteers and adults, it has morphed into a mentor program that will be getting started soon. We have some wonderful professional volunteers that have signed up and will bring a lot to the kids in our youth group. Our kids have also enjoyed doing a letter writing campaign. Our goal was to send letters to a number of congregants in the church and the kids have stepped up in doing so. So you may have seen or will see a letter in the mail from myself or a member of the youth just reaching out to say hello. Feel free to write back as I am sure the kids would love to see what sort of impact that the letters are having.

If anyone in the church is in need of any sort of help outside the house, please reach out to me as I know the kids are looking for things to do and help during this time of isolation. As the school year is winding down we hope that we are able to meet soon, but for now will continue to meet online and this will most likely continue into the Summer. We want to thank the church for all of their support of our youth throughout the past year and also my first school year here at the church. —Russ (russ@fpcbillings.org) or 719-431-3846

Delivery Service Needed?

If you need groceries or personal care items, please contact the church office or Pastor Dave at 696-4913 and we can make arrangements to have items brought to your home. A number of people in our church have volunteered to help others during this time.



Better Together Preschool is currently closed



Our church continues to be the home of the Better Together Preschool, however the school has made the difficult decision to close for the remainder of this school year. Our preschool follows the same calendar as the public schools and hopes to reopen in the fall. This school is open for children ages 2 through pre-K and meet in the downstairs classrooms. The preschool staff is comprised of five ladies, plus additional help is asked of the parents. For more information, please contact Karen Norsworthy at 690-8481 or Karen Morrow at 281-0280.

Men's group

Our men's group meets the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month at 12noon in the Fireside Room. Join other men for a time of encouragement, fellowship, prayer, and study. This group recently began a new study from the book of Acts. For more information about this group, please talk with Pastor Dave. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Monday, May 11 at 12noon. All men are invited.

Upcoming Committee Meetings in September

(Please note that some meeting will likely meet remotely, be postponed, or rescheduled)

Property Committee	Tuesday, May 4 at 12noon
Christian Education	Thursday, May 7 at 7:00 PM
Worship Committee	Monday, May 11 at 10:00 AM
Session Meeting	Tuesday, May 12 7:00 PM
PW Board Meeting	Wednesday, May 13 at 9:30am
Deacons Meeting	Monday, May 18 at 6:00 PM
Congregational Care Team	Thursday, May 21 at 12noon
Fellowship Committee	Tuesday, May 26 at 10:00 AM
Mission Committee	Thursday, May 28 at 7:00 PM

reFUEL will resume at a later time



We had hoped to resume our reFUEL group in May, but due to the coronavirus we have postponed this group to a later date. ReFuel is a group that meets weekly for encouragement, Bible study, prayer, and fellowship. This group will be open to anyone who would like to join us. Watch the weekly bulletin and e-news for updates on this group and the topic of study.

Birthdays

- 2 Cindy Hessler
- 3 John Lamerton
- 6 Cathy Culbertson
- Marty Wallace
- 7 Linda Fedric
- Alicia Nelson
- 8 Karen Finstad
- 9 Heidi Duncan
- 10 Kenton Collins
- 11 Don Goettel
- Karla Mahan
- 12 Bill Dimich
- 13 Lois Munger
- 16 Fred Henslin
- 18 Vickie Johnson

- 19 Jeff Gruizenga
- 22 Ernie Watters
- 23 Meriona Anacker
- 24 Boyd Strissel
- 25 Amanda Webber
- 28 John Wright
- 29 Ruth Van Fossen

Anniversaries

- 12 Bob & Cathy Culbertson
- 14 Greg & Deb Wiens
- 15 Don & Sherry Garretson
- 19 Carl & Vickie Johnson
- 20 Jeff & Tonya Appelt
- 23 Earl & Sharon Henderson (50th)
- 25 Gary & Judy Lohnbakken
- 29 Richard & Martha Davidson
- Fred & Sherry Henslin
- 30 Bob & Linda Fedric
- Jerry & Linda Broderon



Zambia, Africa trip postponed until 2021

The mission trip to Africa has been postponed until the summer of 2021 when seven young adults from our congregation will be traveling to Zambia. While in Africa, the group will be working with Arise Africa in an orphanage, school, and community program to help bring the hope of Christ to kids and families. As of date the group has raised over \$17,000 toward their trip. If you would like to make a donation to this trip, please write a check to "Arise Africa" and send it to the church office. Your donation tax deductible and is greatly appreciated. Sara Thompson is the contact person for this trip and she can be reached at 696-5380.



Mission News

Mission Grant Opportunities: Our church offers mission grants to individuals and organization to help encourage and promote missions. Our individual grants are offered for people to apply for funds up to \$1,000 to be used to further the work of God in our community of beyond. These grants funds can go to a variety of ways to help people. We encourage you to be creative in how you can use these funds to promote the Good News of Christ to Billings and beyond.

Organizational grant funds are available up to \$5,000 per organization. If you work with an organization or know of one who might be interested in applying for grant funds through our church, please have them contact the church office.

We are encouraging our members to reach out to the most vulnerable and isolated in our congregation by sending a card, making a phone call, and offering prayers for one another. This time of isolation for some of our members has been very difficult to deal with.

Dan Ehlang continues to make progress toward the FPC Golf Tournament that has been rescheduled for Saturday, September 12 at the Par 3 Golf Course. This tournament will raise funds for both the Africa trip and the youth group. Cost per person is \$50 (team of four is \$200) and will include golf, lunch, and a number of prizes. We have room for 18 teams and hope that we will have fill the teams to capacity.

Our church continues to promote the "Extra Mile Ministry" opportunity on a Facebook page. We invite you to join this group and share how God is challenging you to go to extra mile to serve others. Lots of ideas have been shared and we would love to see your input in how you are going the extra mile to help others.



Website recently updated

Our church website at fpcbillings.org is currently undergoing some changes. Lots of information is available on our website. We have information about our church's history; what it means to be a Presbyterian; and program options for children, youth, and adults; and calendar. You can watch classes and worship via the link on our website to our Facebook page. You can also give online through our secured giving portal. The website allows you to stay connected even when you are away. Special thanks to Jeri Lamerton for her help with our website!!