

A Voice in the Pines

Presbyterian Kirk in the Pines newsletter

Volume XXXVI, Issue 6, June 2020

Here's what you need to know about what will happen when we return to church

“Predictions are risky, especially about the future” is an old Danish proverb. Never has this been truer than during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The evolution of this pandemic has stymied even the most expert disease modelers. This makes looking into the future all the more difficult for us “non-experts.”

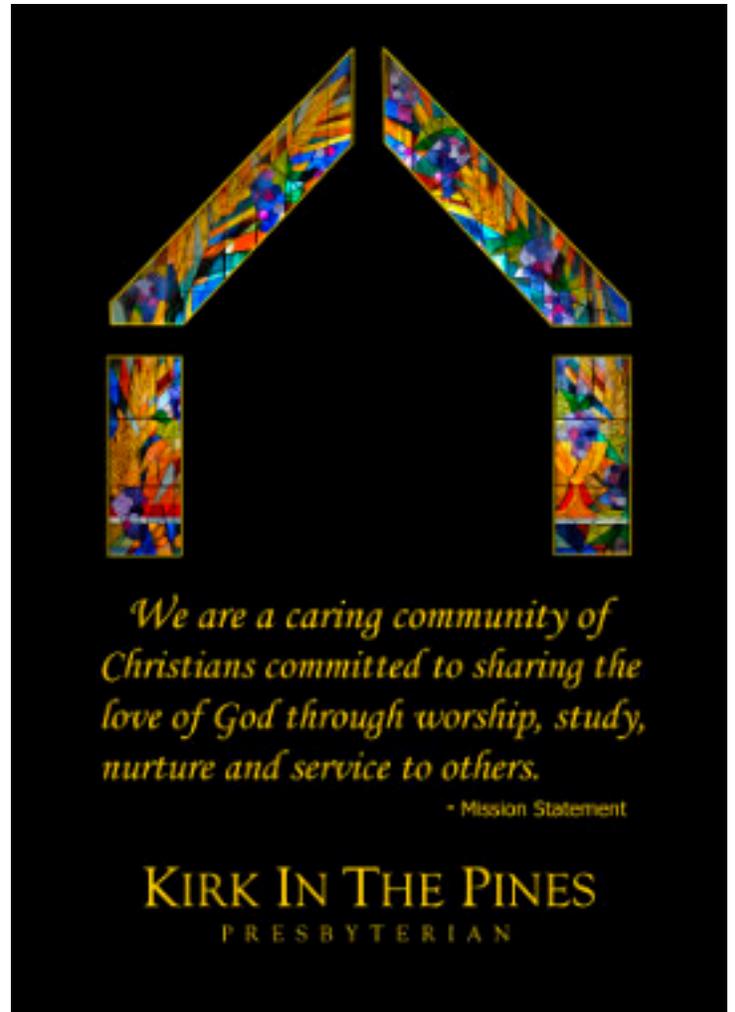
As you know, your Kirk leadership has twice hoped to return to corporate worship together only to have to change course as data on the outbreak has been updated. As of now, we're looking at trying to resume services on June 6-7.

So it would be helpful to summarize what the Session, Pastor Bill Bailey, and our staff have considered in making decisions about coming “back to church” and how worship may differ when we return.

First, your leaders have had an overarching concern for your health.

We also long to come together again for fellowship and worship but, given the relatively vulnerable nature of our congregation, safety has been and is our highest priority. As a result, at the Kirk, we have not been early adopters in the rush to get back to business as usual.

Leadership has been keeping a close eye on data on the spread of the virus as well, including daily new cases in Arkansas, Garland and Saline Counties, and Hot Springs Village. This data has been gathered from Governor Hutchinson's daily briefing (<https://>



Lu Otto photo

www.youtube.com/watch?v=HOjKmluy-vo&feature=youtu.be).

Although there has been a general downward trend since April 25th new cases have fluctuated significantly

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When we meet

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, in-person worship and meetings are postponed. Please check our website at <http://www.kirkinthepines.org> for updated information including meeting times, locations, and accessing online services.



The Spirit can sometimes be a troublemaker

According to the church's calendar, May 31 is Pentecost Sunday. Pentecost is the Greek name for the Jewish Festival Shavuot — the Feast of Weeks. It commemorates the giving of the Torah to Moses at Mt. Sinai. Shavuot is one of the three pilgrim feasts mentioned in the Hebrew Bible.

For Christians, Pentecost marks the end of the Easter Season and "The Great Fifty Days." My pastor, growing up, used to call it "the birthday of the church," referring to that story in Acts 2.

No longer physically present, Jesus is now present



Opening Prayer and Thanksgiving

Thanks be to you O God
that I have risen this day

To the rising of this life itself.
May it be a day of blessing,
O God of every gift.
A day of new beginnings given.

Help me to avoid every sin
and the source of every sin to forsake.

And as the mist scatters
from the crest of the hills
may each ill haze clear
from my soul, O God.

Celtic Prayers from Iona

The Pastor's Corner Bill Bailey



through the power of the Spirit, filling and empowering the church to bear witness to our Lord's resurrection and to work for the Kingdom.

It is interesting that the New Testament writers describe the Spirit's presence and work in a variety of ways.

In the Fourth Gospel, the Spirit is referred to as "the paraclete," a Greek word often translated "comforter, counselor, (or even) helper."

For the Gospel writer John, the Spirit is a comforting presence that sustains us in times of trouble. The Spirit, says John, comes "to stand beside us" and reminds us we are not alone — that we belong to God.

In Luke's writings, The Gospel and its sequel, the Book of Acts, the Spirit is less a comfort and more of a troublemaker.

It is the Spirit that calls the earliest followers out from behind locked doors and into the world to bear witness to the Kingdom in word and in deed.

It is the Spirit that leads the church out into the world to confront injustice. Whenever the Church would rather play it safe and comfortable, the Spirit often gets Peter and Paul, and the others, into trouble with the powers of the world.

In Paul's letters, the Spirit calls the church into a community, provides gifts of the Spirit that enable believers to live together. According to Paul, the Spirit also produces fruit needed for living together — "Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."

The Spirit's presence empowers us "to bear the burdens of each other," so the church may be strengthened and built up.

However, we may speak of the Spirit, whether as a comfort or an empowering presence, as Jesus' followers we are heirs to this same tradition.

May the Lord grant us all strength and courage to follow wherever the Spirit leads us in the weeks and months ahead.



Kirk committees staying busy in time of pandemic

Although we are not meeting together for worship, classes, and social activities, we continue to do the Lord's work.

As of May 13, there are 287 members of the Kirk representing 197 family units.

* * *

It is with great regret I report the loss of Kirk members between March 4 and May 8:

Robert (Bob) Webster passed away on March 4, 2020. He was interred in Cedar Vale Cemetery on March 14, 2020.

Raymond (Ray) Beal passed away on March 8, 2020. No service has been scheduled.

James B. Carpenter passed away on April 13, 2020. A service will be at a later date.

Have you checked out the small garden at the entrance to Hoffius Hall? If you have not seen the recent improvements, take time to drive by and see the new rock retaining wall around the garden. Tom Hayek and others removed the old wooden timbers and Bennet Bros. replaced them with the rock. It has made a vast improvement to the garden.

* * *

Nancy Patton, Bob Morrow, Barron Gage, Pastor Bill Bailey, and others have been working in May to develop returning to worship at the Kirk as safe as possible. This includes changes to the Saturday and Sunday services described in the article beginning on page one of this newsletter.

The group has given a lot of prayerful consideration



to the needed changes and deserve a word of thanks from all of us.

* * *

The Mission Committee has been active during the last two months. Its members have visited with the different organizations being supported by the Kirk to help them financially when possible. Many organizations need additional help because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Members of the Congregational Care Committee are doing an excellent job maintaining contact with members of the congregation mostly through calling by phone. Those telephone calls mean a lot to our members.

* * *

As we go through 2020, many of our committees will be faced with changes in the way they operate due to the coronavirus. We as members of the Kirk are lucky to have excellent committees.

Our temperature is normal, vital signs are good

By Jan Holtberg

After conferring with Shepherd Group leaders, Congregational Care Committee Moderator, and Visitation Coordinator to assess the heart rate and temperature of Kirk congregational members, we find the Kirk is in good health and all vital signs are within normal limits.

Shepherd Groups should create a sense of warmth and fellowship, showing care and concern Kirk members have for one another. The six groups are arranged around games, activities, and/or eating.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, all but one group has suspended social gatherings until restrictions are lifted.

Shepherd Group 5 had planned a "circle-the-wagon" gathering as their May activity. Members were to arrive in their own cars, park in a circle, sit in their own chairs separated by at least six feet, and visit while eating a meal prepared for themselves.

The activity was postponed by bad weather and the

group plans to meet again in a manner that meets restrictions prevailing at the time.

Even though most Shepherd groups are not meeting in person, they are keeping in touch by phone and have no issues or needs to report.

The Congregational Care Committee's goal is to remain aware of and provide physical, emotional, and spiritual support to members of the congregation, particularly those with special needs.

Unfortunately, the "Monthly Meal Ministry" has been suspended so there will be no cooking or meal delivery until restrictions are lifted.

Members of the "Every Single Person" group are still staying in phone contact and but no new singles have been added.

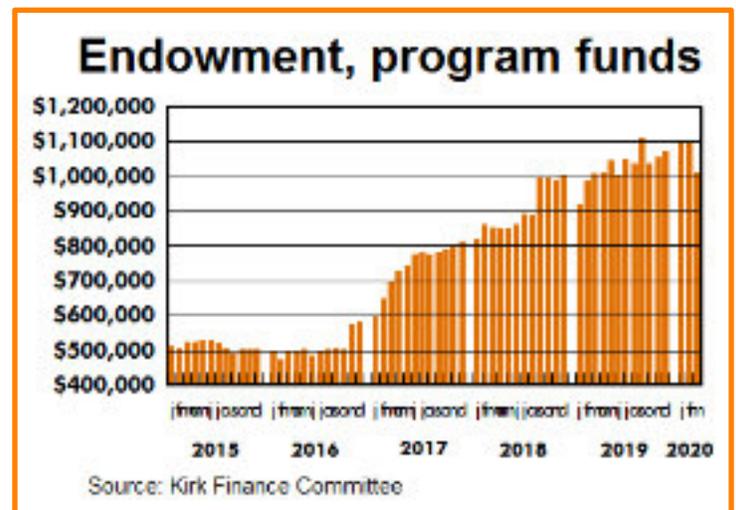
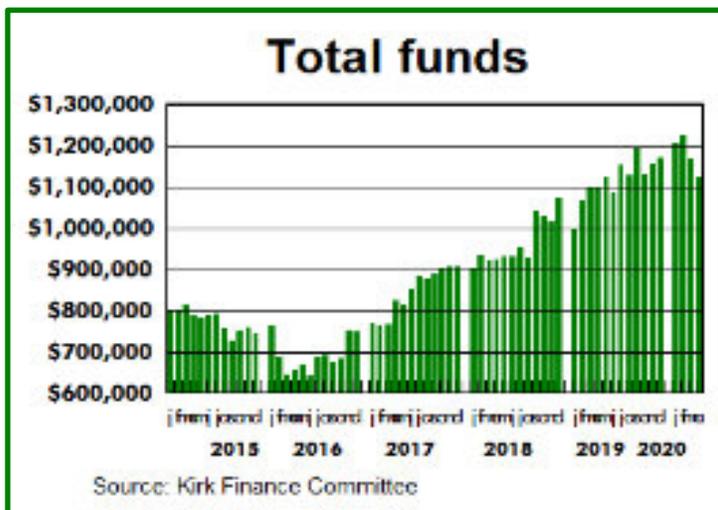
Cards to ill members are being sent by members of the committee and volunteers.

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Kirk in the Pines Financial Report

Year to date as of April 30, 2020

	Month		Year to date	
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>
General Fund:				
Receipts	\$ 36,370	\$ 23,410	\$ 145,479	\$ 147,371
Disbursements	\$ 37,375	\$ 30,359	\$ 149,499	\$ 112,995
Building Fund:				
Receipts	\$ 4,218	\$ 2,844	\$ 16,872	\$ 19,234
Disbursements	\$ 4,660	\$ 6,008	\$ 18,640	\$ 20,371
Total all funds:				
Receipts	\$ 40,588	\$ 26,254	\$ 162,352	\$ 166,605
Disbursements	\$ 42,035	\$ 36,367	\$ 168,139	\$ 133,366
Checking balance				\$ 110,904
Special funds:				
Memorial fund				\$ 56,170
Luke 12:48 fund				\$ 242,062
Programs fund				\$ 49,432
Endowment fund				\$ 607,686
Maack-Ormsbee Fund				<u>\$ 57,227</u>
Total special funds as of March 31				\$ 1,012,577



\$32 for Mission

Thank you for supporting our Mission Dollar campaign. A total of only \$32 was collected in April because the Kirk was closed.

If you wish to give to the fund, please send your contribution to the office by mail.

We are always grateful for your generous gifts and prayers.

Scholarship deadline is June 30

The deadline for applications for the Maack-Ormsbee scholarship is June 30. Applicants must be members, employees, or family members of the Kirk for at least three years, and be registered at an accredited state university or college, Presbyterian Church USA university, or accredited trade school.

Applications and more information may be obtained from the Kirk office or from Education Moderator Pat Kuntz, 501 204-4385.

Kirk's financial condition remains sound in crisis

By Arnie Holtberg

The Coronavirus pandemic has created challenges in several ways, from health to relationships to productivity and finances. Virtually all institutions are struggling in some way and on some fronts.

Thankfully, the Kirk's membership has responded faithfully and constructively to these times, observing the principles of good stewardship and loyalty.

Our finances are sound. Individuals are sending in their donations regularly by mail. A number of us completed our giving at the beginning of the year

through the employment of Qualified Charitable Distributions. Members are also doing what they can to sustain the Kirk's important work.

It is with a grateful heart and confidence that I write this note, knowing we, as a congregation, will continue to do all in our power to support the ministries at the core of who we are and what we do.

Thank you very much for ensuring God's work can be achieved through our every effort.

Arnie Holtberg is the Kirk's Finance Moderator.

After thorough check, Kirk is in great shape

Continued from page 3

As reported by Pastor Bill Bailey in the recent virtual services, the health of the congregation has remained sound and no hospitalizations have been reported as of this writing.

Visitation has been suspended by the coronavirus. Prayer shawls continue to be knitted and crocheted.

Chris Taylor-Wilmoth, Kirk secretary, said there are more than 10 completed shawls at the Kirk. Once the church closure is lifted, I bet the church will be deluged with shawls that can then be blessed/dedicated and distributed to the community.

Chris says that there is quite a bit of yarn, needles, and a book on knitting available in the office. What better time than the present to learn a new skill?

In addition to these committee activities, each member of the committee has a number of people to call weekly. Sally Fink, Moderator of the Congregational Care Committee, said she has not heard of any concerns or issues at present.

Janie Smith, our Visitation coordinator, said she, Sally Fink, and Pastor Bailey confer daily. She reports fewer requests are coming in as many non-critical appointments have been canceled. Pastor Bailey is making contact by phone with congregants who are hospitalized or in care facilities.

Janie said anyone needing assistance should call either herself, Sally, or the pastor.

Janie feels a lot positive has come about during this period of social distancing. Both empathy and communication have been enhanced. She feels it has been good for those of us who are not shut-ins to develop understanding and empathy for those who have lived this way for years.

She also said these times have opened up communication between church members and reports that members are very receptive to calls.



As an aside, I very much enjoyed talking with the Kirk members I interviewed for this article. Every single phone call was answered by a very pleasant, cheerful, and helpful congregant. I think we were all glad to make a connection.

Another positive outcome of closure has been the birth of the virtual service. Shut-ins have been very supportive of and grateful for the virtual service.

To conclude, my diagnosis is the Kirk heartbeat is strong and the temperature is warm (but within normal limits).

There are angels among us still cooking and delivering food, running errands, making masks, and getting cars fixed for others with no desire for recognition. Kirk members, as expected, have risen to the task at hand. As Pastor Bailey ended the virtual service on Mother's Day, "we are tied together with the spirit."

Jan Holtberg is on the Communication Committee.

How things will be different when we resume our services

Continued from page 1

at the state level as testing has rolled out and as outbreaks in prisons have come and gone.

The result has been a moving target. Happily, new cases in Garland and Saline counties have been declining and there have been, at the time of this writing, no reported cases in Hot Springs Village.

But, it is not just a matter of numbers.

Your Session and Pastor Bailey have also considered the concern you and your families have about potential exposure to the virus in a public setting. Prayerful consideration has been given to honoring the trust you place in your leadership to make decisions that are in your best interest.

We plan to resume worship in person, perhaps even as this newsletter reaches you when the data shows a sustained trend of decreasing new cases, and our sense is that we can provide a safe environment.

But things will be different when we come together again. The following recommendations and practices are based on guidelines provided by health experts:

- If you are not feeling well, or if you have experienced fever, sore throat, loss of taste and smell, new runny nose, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea over the last seven days, please stay at home. We will continue to offer the online service as we have over the last many weeks.

- If you are more comfortable wearing a face mask, you are welcome to do so but it is not required. Masks will be provided thanks to Wendy Gage, Susan Morrow, and Anne Bailey for Sunday worship, and Della Reimers, Cindy Hopfensperger, and Jean Mowry for the Saturday worship.

- In an attempt to minimize surface contact in a confined space, the elevator will not be in service, and the doors to Hoffius Hall will not be open for the Sunday service.

- For Sunday services please enter and exit the church through the main entrance. As you enter the building please do not stop or gather in the narthex.

- Please refrain from shaking hands or embracing.

- Bulletins will be placed in the pews indicating proper distance seating.

- Attendance pads, hymnals, and pew Bibles have been removed. You will find the words to the hymns printed in your bulletin. You are invited to sing.

- The order of service will remain essentially the



One of six sanitizer stations available around the sanctuary when services resume. (*Bob Morrow photo*)

same with the exception of the offering and the passing of the peace.

- Pastor Bailey will give the benediction from the pulpit and will not be greeting you at the door.

- Ushers will dismiss by rows in order to achieve the six-foot standard of distancing. Please do not congregate in the narthex, but rather continue directly outside.

- Unfortunately, at this time it is not advisable to hold a coffee hour in Hoffius Hall.

- For the Saturday night service, we feel it is not advisable to have refreshments before or after the service. Please refrain from shaking hands or embracing. Chairs will be arranged in a way that complies with the social distancing directives. Exterior doors will be propped open to minimize touching the handles.

We know these changes seem so unlike the warm and connected congregation we are, but they are necessary to keep one another safe. For now, we are glad just to be together as a fellowship of believers to praise and worship a gracious God.

Until we meet in person again we hope and pray you stay connected with friends and family. Social distancing need not mean social isolation. We can still be the church and continue to reach out with phone calls, emails, and letters to encourage and support those in need. Please inform the Kirk office of any pastoral needs or emergencies.

Contributed by Pastor Bill Bailey, Jerral Johnson, Nancy Patton, Barron Gage, and Bob Morrow.

Kirk creates new fund to help needy during pandemic

By Bob Morrow

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been felt in our community in many ways. For most of us, the primary impact has been social distancing and sheltering in place.

That's been hard, but for many Arkansans, the societal response to COVID-19 has also meant unemployment. Without a job or a paycheck comes food insecurity, loss of medical insurance, and homelessness.

"The ministries and agencies we support are really being hit hard," according to Harry Wakefield, Moderator of the Kirk's Mission Committee.

Especially hit hard are those that distribute food. The Project Hope Food Pantry, which receives no government funding, initially experienced a 90-percent increase in demand in March and now is reported to be distributing more than two-fold as much food compared with before the pandemic.

Although demand has eased off somewhat with the advent of stimulus aid and enhanced unemployment benefits, agencies are anticipating a surge in demand as assistance runs out.

The missions committee contributes to many charities and agencies, but the ones distributing food and providing medical care are experiencing the most difficulty. These include the Arkansas Food Bank, Project Hope Food Pantry, Jackson House, Potters Clay, and Cooperative Christian Ministries/Clinic.

"To make things worse, donations are down as well" Wakefield said. Roughly \$8,600 of the Mission Committee's budget is supported by pledges (about 20 percent) and is earmarked for these charities.



Ted Thompson, executive director of Project Hope, works with food to be given to those in need.

"With congregational worship suspended, the "dollars for missions" donations dropped in the collection plates during worship have declined sharply. So have contributions to the food boxes located at the church office and Hoffius Hall entrances".

Donations of food directly to these programs are helpful but, according to John Davis, Mission Committee member, "it's much better for the charity to have dollars to spend on the right kind of food to meet the need."

On May 7, the committee grappled with this emergent need and considered a number of options, such as soliciting more food or donations to individual programs.

The group settled on an approach used before to respond to natural disasters and voted to establish a special fund to support new needs posed by the pandemic. After consulting with Kirk leadership the Second Mile Giving fund was established.

In a recent letter to the congregation, Pastor Bill Bailey reminded the congregation that in the Sermon on the Mount "Jesus commands his followers to go beyond just the minimal requirements."

He cited *Matthew 5:41*: "If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles."

The fund, in the words of Pastor Bailey, is for "those who are willing and able to give more to those who are suffering in this time of need. Beyond just supporting our Kirk ministry with our pledges, this fund is for those who can do more."

Establishing the "Second Mile Fund" reminds us that, even though we are not able to meet together or physically meet the needs of our neighbors, the work of Christ's Church continues.

Bob Morrow is Moderator of the Communication Committee.



Betty Choate helps move food in the Project Hope warehouse. (Harry Wakefield photos)



The welcoming garden at the entrance to Hoffius Hall has been rebuilt. *(Tom Hayek photo)*

Garden outside Hoffius Hall has been beautified

By Tom Hayek

It is interesting how much a garden can transform an otherwise unwelcoming concrete space. Such is the garden at the entrance to Hoffius Hall.

For many years the display of trees, shrubs, perennials, and annuals has provided a shamelessly beautiful display to welcome members and visitors entering the hall. Even so, nature had worn down the aging garden and it was time for a refresh, despite much tender loving care. It was time for action.

First, the old wall of rotting wood landscape timbers was removed and a new stone wall was set in place.

Five Indian Hawthorne bushes have been added in the back of the garden in front of the windows, replacing azaleas that died, and beautifully complimenting the thriving forest pansy redbud tree in the center of the garden.

Other plants including tall phlox, coneflower,

daylilies, and Lenten roses are doing well and have been complemented by two new drift rose plants.

The irrigation system has been set up to water as needed when the time comes.

This garden was well attended by Harry Marshall for many years. The church grounds committee oversees the area and friends of Harry are donating funds to help keep this garden as nice as it was under his care.

We are very grateful to members like Vicki Rosenquist who currently gives this garden the same TLC that Harry did.

Garden workdays are usually set for the first Friday of the month and other days as needed. Please join us on June 5 weather permitting. For more information, call me at 226-5345.

Tom Hayek is Moderator of the Church Grounds/Memorial Garden Committee.



Members of the “Black Sheep” group who gathered to honor Harry Marshall are (from left) Shirley Siska, Jim White, Nell White, Martha Wilson, Dotty Rector, Sheri Swan, Ellen Marshall, June Moore, Gary Rector and Mary Ann Krieger. Not pictured are Cora Jane and Sam Pope. (*Jamie Federick photo*)

‘Black Sheep’ gather to honor Harry Marshall

By Dotty Rector

The Black Sheep met May 13 to honor our friend, Harry Marshall.

It was a strange sight to greet each other in masks. Smiles were hidden, there was no hugging, social distancing was adhered to. But, here we were, 10 of the remaining 30-some original Black Sheep members. We have been together for 25 years, a Kirk Shepherd group that just wouldn’t disband.

Harry Marshall was the glue that held the group together. He and Ellen hosted an annual Christmas party at their home for many years. He was the communicator of all things serious happening to any of the members.

The garden outside Hoffius Hall was tended by Harry for almost two decades.

In the early days, there was no water supply to the garden, Ellen says, so Harry would climb the rocks and throw the hose down to Ellen so she could water the garden. Now there are sprinklers right in the garden.

This dedication to gardening gave us the idea to memorialize Harry by funding plantings in the garden. We all got together and contributed to a special fund to purchase several hawthorn plants and drift roses, and more plants as the need arise.

This day the garden was vibrant with color, tended lovingly by Vicki Rosenquist. We now affectionately call it Harry’s Garden.

Our little group now gets together only at Christmas time for dinner. So, this was a special time to be together to honor our old friend. We visited and shared “Harry stories.” In spite of social distancing, we were able to enjoy each other’s company and honor our dear friend, Harry Marshall.

Dotty Rector is on the Communication Committee.

Potter’s Clay getting help from food basket in June

The Kirk is collecting non-perishable food for Potter’s Clay in June.

They need canned meat, fish, vegetables, soups, stew, Spam, chili, pasta and pasta sauces, dry boxed dinner helpers for hamburger, chicken and tuna, macaroni and cheese, dry rice, beans, dry hot and cold cereals and canned milk and juices.

We thank Potter’s Clay for the work they do, and we thank you for helping them. The generosity of the Kirk congregation never ceases to amaze.



The Kirk's "mask team" has been producing masks for those who need one and wish to use it during worship services. Behind the masks are (from left) Wendy Gage, Susan Morrow, and Anne Bailey. (*Jamie Federick photo*)

Mask task force busy preparing for re-opening

By Jamie Federick

The Kirk is making plans for re-opening the church in June.

One recommendation from Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson, is for everyone to have face coverings in our worship services. This has been one of the items on the Kirk's checklist in preparation for the re-opening.

This task was taken on by Wendy Gage at the end of April. Contacts were made by Wendy and the "mask task force" of Anne Bailey and Susan Morrow was assembled.

They continue to sew each day with the goal of having 100 masks ready and available in all sizes for those who need one and feel comfortable gathering for worship.

Della Reimers has also been sewing masks for the Saturday evening worship service.

These talented and giving seamstresses will be prepared with the masks when our services resume.

Cindy Hopfensperger (not a member of the Kirk) has donated masks she made to our member Jean Mowry for church distribution.

Thank you, ladies, for your work and compassion during this time of crisis. If anyone would like to donate their time to this cause, please contact Wendy Gage at 559 970-9834.

Jamie Federick is a member of the Communication Committee.

Are you sure your email address is up to date?

Important notices from the Kirk are sent by email. Check your email address in the membership directory so you don't miss a thing.

Current directories are available outside the Kirk office and in the narthex.

Good time to think about all PW has to offer you

By Vicki Rosenquist

During these uncertain times, one thing is certain. We need the support and love of each other. That's what Presbyterian Women is all about. Although the PW year has ended planning is already underway for our upcoming year which begins in September.

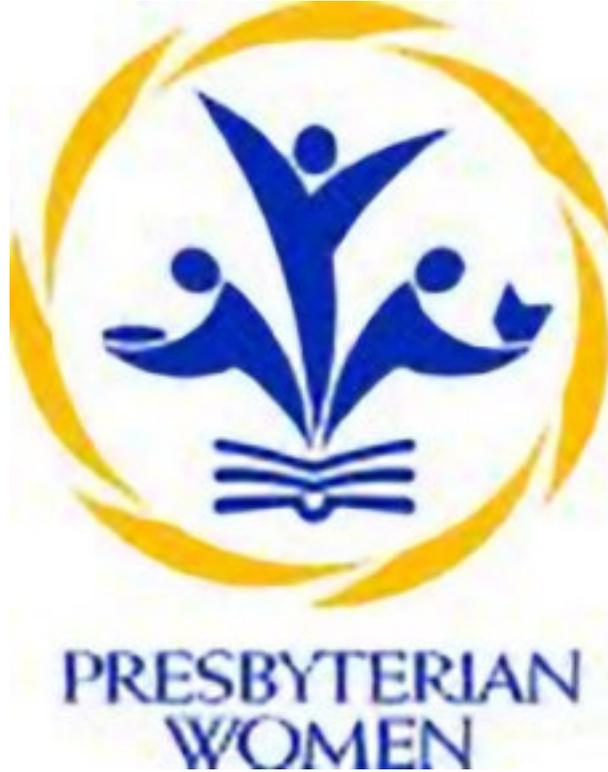
For those who are members of a circle, this is a reminder that we begin our 2020-2021 year at 11 a.m. Monday, Sept. 14, in the sanctuary. Hopefully, we will be back to our "new normal" by then.

The Rev. Carol Clark will be our guest speaker, and a potluck luncheon in Hoffius Hall will follow the Bible study. Mark your calendars now so you don't miss our first Gathering.

For those Kirk ladies who don't belong to a circle or haven't attended in a while, let me encourage you to give it a try. Whether you are a former member or one who has never belonged to a circle at the Kirk, it is worth prayerful consideration.

There are four circles from which to choose.

Circle 1 meets in the church conference room at 1:30. Circle 2 meets in a member's home at 9:30 a.m. Circle 3 meets at Good Sam's library at 1:30, and Circle 4



meets in the Kirk library at 7:00 p.m.

All circles meet on the second Monday of October, November, January, February, and April. As you can see, there's a time and place for just about everyone's schedule.

Three of the circles will be studying The Ten Commandments series by Horizons Bible Study, while Circle 4 will continue to use *The Bible Jesus Read* by Philip Yancey.

Besides our five circle meetings, there are Gatherings in the months of September, December, March, and May. During these gatherings, we meet in the sanctuary at 11:00 for Bible study led by Rev. Bailey or have a guest speaker. Then we enjoy a delicious luncheon in Hoffius Hall.

I encourage each Kirk woman who isn't a circle member to give serious thought to joining us at our first gathering in September. You will meet women from all four circles and enjoy some wonderful friendship and fellowship. More information about PW circles will be coming in the next edition of the Kirk Voice.

Vicki Rosenquist is PW Moderator.

Ferncliff offering a new summer Camp-in-a-Box

This summer Ferncliff is offering an alternative to face-to-face programming that brings the fun of a camp or VBS program to your doorstep: It's Camp-in-a-Box!

Camp-in-a-Box is a new program for 2020 that's designed for elementary-aged children and provides five days worth of activities that are screen-free, encourage outdoor activity, and minimize demands on parents.

Each day has a scripture, theme, and lots of fun activities, plus all the instructions and supplies campers will need.

The Camp-in-a-Box curriculum is Deep Roots, New Leaves. In their week-long experience, campers will discover that God is always doing a new thing while continuing to provide stability and security.

[Click here](#) for the Ferncliff Camp-in-a-Box information packet.





Open the Coffee Closet and honorably select a favorite brew or tea

The Coffee Closet is open in Hoffius Hall!

You will find a variety of products including organic ground and whole bean regular and decaffeinated coffee and tea.

Prices are posted on the back of the closet door. We are using the honor system for your purchase so please place your payment in the mug on the shelf in the closet.

Enjoy good coffee! Read good books!



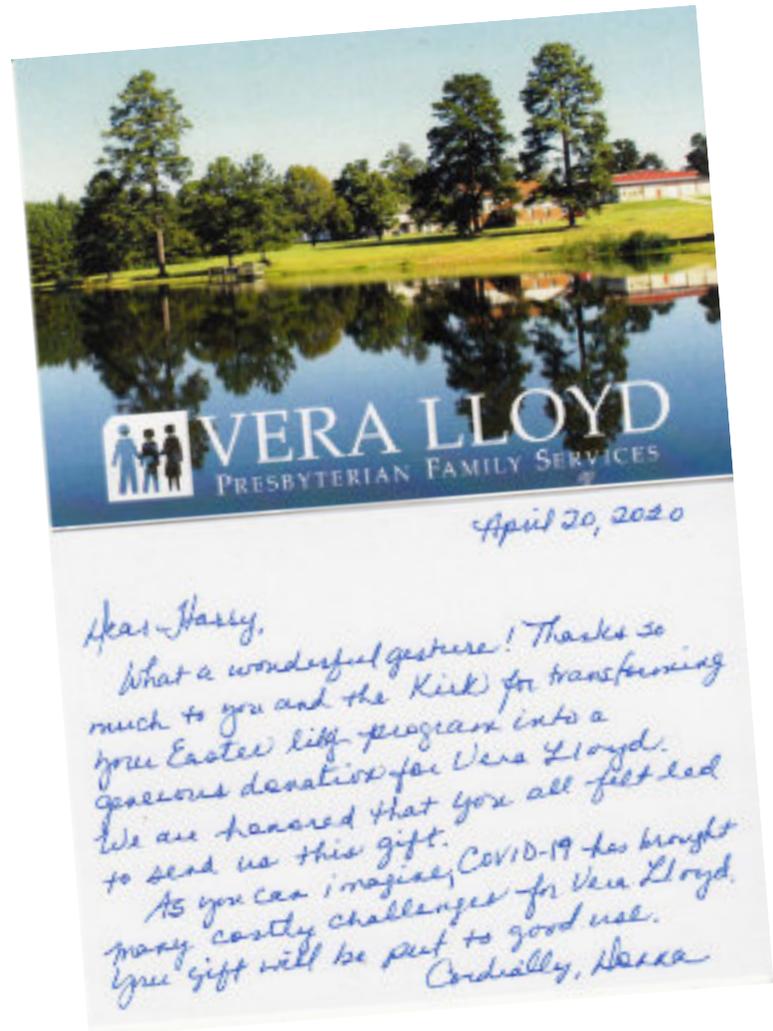
Turning a problem into a \$1,417 Easter gift

When we learned Easter services would be canceled we had to consider how to handle the orders we had received for Easter lilies.

On behalf of the Mission Committee, we approached those who had purchased lilies and suggested donating the funds for the purchase to Vera Lloyd Family Services. All agreed, and the offer was expanded to the entire congregation.

The result was a \$1,417 gift.

Harry Wakefield, Moderator
Mission Committee



Lowell Gardner transformed the Kirk newsletter

By Susan Morrow

Lowell Gardner, Moderator of the Communication Committee from January 2018 through May 2020, recently retired after overseeing 28 editions of the Kirk newsletter *A Voice in the Pines*. We are grateful for the commitment Lowell made to keep the lines of communication open for our very involved and close church community.

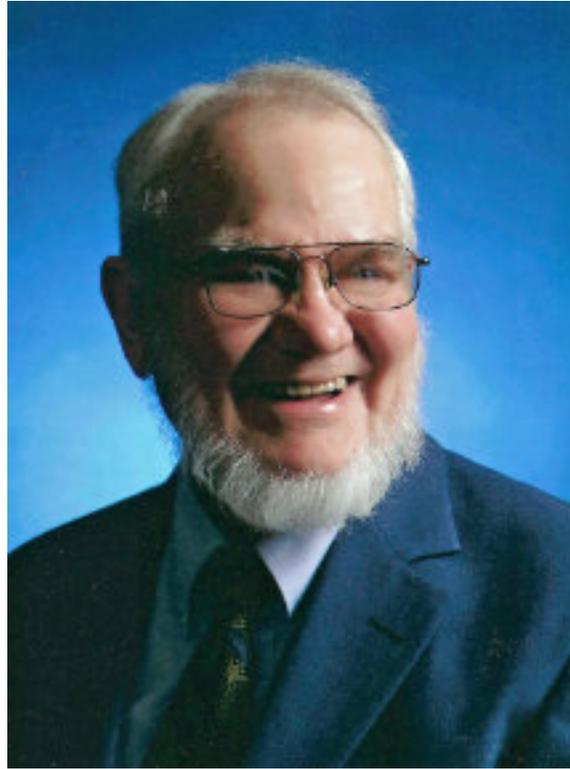
Lowell assumed the role of Moderator after coming from a distinguished career in literature and writing.

He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English literature with a minor in Philosophy at Bethel College. He also received a theological degree at Bethel Seminary and served in pastorates for nearly two decades. He ultimately retired from the newspaper business after 17 years.

It is no surprise that Lowell became a transformative figure as Moderator of the Communication Committee.

In partnership with Frank Leeming, they created one of the best newsletter publications in the Arkansas Presbytery (if not the best).

Lowell enhanced *The Voice in the Pines* by adding informative features such as “Kirk in the



Lowell Gardner, former Moderator of the Communication Committee.

Community,” a look at our members’ personal community involvement; “Behind the Scenes,” focusing on the worship sound crew, newsletter mailing and distribution crew, prayer shawl ministry and music librarians among others, and “Missions in Depth,” helping us become better educated about the Kirk missions we support through our donations.

Lowell was able to carry out these goals in part by creating and effectively guiding a diverse communication committee team with the addition of six new members, one who specializes in electronic media and community coverage.

Lowell often functioned as a moderator, photographer, and writer.

In addition to overseeing 28 editions of the newsletter, there were also 28 deadlines met and at least 50 articles contributed by Lowell himself, amounting to as many as 10,000 words.

Lowell continues to write poetry as well as monologues, newsletter articles, and newspaper articles.

His book of poetry, *Winter Has a Way* (2018), represents a lifetime of writing over 46 years.

The poem below, *Why I Write*, captures the struggle to write which all writers know very well.

We are very thankful for Lowell’s talent and the gift of leadership shared with the Presbyterian Kirk in the Pines and for the strong foundation for *The Voice in the Pines* that will continue to speak the written word to our Kirk and to the community.

Susan Morrow is a member of the Communication Committee.

Why I Write

By Lowell Gardner

I had a thought the other day
And then another and then several more.
As they spiraled about in my now captured brain
They configured a shape to regard.

Not wishing to lose the original muse,
I began to note down a few of the words
That formed the thoughts that sculpted the motif
That had interrupted my day

Then that strain began to flow

As each sentence revealed an idea newborn,
The structure defined a vision conceived
In a beat that propelled it along.

Barriers arose from without and within
That would hinder this conception begun
But I was ever drawn back to the embryo of thought
That enticed me at all to embark.

At last, all imagined appeared in its whole,
Would it grasp wisdom, mold fashion, or gain fame?
No way for me may this ever be known,
I do know, the thought drew me home.

Finding Common Ground in a Divided Country

“Americans today lack agreement about the purpose of our country, the nature of the common good, and even the meaning of human flourishing.”

This is the central assertion of the authors of *Uncommon Ground: Living Faithfully in a World of Difference*, a book available in our Kirk library.

We are all too familiar with the divisions in our society over race, politics, culture, and belief systems. Discourse has broken down into strident positional arguments, name-calling, character assassination, and ostracization of whole segments of our society.

At the outset of this collection of 12 essays by diverse Christian writers, Timothy Keller, a bestselling author, and John Inazu, a legal scholar ask: “How can Christians interact with those around them in ways that show respect to those whose beliefs are radically different while remaining faithful to the gospel?”

The dust cover of the book says it symbolically with a picture of apples and oranges growing on a single unified tree branch.

The book is hot off the press and represents a departure from Keller’s usual expository writing and Inazu’s scholarly work. The collection includes chapters by writers ranging from pastors and priests to singers and songwriters, hip hop artists, theologians, entrepreneurs, missionaries and others.

The goal of the work is set out by three divisions: Framing engagement, communicating engagement and embodying engagement by faithful Christians.

According to Inazu, this work will require faithful Christians to develop three practices: Humility, patience, and tolerance in interactions with others.

Keller adds a fourth: Courage. He stresses we must do more than tolerate, adding, “we should love and welcome everyone.”

One of the most engaging contributions took me by surprise. Hip-hop artist and storyteller, Lecrae, wrote a very direct and insightful essay in which he describes his own story of being on the outside of society looking in, and how we all create stories to explain and justify ourselves, complete with villains and heroes.

For Lecrae, this tendency to create stories stands in



Carnegie Corner By Bob Morrow

the way of seeing ourselves and, in addition, others as recipients of God’s grace.

Unlike the narratives we create to justify ourselves and diminish others, the “Christian storyline” is the only true story, and Christ the only real hero. For Lecrae, understanding our need for redemption in common with all others creates the right relationship for engagement.

Trish Newbell, author of the chapter “The Reconciler,” offers practical advice in interacting with society by praying, being slow to speak, and seeking out relationships for accountability and support.

Claude Richard Alexander, Jr. reminds us in his chapter “The Peacemaker” that Jesus taught us we are blessed if we are peacemakers, not peace receivers.

In concluding, Inazu and Keller note three typical ways the church responds to culture. Defense against culture leads to attempts to dominate in society. Purity from the dominant culture leads to withdrawal. And, seeking to be relevant to culture leads to the adoption of cultural priorities and values.

They offer four alternative practices for Christians seeking to engage faithfully in society.

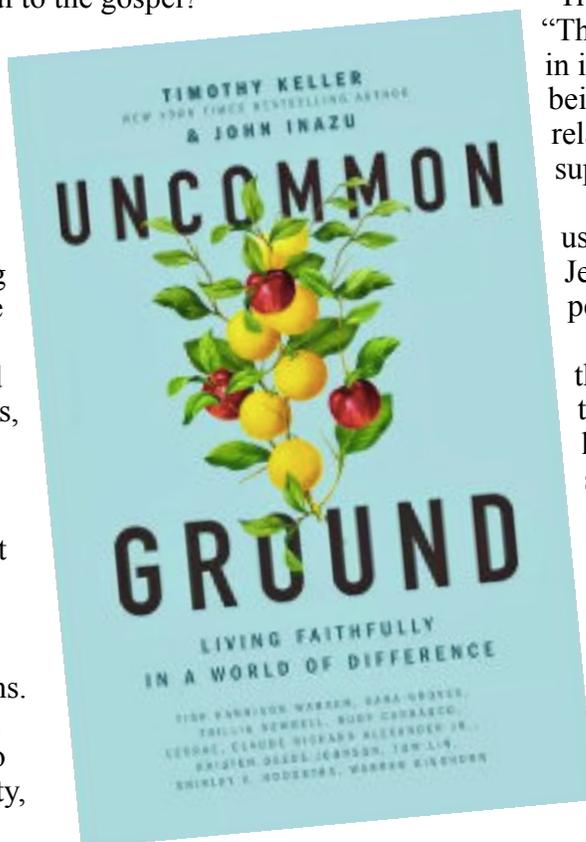
“First, Christians should not overidentify with any particular political party or platform.

“Second, Christians should approach the community around them through a posture of love and service.

“Third, Christians should recognize that the gospel subverts rival stories and accounts of reality.

“Fourth, Christians should reach out to others with humility, patience, and tolerance.”

Keller and Inazu summarize that “The stories in this book help show us the way forward. It begins with knowing who we are in Christ as we live “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love.” (*Ephesians 4:2*).





Happy dates



Birthdays

June 1	Lynn Wallace	June 13	Shirley Siska	June 24	Chuck New
June 3	Nadean Cannon	June 14	Jan Holtberg	June 26	James White
	Ted Hommemma		Bob Wessel	June 27	Norm Fisher
June 5	Ginnie Hastings	June 18	Nancy Otto	June 28	Bill Wiard
	Diana Milligan	June 20	Sherry Bingham	June 30	Ed Baldwin
	Joe Perryman		Linda Wessel		Barbara Booth
June 12	Ellie Elsenheimer	June 21	Jackie Herbst		Martha Wilson
June 13	Anne Bailey	June 22	Char Martin		

Anniversaries

June 2	Nancy and Lu Otto	59 years	June 17	Janette and Bill Wiard	20 years
June 5	Ro and Dick Easter	65 years	June 19	Charlotte and Dick Massey	38 years
June 6	Ruth and David Hamilton	56 years	June 20	Martha and Wayne Copeland	33 years
June 8	Jean and Heinrich Eiler	69 years	June 22	Norma and Steve Stevens	35 years
June 10	Merilyn and Mike Seitz	58 years	June 24	Wendy and Barron Gage	37 years
June 12	Becky and Ed Baldwin	53 years	June 27	Marjorie and Gene Carlisle	67 years
June 14	Barb and Daryl Henry	48 years	June 28	Patricia and Kenneth Poole	62 years
June 17	Beverly and Fred Raskin	43 years			

Kirk's music goes on despite our church's closure

All Kirk members and groups have been forced to adjust during this lockdown. Our choir family loves to make music as a group, and by eliminating "group activities," we are missing not only Sunday morning worship, but also fellowship and fun.

We can't wait to be together again!

Thanks to the creativity and commitment of several singers, we have been blessed with special music throughout the close down. The group was purposefully kept to a limited number under the pandemic guidelines. Let me thank and highlight a few:

We absolutely could not have provided these video services without Sharon Gardner. She has graciously videotaped every service, edited them to make them more effective, and, of course, sung with the singers during the hymns. Thanks to Sharon for bringing us this option!

Sharon's singing partner, Patty Van Cleave, has been a stalwart from the first week. She has been a regular member of the hymn singers and has sung duets with Sharon and Randy.

Susan and Bob Morrow, Jean and Clark Mowry, and Fran and Abe Stroud have also been regular singers and players, enhancing the video worship week after week.



Choir Notes

By Randy Toney

In the coming weeks, we will welcome Bill Morgan and Kathy Ogilvie, two of our favorite guest instrumentalists.

We are thankful for all who contribute by offering their talents.

And, of course, we are very thankful for Donna Toney, who always brings her best with a piano special. And isn't it nice to be able to see her at the keyboard!

Until it is safe for our choir to meet and practice again (fall, maybe?), we hope these musical offerings are meaningful to you. We appreciate your feedback.

Saddle up! Kirk's golf season tees off on June 14



By Jim Hess

YES!

We ARE playing golf.

June 14 at Magellan Golf Course. The first tee time will be at 1 p.m. A sign-up sheet will be emailed to all members on May 16. With the current golf course requirements, we will be one person per cart, with the exception of couples. Social distancing requirements must also be observed throughout the course.

At this time, we are uncertain about the availability of restaurant dining. We will keep you informed of plans for dinner on June 14 as information is available.

If you are new to our Kirk or are a current member and would like to join our Kirk Sunday Golf Group, we welcome you.

We are couple and single golfers of various abilities who play 9 or 18 holes, your choice. We play our Village courses with dinner to follow after golf the second Sunday of each month, April through October. If you would like additional information, call me at 922-2326.

Jim Hess is the Kirk's golf coordinator.

Kirk staff

William B. Bailey – Senior Pastor

Randy Toney – Director of Music

Donna Toney – Organist/Pianist

Janie Smith – Visitation Coordinator

Chris Taylor-Wilmoth – Secretary

Beverly Schaumburg – Business Administrator

Arthur “Chip” Johnson – Sexton

Presbyterian Kirk in the Pines

275 Asturias Drive

Hot Springs Village, AR 71909

Phone: 501-922-1333 Fax: 922-6005

Email: kirkoffice1@sbcglobal.net

www.kirkinthepines.org

A Voice in the Pines

is a monthly publication of Presbyterian Kirk in the Pines. It is produced and edited by the Kirk's Communication Committee – Bob Morrow, Moderator. Send comments or questions to:

kirkvoice@sbcglobal.net

