



THE INTERIM

Wednesday To-Go Meals resumed
Wednesday, September 9

Volume 77 Issue 19

September 13, 2020

From the Pastor...

It struck me as ironic that our Sunday School Lessons for the next several weeks focus on joy. Who can feel joyful in the middle of a pandemic, racial tensions and a heated political election? Maybe folks who enjoy drama are happy right now, but most of us are struggling to see the good.

If you look more closely, the Sunday School book title is “Pure Joy – A Choice to Rejoice.” The subtitle is actually the key. It reminds us that we can choose joy, even in the most stressful times. Joy is not happiness. Joy is a deep belief that God is in control and acting in love, despite what we see.

When Paul wrote to the Philippians, he was in jail facing trial and possible death. Outwardly, there was very little in which to rejoice. Yet, he rejoiced that his circumstance would actually advance the gospel. Paul saw beyond his own circumstances and rejoiced in what God was doing to save the world.

Likewise the Church at Philippi had little reason to rejoice. As theologian Frank Stagg notes in the Broadman Bible Commentary, “The church was born in a situation of crisis, knew hardship and persecution from its inception.” Yet, the church learned from Paul to rejoice in every situation by refocusing on thanksgiving, prayer, and peace.

Philippians isn't known as Paul's letter of joy, because everything was great. The joy found in Philippians is one born out of faith amidst hardship. Paul rejoices because he remembers his dear friends and trust God to bring their faith to fruition. The church rejoices because they have received the hope of the gospel as well as God's call to share in it.

Paul's letter to the Philippians is filled with excellent advice for all times; but especially for difficult times. Perhaps we too need to be reminded that joy is a choice and we make that choice by where we put our focus. Paul's words still ring true today:

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things ... And the God of Peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:8&9b)

Schedule

Sunday, September 13

7:00 a.m. Sunday School Lesson

Uploaded to YouTube

9:00 a.m. Sunday School - FLC & Zoom

10:00 a.m. Worship

Monday, September 14

8:30 a.m. Pickle Ball

7:00 p.m. Pickle Ball

Wednesday, September 16

8:30 a.m. Pickle Ball

12:00 p.m. Virtual Bible Study - Zoom

5:30 p.m. Wednesday Evening To-Go Meal

Menu: lasagna, meatballs, green beans, & brownies

Thursday, September 17

8:30 a.m. Pickle Ball

1:00 p.m. Clothes Closet

Sunday, September 20

7:00 a.m. Sunday School Lesson

Uploaded to YouTube

9:00 a.m. Sunday School - FLC & Zoom

10:00 a.m. Worship

Monday, September 21

8:30 a.m. Pickle Ball

7:00 p.m. Pickle Ball

Wednesday, September 23

8:30 a.m. Pickle Ball

12:00 p.m. Virtual Bible Study - Zoom

5:30 p.m. Wednesday Evening To-Go Meals

Menu: pot roast, mashed potatoes, mixed veggies, & cookies

Thursday, September 24

8:30 a.m. Pickle Ball

1:00 p.m. Clothes Closet

Spiritual Statistics

Weeks of August 30 & September 6, 2020

	8/30	9/6
In-Person	56	48
Live Stream Views	60	59

Church Staff Directory

Dr. Nelson Granade.....Senior Minister
 Mr. James Martin.....Minister of Music & Worship
 Rev. Melissa Wilson.....Minister of Children
 Mrs. Elizabeth Kilby.....Minister of Young Families
 Mr. Eddie Wiseman.....Accompanist / Music Assistant

OFFICE HOURS: 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM Mon - Thur, 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM Fri
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A Call to Prayer

On Saturday, September 26, Franklin Graham will be leading a prayer meeting on the National Mall in Washington, DC. Thousands of people will gather to pray for our nation. God promises in His word: "If my people who are called by my Name will humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." (2 Chron. 7:14)

I'm sure we would all agree that our nation is on the brink of destruction as we witness the rioting, looting, killing, disregard for human life and the rights of free speech and religion. But I choose to believe God's word over what I see. I believe God's power can overcome anything the devil is doing.

Prayer is the fire that fuels God's power! I believe God established this nation and longs for us to turn back to Him in repentance. If we will put ourselves into the first part of the 2 Chron. 7:14 equation, God will put Himself into the second part, and we will see a great change in our country.

We may not all be able to go to Washington, but we can all pray.

His servant and your friend,
 Ginny Stikeleather

FBC To-Go Meals

Pick-up will begin at 5:30 p.m. Please make your reservation by Monday at 10:00 a.m. You can make your reservation in the following ways:

Standing Reservation: If you plan to pick up meal every Wednesday, you may make a standing reservation. If you are unable to attend one Wednesday, please call the church office or e-mail Christine Anderson at christine@statesvillefbc.org to cancel by Monday at 10:00 a.m. To make your standing reservation, please call the church office or e-mail christine@statesvillefbc.org.

Call or E-mail: Call the church office or e-mail christine@statesvillefbc.org to make you reservation each week.

Remind App: Text "@fbcsmearls" to 81010 to join the remind app. You will receive a text message each Sunday afternoon with the following Wednesday Evening Menu. You can reply to that text with your reservation. Ex. 2 Adults 1 Kid

Financial Statistics

	September	Year-to-Date
Giving Goal	70,772.00	878,661.00
Budget Receipts	7,772.00	783,127.00
Need to Meet Goals	62,521.00	95,534.00
Alms	100.00	5,437.00
Designated	5.00	64,941.00

A Prayer for the Start to This (Weird) New School Year

by Rev. Laura Stephens-Reed, www.cbfn.org

As school has resumed for many across our state in the last two weeks, we offer this prayer. CBFNC is in prayer for each student, parent, teacher, principal, school staff, superintendent, and school board. This has indeed been a weird start to the new school year and we pray for a year full of learning and growth!

My son last received formal instruction from his school on March 13, meaning first grade effectively ended for him on that day. Five months later, he is about to begin second grade. In that between time his school system, like every other one across the United States, has brainstormed, changed course, planned, and crossed its fingers for the academic year to come. In that time my spouse and I, like many parents across the United States, have wondered, fretted, been faced with impossible choices that we changed our minds about almost daily, and settled uneasily on the best path forward for our family. If you – or the people in your care – are in this situation, here's a prayer that you're welcome to use and share. Peace be with you.

God our help in ages past and hope for years to come,
we approach the beginning of this cycle of formal education with all the typical emotions:
excitement, uncertainty, disappointment at the end of summer, grief about the passage of time.

This year, though, that's not all.

Over this summer the Covid-19 infection rate has trended up.

So schools and school systems have pivoted and planned to the best of their abilities for the education and safety of their students.

So parents have debated the educational options and second-guessed their choices for their children.

So faculty and staff have asked hard, important questions – many of which remain unanswered – about adequate access to cleaning supplies and protocols if someone gets sick.

Now here we are on the precipice, hoping for the best but terrified to send our loved ones into potential outbreak incubators.

It is too much.

It is too much to ask of our educational institutions that they meet so many community needs that kids' attendance at them becomes essential for some families.

It is too much to ask of parents to give up income and calling to stay home with virtual learners to decrease exposure.

It is too much to ask of faculty and staff to overhaul their teaching approach or risk their lives (and potentially those of their loved ones) for not enough pay or respect.

And so we pray, fervently.

For good health, above all.

For peace with our hard-wrought decisions, whatever they are.

For compassion toward all, recognizing we're all doing the best we can.

For enough for those scraping by with less income.

For flexibility and resilience, which we'll all have opportunities to deepen.

For learning, whether or not it's of the "academic" variety.

For connection across the cloud and across physical distancing restrictions

For an increased awareness of the struggles of those around us and ways we can safely help one another.

For a long-term commitment to change systems that don't serve us all equitably.

May we remember that you go with us wherever we go – or don't go.

May we grow our dependence on you through this time.

And may we yet wrestle a blessing out of this terrible mess, leaving us changed for the better.

We pray these things in the name of the Christ who hurts with us

and by the power of the Spirit who gives us courage.

Amen.

Rev. Laura Stephens-Reed is a clergy & congregational coach. An ordained minister since 2002, she has served congregations in a variety of settled and interim roles, including pastor, associate pastor, and minister with age-specific groups. Laura believes in the power of the local congregation to change individuals and communities in the name of Christ. Her call is to increase the effectiveness of clergy and congregations by helping them harness the amplified opportunities and overcome the challenges presented by transitions.



CBF Mission Bite

Mission Bite 195: Pray for Maria

One of the most important people in Fellowship Southwest's network of ministry to immigrants on the U.S.-Mexico border needs your prayers. Maria, a refugee from Cuba who lives in the shelter in Palomas, Chihuahua, is facing surgery.

When Maria migrated from Cuba and sought asylum in the United States, she landed in Palomas, about 100 miles in the desert west of Juarez. Fellowship Southwest collaborated with Red de Albergues Para Migrantes and state and local government officials to open the Palomas shelter early this year.

The rural village could not maintain a shelter on its own, and yet some refugees congregated there, awaiting their opportunity for asylum hearings in the United States. Fellowship Southwest provides funds each month to operate the shelter and has purchased appliances and provided funds to help renovate the building.

But Maria is the person who has made the Palomas shelter special.

She's a nurse—almost a doctor. She does everything out there a doctor would do. In addition to tending to the medical needs of immigrants, Maria also has treated people from Palomas.

On top of mending the physical ailments of immigrants and locals, Maria is the de facto director of the shelter. She shares the love of Jesus with people who meet her.

So, Maria has been a godsend to the refugees in the shelter and to the community.

But she has become ill, and has been transported to a Red de Albergues Para Migrantes/Fellowship Southwest shelter in Juarez, where she awaits surgery.

Fellowship Southwest has provided funds to cover the cost of the operation. This is possible because medical expenses in Mexico are much lower than they are in the United States.

We seek your prayers for Maria, too. To help Fellowship Southwest with the costs of Maria's surgery and extend her ministry to immigrants, you can support the FSW Immigrant Relief Ministry at www.fellowshipsouthwest.org.

Announcements

2020-2021 Ministry Budget

It is time to approve our 2020/21 Ministry Budget. Members of the Business Management Team will be available for questions in Adams Hall immediately following the worship service on Sunday, September 13. The budget will be presented for your approval on Sunday, September 20, 2020.

In-Person Sunday School

This Sunday, September 13, we will add an in-person Sunday School option. We will begin at 9:00 a.m. in the Family Life Center. We will social distance, and masks are required.

Sanctuary Choir Under the Oak Wednesday, September 16, 2020 7:00 p.m.

Calling all sanctuary choir members past and present! Let's get together and catch up on things. Let's meet Wednesday, September 16, at 7:00 p.m. under the big oak tree in the parking lot. This will be a great time of fellowship and maybe even some singing!

James Martin
Minister of Worship and Music

Precept Bible Study Wednesdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Precept Bible Study will meet Wednesdays, 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. in Adams Hall. The study will run September 16 - November 4.

A Note of Appreciation From East Iredell Middle School

Church Members,
Thank you so much for thinking of our staff and preparing goodie bags for all of us. The staff greatly enjoyed getting this surprise in their mailbox!

Many thanks,
Lisa Brooks, Assistant Principal