

Lament & Let Go

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Those of you who were in worship on February 26 may recognize the title of this article as the same title as Sunday's sermon. At risk of being redundant, I want to take advantage of the opportunity to once again share a few thoughts about the Lenten season which begins this Wednesday. (I hope to see you at our Ash Wednesday service at 6:30pm!!) These words, "Lament & Let Go," speak to the invitation that God gives us in Scripture to bring to the Lord these things in our lives that are causes for anxiety, fear, anger, doubt, trial, struggle, and sadness (just to name a few emotions). God does not desire that we should carry these burdens. Jesus invited us, "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28) It reminds me of the words

to this familiar chorus (red hymnal #221), the "Cares Chorus":

*I cast all my cares upon You,
I lay all of my burdens down
at Your feet.
And anytime that I don't
know what to do, I will cast
all my cares upon You.*

This is something we all want to do. We have a desire to cast our cares upon the Lord and allow Jesus to take these burdens from us. We become tired and weary of carrying them. And yet, this is not easy for us to do. As a way of helping us all do this, you have been invited to participate in working through the book *Essential Practices of the Faith* (we still have some copies at the church if you did not receive one – it's not too late to join us!). Each of these

continued on p. 14

Jake and Ben
at Jubilee

CCO Jubilee Conference



This weekend we were in Pittsburgh for our annual Coalition for Christian Outreach (CCO) Jubilee conference. 3,500 students gathered together to learn how Christ claims and is claiming Every Square Inch of the world He loves. Favorite quote from the weekend. "Redemption - the cosmic reordering of all things."

Continue to pray for Ben who desires to go back and be salt in his fraternity through starting a weekly bible study.

continued on p. 2

Ashland CCO XD continued from p.1

A Theology of Attention

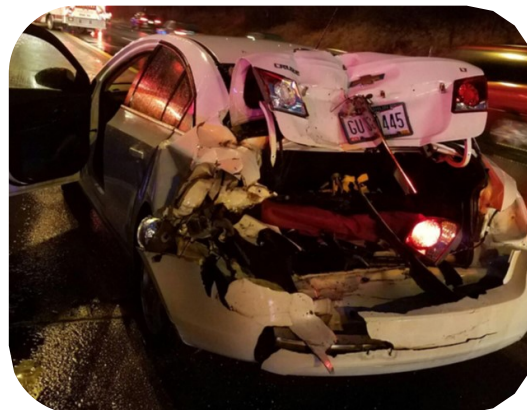
A few weeks ago a close student of mine was rear-ended by a vehicle driven by a distracted driver. The student was fine, but two others were killed in this tragic accident scene involving many vehicles, as well as a police officer.

Last week at an all day retreat for Leadership Ashland,* I learned from the ODOT of the rise in deaths due to "distracted" driving. I've witnessed it; I'm tempted by it myself when my mind drifts to all the conversations I could have and all the things to accomplish. I'd guess that most of us have lost the art of driving just for the sake of driving, and attending to the moment.

So what can I do? or what can we do?

I'm taking a new look at my view of God and our call to be image bearers, and suggesting that we have before us an opportunity to practice a theology of attention.

Jake, are you saying that our driving could be an act of worship and a



The Back End of the Student's Car

spiritual discipline? Yes!

Perhaps we can begin to see driving as a time to be present with God and ourselves—a spiritual discipline if you will—especially if we invite the Holy Spirit into our drive time. With this car accident fresh on my mind I invite us to reconsider our theology of attention, to put the phone down...and "BE."

Please pray for the students on a weekly basis that I interact with. It is our desire and prayer as CCO XD to call students to be image bearers of Christ through experiences...and to invite them to attend to all that they are and can be in Christ.

ASHLAND
UNIVERSITY

CCO XD ADVENTURE

CCO XD ADVENTURE is an on campus ministry at AU. FPC has partnered with CCO to help call students to serve Jesus with their entire lives. One main distinction in this ministry is designing opportunities around connection with God through creation and adventure.

*Leadership Ashland is a community sponsored leadership program that meets monthly to consider critical issues in the local community and have leadership development responses to those critical issues. I network with fellow young and aspiring leaders, and learn more about the community we serve! It is a valuable investment and lots of fun!!!

Birthdays



MARCH

1st Terrence Webb
 6th Doug Click
 8th Tim Mast
 10th Cindy Click
 12th Matt Madden
 14th Meredith Beer
 15th William Downs
 Braylen Jarvis
 21st Karen Ford
 22nd Lindsey Saffle
 Jordann Saffle
 24th Susan Schwartz
 26th Carl Armstrong
 27th Connie Nordstrom
 David Steury
 30th Danielle Conley

APRIL

2nd Ronald Baum
 Carolyn Shenberger
 5th Carolyn Freer
 6th Vinny Foley
 Dex Sedwick
 7th Jamie Kash
 8th Justin Dew
 9th Judy Frame
 10th Sally Smetana
 11th JoAnn Ford Watson
 14th Linda McKibben
 15th Erin Skafec
 16th Cynthia Eckenroth
 19th Jake Blasdel
 20th Brent Sponsler
 21st Anne Beer
 25th Bill Manos
 28th Maylyn Latham

MAY

1st Matthew Latham
 4th Jakin Parker
 8th William Beck
 Dee Eiserling
 Edie Lerback
 Corinne Sedwick
 11th Judith Webb
 12th Jean Hudkins
 Preston Sponsler
 13th John Saccomen
 Julia Schoonover
 17th AJ Tabler
 18th Catherine Hiner
 20th Dick Bonesteel
 Judy Mengel
 25th Ellen Saccomen
 26th Matt McClain
 28th Angelica Morales
 Allison Skafec
 29th John Mast



Lily Order Form

\$8.00 each

Due Sunday, April 2



In Loving Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

Given by: _____

Please use one form per lily. Return this order form by Sunday, April 2 with your payment to either the church office or place it in the offering plate. Checks should be made payable to the First Presbyterian Church and please put "Lily" on the memo line. Thank you.

FPC will no longer be delivering lilies to others.

You are encouraged to take your lily with you Easter morning, April 16, after worship.

Financial Reports

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FINANCE REPORT - JANUARY 2017

<u>Contributions/Receipts</u>	<u>JAN. 2016</u>	<u>BUDGET 2017</u>	<u>JAN. 2017</u>
	<u>YTD</u>	<u>YTD</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Pledges	\$39,520.14	\$41,598.37	\$38,543.50 *
Non-Pledged Contributions	\$2,307.00	\$3,750.00	\$2,155.00
Loose Offering	\$412.00	\$416.67	\$242.00
Prior Year Pledges	\$15.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,500.00
Church Use Donations	\$0.00	\$541.67	\$2,125.00
Whiting Fund	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
ACCF – Program	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
ACCF – Building	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
ACCF - Mission	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Interest/Investment Income	\$12.69	\$1.25	\$3.73
Miscellaneous Income	\$0.00	\$208.33	\$58.22
Total Receipts	\$42,266.83	\$47,516.29	\$44,627.45

Expenses

Personnel	\$18,253.33	\$19,206.93	\$18,508.29
Health Insurance	\$1,186.21	\$1,241.33	\$1,209.59
Property	\$1,424.80	\$1,733.33	\$735.75
Property Insurance	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Utilities	\$1,657.11	\$1,816.65	\$2,207.97
Finance	\$68.27	\$66.68	\$45.20
Per capita assessment	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Session Expenses	\$0.00	\$125.00	\$0.00
Worship/Music	\$340.25	\$261.67	\$10.27
Office	\$546.48	\$845.84	\$459.35
Discipleship	\$81.33	\$245.83	\$959.77
Stephen Ministry	\$0.00	\$41.67	\$0.00
Mid Week Gathering	\$0.00	\$83.33	\$0.00
Formational Prayer/Training	\$0.00	\$83.33	\$0.00
Evangelism / Outreach	\$875.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fellowship / Gatherings	\$0.00	\$191.67	\$0.00
ACCESS / Community Care	\$0.00		
Pastor Discretionary Fund	\$102.00	\$83.33	\$0.00
Total Expenses	\$24,534.78	\$26,026.59	\$24,136.19
EXCESS INCOME / EXPENSES	\$17,732.05	\$21,489.70	\$20,491.26

* Includes prepaid pledges of \$26,580.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Balance Sheet (UNAUDITED)

Consolidated - January 2017

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	Current Year
ASSETS	
CASH ACCOUNTS	
Sutton Bank Checking Acct	\$59,418.69
JanneyMontgomeryScott LLC	146,730.60
Subtotal Cash Accounts	206,149.29
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>\$206,149.29</u>
LIABILITIES	
CURRENT LIABILITIES	
200th Campaign Fund	\$1,011.02
Property Purchase	29,610.00
Lick Fund-Children'sMusic	300.00
Memorial & Special Gifts	
Nancy Donley Estate	6,135.46
Lorraine Wetzel Memorial	964.08
Organ maint.Liability a/c	1,000.00
Kitchen maint. Liab. a/c	708.18
Office Liability A/C	901.19
Office Furniture (Pastor)	459.74
StephenMin./HealingCare	2,155.41
Jesus/StainedGlassWindows	2,249.55
Youth/ Ch.Min.-Plank Mem.	1,080.00
Michael Hudson Memorial	2,135.00
Music/Choir - H Webb Mem.	460.00
Subtotal Memorial & Special Gifts	18,248.61
ACCESS	281.64
Youth Ministry	
ACCF - Johnson	2,408.09
Subtotal Current Liabilities	51,859.36
WITHHELD PAYROLL TAXES	
F.I.C.A.	452.49
Medicare	105.80
Federal Income Tax	551.73
State Income Tax	137.41
City Income Tax	145.99
Employer's Share FICA	452.49
Employer's Share Medicare	105.80
Subtotal Withheld Payroll Taxes	1,951.71
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>53,811.07</u>
FUND BALANCE	
Fund Balance	\$152,338.22
TOTAL FUND BALANCE	<u>152,338.22</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE	<u>\$206,149.29</u>

(RESTRICTED FUNDS)

(TOTAL RESTRICTED FUNDS)

HEALING CARE MANDATE EVENT

Fear Not: Finding Peace in a Scary World

April 21 - 6:00-9:00pm

April 22 - 9:00am-3:30pm

First Presbyterian Church of Ashland

Security. It's one thing we all want and need, but is difficult to find in a time filled with uncertainty, violence, anger, and even hidden threats. It can leave us with feeling anxious and afraid. How do we live in this tension when, for many of us, life has stripped away our sense of security?

In the midst of similar trials, Jesus encouraged His followers to "fear not." But can a real sense of security be found in Christ? Is it really possible to face the uncertainties of life with peace, hope, and rest?

This Friday evening through Saturday afternoon event is led by Jeff Franks, MAPC, CEO of HCM International. Jeff has been positioning people to be for spiritual formation and inner healing for 18 years of full-time ministry.

More information about registration and cost to come.



Exploring Our Stories

MVP Spring Retreat

Sunday, May 7th—Tuesday, May 9th
Saint Therese's Retreat Center
Lead by Marc van Bulck

Join a group from our Presbytery for a retreat to reflect in a guided way on the stories of our lives and our callings. What has our story looked like to far? What chapter do we find ourselves in today? What might God be imagining as the next chapter, and what is our capacity to move our story forward? Contact the church office or Presbytery for more information.



HEALING CARE
a ministry of formational prayer

Formational Prayer Seminar

June 7-10, 2017

Heritage Christian Church, Westerville, OH

Formational Prayer is a ministry of the Holy Spirit, moving through a Christian caregiver, bringing the Healing Presence of Jesus Christ into the place of pain and brokenness within a wounded person. This semi-annual seminar is led by Terry Wardle, DMin.

For more information or to register, contact Lynne Lawson at lynne@healingcare.org or 419-496-0388.



Much thanks to our church family for all your expressions of care and concern: for your prayers, for food, for visits, for cards and notes, for the nice soft prayer shawl. We've been blessed!

The Ramages



Jaxson Everett Dew was born on February 1 to Justin and Andrea. Proud grandparents are Chad and Judi Dickinson.



To the friends and family of Beverly Bixler, who passed away on February 5.

Lent at First Presbyterian



Ash Wednesday, March 1

6:30pm Worship with Imposition of Ashes and Communion

Handel's Messiah

David Hartzfeld will continue the adult Sunday school class based on Handel's *Messiah* during Lent. This class will study the second part of the work beginning March 5, and will meet at 8:45am Sunday mornings in the Knox Room.

Lenten Study

Pastor Mike and Dr. Jody Watson will lead a book study, discussion, and reflection of Henri Nouwen's *Turn My Mourning into Dancing: Finding Hope in Hard Times*. This study will meet in Andrews Chapel at 6:30pm on Wednesday nights during Lent beginning March 8.

Loud Sunday

When a month has a fifth Sunday, FPC collects a special offering to benefit a local charity or project. This offering is "loud"

because we throw our change into coffee cans and make a joyful noise to the Lord.

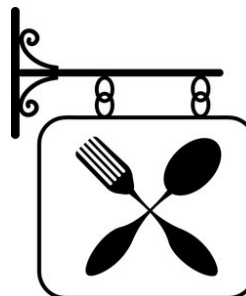
April 30, our Loud Sunday Offering will benefit the Ashland Pregnancy Center. Thank you for saving your spare change.



Thursday, May 4, 6:30am.
AU Convocation Center

Presby Lunch Bunch

Tuesday, March 21, 11:30am



Join The Presby Lunch Bunch for March Madness on March 21st at 11:30 am at the New BW3 (Buffalo Wild Wings) on East Main Street. Don't forget we have two world class basketball coaches who can give you the inside scoop on who to root for. Reservations to Cora Walker no later than March 20th.



ACCESS

Our next week to host is March 5-11

Volunteers are needed!



Holy Week

Palm Sunday, April 9:

10:00am Worship with palm processional and Communion

Maundy Thursday, April 13:

7:30pm Tenebrae Service with Communion

Good Friday, April 14:

12:00-3:00pm Community Worship Service at Trinity Lutheran Church

Resurrection Sunday, April 16:

9:00am Breakfast

10:00am Worship with Communion

March

First Presbyterian Church of Ashland

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 10:00am Bible Study 1:15pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 6:30pm Ash Wednesday Worship	2	3	4
5 Host ACCESS Hunger Sunday 11:15am Deacons	6 Host ACCESS 6:00pm Women's Fellowship Group @ Sponslers' home	7 Host ACCESS 9:00am Staff 8:00pm AA	8 Reports to Session Due Host ACCESS HCM Seminar 10:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Lenten Study 7:30pm Choir	9 Host ACCESS HCM Seminar	10 Host ACCESS HCM Seminar	11 Host ACCESS HCM Seminar
12 Daylight Savings begins 11:15am New Member Class	13	14 10:30am Finance Ministry 7:00pm Session Prayer Meeting 8:00pm AA	15 10:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Lenten Study 7:30pm Choir	16 1:15pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 6:30pm Evangelism and Outreach Team	17	18
19 Communion	20	21 9:00am Staff 11:30am Presby Lunch Bunch @ BW3s 8:00pm AA	22 10:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Lenten Study 7:30pm Choir	23	24	25
26 11:15am New Member Class	27 Monthly Newsletter Deadline	28 7:00pm Session Prayer Meeting 8:00pm AA	29 10:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Lenten Study 7:30pm Choir	30	31	

April

First Presbyterian Church of Ashland

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 Hunger Sunday 11:15am Deacons 5:00pm All-Daughter Banquet	3 6:00pm Women's Fellowship Group @ Sponslers' home	4 9:00am Staff 8:00pm AA	5 Reports to Session Due 10:00am Bible Study 1:15pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 6:30pm Lenten Study	6	7	8 Private Wedding Shower
9 Palm Sunday 11:15am New Member Class?	10	11 7:00pm Session Prayer Meeting 8:00pm AA	12 10:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Lenten Study 7:30pm Choir	13 7:30pm Maundy Thursday Worship	14 Good Friday Office Closed 12:00pm Com- munity Worship Trinity Lutheran	15
16 Easter 9:00am Breakfast 10:00am Worship	17 Office Closed Easter Observed	18 9:00am Staff 7:00pm Session Prayer Meeting 8:00pm AA	19 10:00am Bible Study 7:30pm Choir	20 1:15pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 6:30pm Evangelism and Outreach Team	21 HCM Fear Not Seminar 6:30pm Movie Night	22 HCM Fear Not Seminar
23	24	25 8:00pm AA	26 10:00am Bible Study 7:30pm Choir	27	28	29 Presbytery Meeting @ Marietta First PC
30 Loud Sunday Offering Benefits Ashland Pregnancy Center						

May

First Presbyterian Church of Ashland

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 9:00am Staff 8:00pm AA	3 10:00am Bible Study 1:15pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 6:30pm Healing Pathways 7:30pm Choir	4 6:30am Prayer Breakfast	5	6
7 Communion Hunger Sunday Compassion Sunday 11:15am Deacons	8 6:00pm Women's Fellowship Group @ Sponslers' home	9 7:00pm Session Prayer Meeting 8:00pm AA	10 Quarterly Reports to Session Due 10:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Healing Pathways 7:30pm Choir	11	12	13
14	15	16 9:00am Staff 8:00pm AA	17 10:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Healing Pathways 7:30pm Choir	18 1:15pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 6:30pm Evangelism and Outreach Team	19 6:30pm Movie Night	20 9:00am Session Meeting
21	22 Quarterly Newsletter Deadline	23 7:00pm Session Prayer Meeting 8:00pm AA	24 10:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Healing Pathways 7:30pm Choir	25	26	27
28	29 Memorial Day Office Closed	30 8:00pm AA	31 10:00am Bible Study 6:30pm Healing Pathways 7:30pm Choir			



Presbyterian Mothers Study Group
All Daughter Banquet
Sunday, April 2 @5:00PM
 Fellowship Hall



Join Us for the All-Daughters' Mardi Gras Banquet

Menu

Chicken Kabobs
 Gator Steak (Swiss Steak)
 Mac 'n' Cheese

Dirty Rice (Brown Rice)
 Mardi Gras Slaw
 Cornbread Muffins

PBJ Sandwiches (for kids)
 Sundae Bar
 Beverages

Cost: \$12.00 for Adults, \$11.00 for Senior Citizens (65 & older)
 \$9.00 for Children 4-12 years old, Ages 3 and under Free



Names and cost of those attending:

Name _____ Cost _____

Name _____ Cost _____

Name _____ Cost _____

Name _____ Cost _____

Name _____ Cost _____



Payment must accompany reservation.

Make checks payable to First Presbyterian Church

Please return this form to the church office by Sunday, March 26, 2017.

Questions: contact Peggy Yoder @ 419-496-7569

Visitation and Stephen Ministry



David Hartzfeld has been visiting members of the senior population of our church for the past seven months. You may not know much about David. He retired recently from First Congregational Church in Mansfield and moved shortly thereafter to Ashland with his wife, Linda.

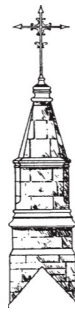
David began his ministry as a youth pastor in New York, Minnesota, and Pennsylvania while he completed his seminary degrees. At that point it was 1968 and David's desire to work overseas began to move forward. He and Linda soon arrived in Saigon—1969. While studying Vietnamese, David joined other missionaries in ministry to Vietnamese soldiers. He also taught Greek and Hebrew to Vietnamese young men who were working their way through ministry qualification.

The Hartzfelds returned to the U.S. in March 1973 and began teaching at a college and seminary in Regina, Saskatchewan. David taught Introduction to Bible, missions, Hebrew; served as Athletic Director (AD) and coach of several sports. The seminary offered the opportunity to study for a Ph.D. in Sheffield, England. Following that, David served as Academic Dean at three seminaries.

The final twelve years of his ministry were served as Associate Minister in Mansfield.

You Can Help

FPC has engaged David Hartzfeld to visit members who are in hospital, nursing homes, or limited to their own homes. David also delivers prayer shawls to those in our church family who are unwell. If you know of a person who would appreciate a visit from David, please call David at 419-651-4254 or email davidhartzfeld@aol.com.



Property Ministry

The adjacent property transfer to the county has hit a snag. There has been no new information on the transfer for some time. Our plans still assume that the county will get it and the church will have some agreement to use part of it. This makes it hard to plan our future use. There are plans and wishes in place and others being developed.

Our plans this year are to do what we can within our possibilities and budget. You will notice some changes as we work through the spring months. Here are projects already or nearly ready to begin:

- Tuck pointing and repair of the exterior of the building
- Repair of the Rose window lighting
- Refurbish Fellowship Hall stage curtains and clean up the area. Repair stair area damaged by the water leak
- Restoration of the dishwasher and generally look at kitchen area improvements
- Explore different options for Fellowship Hall with emphasis on floor coverings, video options and its use as a general meeting area for outside groups
- Upgrade lighting in various areas of the church to make them brighter and more welcoming
- Refurbish the office area with some upgrades for security and appearance
- Better signage to direct visitors to restrooms and which outside doors to use during the week
- Some additions to the sanctuary sound and recording capabilities
- Plan for air conditioning upgrades and explore adding new areas to be air conditioned
- Furnish and decorate office 223, former Stephen Ministry office

Bill Dravenstott

One Great Hour of Sharing

“You Shall Be Called Repairers of the Breach”
Isaiah 58



This annual Lenten Special Offering through PC(USA) makes ministries possible through:

PDA - Presbyterian Disaster Assistance

- Catastrophic flooding victims in southeastern US have been provided with essential food, water, and supplies for affected communities, with work continuing as long-term recovery needs are determined.
- Syrian refugees have been assisted in helped in resettling in the US since March 2011.

PHP - Presbyterian Hunger Program

- In Oakland, CA, Phat Beets Produce closes the gap between small farmers of color who need market outlets, and urban communities that lack access to healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate food.
- In Uganda, rural women farmers are assisted to know and exercise their land rights through Action for Rural Women's Empowerment by offering legal support on land issues.

SDOP - Self-Development of People

- Detroit citizens affected by the water crisis have been aided by the Water Crisis Hotline which provides short term water supplies, restores water to affected and high-risk citizens, and implements policy to ensure fresh, clean and affordable water is delivered to low-income residents.
- Residents of India, through the Sai Self-Help Group, have benefitted by the purchase of silkworm rearing equipment, enabling marginalize community members to raise and market silkworms in their effort to realize income sufficient to lift them out of poverty.

This is just a sampling of the multitude of projects and initiatives underway around the world that are possible from OGHS contributions from congregations and individuals. Prayerfully consider how you

might add your dollars in this gigantic effort to make a difference. Special offering envelopes will be in place in the pews through Palm Sunday, or you may text OGHS 20222 to give \$10 now, or check out presbyterianmission.org/give-oghs.

Reminders and News from Evangelism and Outreach

Pleasant Hill Outdoor Center

March 12 – Maple Syrup Open House, free pancakes (donations accepted) until 3:00,

Great opportunity to visit PHOC and enjoy real maple syrup while appreciating the woodland environment

March 25 – Spring Workday (general workdays 4th Saturday of each month)

May 6 – Summer Camp Open House (367 camper experiences provided in 2016) Check out website www.phoc.org. Camper registration forms and info available in our narthex.

Compassion Sunday

May 7 – Opportunity to learn about alleviating poverty for an international child by monthly sponsorship, which includes communicating with that child to learn about his/her family, hobbies, education, while praying faithfully for well-being and growth in the Lord.

Presbyterian Giving Catalogs for 2016-2017

Gratitude for God's grace moves us to join in God's mission in the world, with ministries of love and justice, reconciliation and peace. Take a catalog from the narthex table and see how your gift of even \$20 can purchase 20 jerry cans for those who must carry clean water for their families, or \$10 can provide farming tools, or \$25 can buy a kitchen kit.

“Small Gifts, Big Impact”

Lament & Let Go

continued from p.1

practices invite us to “let go” of something – the wrongs that have been committed towards us, the times in life when things go wrong, the disappointments that seem to stay with us.

As we journey through this process as a community of faith there are a few misunderstandings that we can sometimes have to which I want to briefly speak.

1. You are not alone in this! We often think that we are the only ones really dealing with things like this. This can lead us to feel isolated or alone, wondering what’s wrong with us that we can’t get over our stuff like everybody else. Let me reiterate – you are not alone in this! Nor are you called to deal with it in isolation. We are called as a community to bear one another’s burdens (Gal. 6:2). Let us each take comfort in the opportunity to journey through these things as a community of faith.

2. Letting Go does not mean simply dismissing. I want to remind you that we are letting go and giving our stuff to Jesus. This is very different than just pushing it aside, discounting, or dismissing it. When turning to Jesus with our burdens we can find comfort, peace, and healing. When we simply ignore our burdens, set them aside, and “move on” we actually end up dragging them behind us; no wonder we become so weary! This isn’t “letting go” at all. In the end we find that we are dragging huge duffle bags filled with burdens. Jesus’ invitation is to actually remove these from us so that we can move and live in freedom.

3. This is easy. Those of you who have worked on the practices of forgiveness and praising God when things go wrong might understand full and well that this process of letting go is far from easy. However, sometimes we enter into things thinking they are easy but when we realize how difficult they are there is temptation to quit. We wonder,

“Wasn’t life easier when we weren’t trying to deal with all of this stuff?” We echo the cries of the Israelites in the wilderness who somehow thought it was better when they were living in Egypt as slaves! If you are finding this process much harder than you anticipated I pray you will persevere. I cannot stress the importance of the practice of lament (which we will be focusing on the first three weeks of Lent). Directing our emotions to God helps us to let go of the source behind the emotions. There is freedom at the end!

I am interested in knowing how God is working in your life through the practices. I welcome your phone calls, emails, and conversations. Please let me know how we can come alongside you in this journey. And know that my prayers are with you and echo the psalmist:

*“Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior,
who daily bears our burdens. Our God is a
God who saves; from the sovereign Lord
comes escape from death.”*

In Christ’s Love,
Pastor Mike

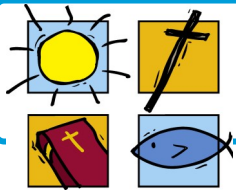
Prayer Shawls

FPC has a prayer shawl ministry group who gets together twice a month to make shawls.

The shawls are then delivered by David Hartzfeld to those in our church family who are unwell. The shawl is a reminder of God’s loving presence and is meant to encourage someone and let them know that their church family is thinking of them and praying for them.

Contact Brenda Luttrell if you would like to help create prayer shawls.





Children's Ministry

January in the Atrium we dove into the parable of the lost son, Luke 15: 11-32. The first week we read and then learned about what times were like during the time this parable was told. The children had many questions, many about the fattened calf, which made me giggle.

The second week we read and then created a work that represented the lost son's journey (see picture, upper right).



The third week we read and then played. The kids through conversation created a game that they felt embodied the message. The game resembled freeze tag with obstacles. The freezers being the temptation or wild life and the obstacles being the conviction he was to overcome or the time where he was hungry and feeding pigs. The base they were running to was the cross which represented the Father.

The fourth week we read and rested. We took time to pray for guidance and clarity in areas that might be pulling us from our Father. Then each child had one on one time with me to discuss the past month's passage. During this time we went over their understanding by asking questions of what they heard and felt about the scripture. The children were then given opportunity to reflect on the month as a whole. Though Read and Play week was a clear favorite the response was encouraging to the whole process. They liked it and really embraced every week for what it was.

Thank you Lord for guidance, growth, vision, joy, peace, and Your abundant love. Thank you Lord for insight on how you want Your children to learn in this season of their lives and blessing our time in the Atrium.

February we are engaging the parable of the sown seeds, Matthew 13: 1-23.

Here is the renderings from Read and Create week (right):



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“Little Man” Baby Shower

January 21, 2017



Patti Fenwick threw a
baby shower for the
Dews and invited the
whole congregation.
There were mustaches
galore in honor of
“Little Man” Jaxson,
who arrived February 1.

Andrea Dew, Martie Casciani, Justin Dew