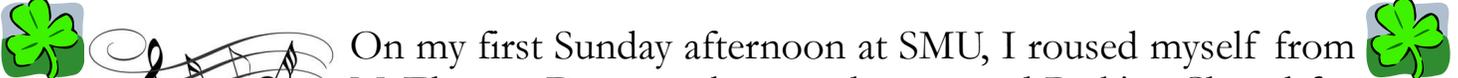


Eastminster Eagle

Volume 38, Issue 3

March 2021



Notes From
Fred

On my first Sunday afternoon at SMU, I roused myself from McElvaney Dorm early enough to attend Perkins Chapel for worship. One of my scholarships was to sing in the choir at Highland Baptist, but that didn't start until the following Wednesday. Being a Southern Baptist, although I've noticed the same seems to happen with lots of Presbyterians, some mixture of tradition, habit, and curiosity landed me in a pew near the back. The Chapel is a beautiful edifice. All these years later, I don't remember much about the service except the singing. The Chapel Choir, made up of some sacred and other music majors and theology students, sent sacred music aloft into the soaring arches, balm for an anxious junior transfer. Dr. Lloyd Pfaustch was in his second year as Director of Choral music in the then SMU School of Music and though I had heard the University choir sing under him earlier in the Spring, I wanted to see him directing again before auditions for the choir on Monday. They sang two pieces I knew from my Baptist Church, "With A Voice of Singing" by Martin Shaw, and "Behold Now, Praise the Lord" by Everett Titcomb, but what really spoke to me that day was the singing benediction "The Lord Bless you and Keep You" by Peter Lutkin. I also knew that piece from my church and from the John Tyler High Acappella choir. Since I was mostly singing in choirs both church and from the 6th grade on in school, I had never really heard it as a listener. For whatever reasons, maybe being away from home for the first time for longer than a couple of weeks, maybe being a little anxious about being at a new school, and the reputation of Dr. Pfaustch and my new voice teacher Mack Harrell, a Metropolitan Opera baritone, whatever it was when the choir sang at first my eyes watered a little, but then a feeling of comfort along with a feeling of being happy kicked in and I knew that I would be o.k.

In the years before and after SMU, choral singing has brought me gifts beyond counting community, solace, joy, friendship, peace. The years I have been here as the Director of Music have shown me an even deeper community both in the congregation and specifically in the choir. The choir has worked hard over the years to be as some have dubbed themselves "the

Continued on Page 2



best little Church Choir". Yes, they have sung and given wonderful sounds, soft and loud, slow and fast that have spoken to the soul and heart of many in our congregation, some people beyond our walls, in the choir itself, and to me with inspiration, a feeling of God's Spirit moving in our bodies both mentally and physically, brought comfort, prayers, moving commentary on God's Word, and the feeling that God is with us.

COVID-19 has robbed us of many of those experiences, of God speaking to us through the Scriptures as read in the Sanctuary, of the family feelings this congregation excels in as they welcome friends, family and visitors, of hearing and singing congregational hymns and the choir, Melody and other instrumentalists' offerings, and most of all for me, I miss the community of the choir. Its hard to explain, but they work hard, support each other, this church, and beyond in their various communities, and have fun. I miss all of that.

Few gifts are given as freely as the gift of singing. I do not mean the precise, mellifluous notes of professionals, or even the practiced harmonies of good amateurs. I simply mean the capacity of virtually everyone born to produce sounds beyond speech. Singing can encompass everything from caterwauling in the shower to belting an aria at the Metropolitan Opera. It's something we do instinctually — children make up goofy songs, drivers hum along to the radio in their cars, the religious sing together in every manner of worship. Singing is a staple of our civic rituals, whether it's the National Anthem or anthems of protest in the streets. It is God's gift to us.

Amid my own grief and despair at not being able to have the weekly blessing of choir rehearsal and Sunday worship, I have also borne witness to small signs of resilience. Some of the choir members were able to sing some and prepare some of the Lessons and Carols music and scriptures. Several people tell me they sing along on the hymns and anthems during the online services. Some have prepared video music for the worship service, and some have and continue to participate as liturgists for the online services.

Yes, things have been different in all our lives since mid-March 2020. Yes, we have had grief, anxiety, fear, deep concern for those who contracted the virus and other illnesses, cooped up with all the family 24-7 (admittedly good and not so good). or loneliness, and lack of being in worship in the physical building and with our church family. God is in the online worship, the many contacts from the outreach committee, our members who work at the food pantry, the Christmas Village, the email prayers from Pastor Sherry and many other people and activities.

Of course, I am anxious to be able to have choir rehearsal, in person worship and Sunday School classes, and the activities of our normal church year. I pray that we can with social distancing, wearing masks and the choir with singer's mask, be able to return to some regular in person worship and fellowship (greatly missed).

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I am reminded that God is not restricted to the physical church building and can communicate and call us wherever we are and however we are worshiping, praying and meditating. God is still calling us as the anthem “The Road Home” by Stephen Paulus so beautifully expresses the longing and hope as we endure a grim historical season while working toward the day when we will be physically worshiping, praying, studying, mediating together in small and large groups. The last two verses have given me some quiet solace, hope, joy, and a reminder that no matter how far we may stray from our goals and beliefs, God is still calling us home to Him.

*After wind, after rain, when the dark is done,
As I wake from a dream in the gold of day,*

*Through the air there's a calling from far
away, there's a voice I can hear that will lead
me home.*

*Rise, follow me. Come away, is the call.
With the love in your heart as the only song.*

*There is no such beauty as where you belong.
Rise up, follow me
I will lead you home*

P.S. you can listen to this beautiful song on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbwhSP3ZIQ4>

What is One Great Hour of Sharing?

Immediately following World War II, Protestant churches in the U.S. made appeals for the relief and reconstruction of areas devastated by the war, primarily Europe and Asia. In 1949, the leaders of several denominations formed a committee to organize an appeal to support their church's separate campaigns.

A program called One Great Hour was broadcast on March 26, 1949, over major networks and many independent stations. The broadcast closed with a request that listeners attend their local church the following morning and make a sacrificial contribution. No exact measure of receipts was possible, but it was estimated that more than 75,000 churches participated.

Today, projects supported by One Great Hour of Sharing are under way in more than 100 countries, including the United States and Canada. In recent years Presbyterians have given about \$10 million annually.

Currently, there are eight denominations participating in One Great Hour of Sharing.

The Session of Eastminster during their February Session meeting approved the One Great Hour of Sharing receipts to be divided equally between the Pleasant Grove Food Pantry and the denomination. The denomination programs supported by this offering are Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People.

On the back page of this newsletter is a One Great Hour of Sharing Calendar with interesting ways to begin your contribution. Truly, the calendar explains not only the needs but the daily reminders just how much we are blessed.

The Offering will be received March 21, March 28, and April 4 Easter Sunday.

Please prayerfully consider this special offering. Thanks be to God.

Dear Eastminster,

You are my brothers and sisters, and my family in Christ, and my home and my community. Thank you for all your prayers and kindnesses (both practical and spiritual). Make no mistake, I am alive because of your prayers! You all have always been there for Michele, the kids and me. There are not sufficient words or deeds to thank you, but I intend to try over the days and weeks of my recovery and beyond.

The recent medical journey and current recovery leave me with humble gratitude and a great many questions about God's plans for me.

There are some things I know (having learned the hard way):

- 1) Covid is evil at many different levels, but we have already turned the corner to victory, despite much loss and sadness to come;
- 2) God's will is inexplicable and God's grace is blinding and beautiful;
- 3) Our medical people are doing heroic, skilled measures that the public doesn't adequately appreciate; and
- 4) Never underestimate the power of prayer, the power of community, or the power of prayerful communities.

I look forward to worshipping with my community (remotely or in person!). I look forward to returning to the rhythms of my church community. I look forward to speaking with each of you and personally thanking you.

It is a wonderful blessing to be alive, thank you.

Love, Tom



A Lenten Journey

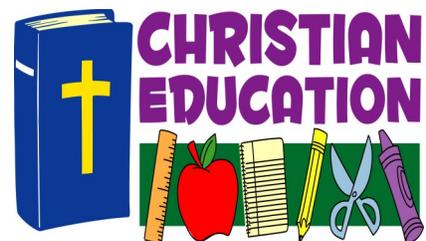
As we move into the Lenten season for 2021, we find ourselves once again facing challenges we never expected. Today – maybe more than ever – we seek to reflect on our relationships – with each other and with God.

Grace Presbytery has put together a unique resource to aid us in our Lenten journey this year. Designed by educators, this project can be used singly and by families; by adults and children alike. Each module incorporates four “movements” – reading, practicing, praying, and responding – and leads us in a prayer practice as we consider closely our relationships with God and with others. There are no special materials involved beyond the Bible and some ordinary household things.

Each week, you will receive a reminder.. If you would like to have printed copies of each week, please call or email the office and we will provide that for you.

Use A Lenten Journey as a guide for focusing as you reflect during this Lenten season. May the Spirit be with us all.

The Christian Education Committee





	Families	Adults	Seniors	Children	Persons	Pounds
Jan 5	197	421	50	476	947	17,132
Jan 12	202	415	54	504	973	5,088
Jan 19	193	429	69	485	983	7,034
Jan 26	207	428	75	486	989	11,972
Totals	799	1,693	248	1,951	3,892	41,226

A breath of fresh prayer

Norwegian theologian Ole Hallesby described prayer as simply letting God into our lives. God “knocks,” he said, “not only in the solemn hours of secret prayer” but “in the midst of your daily work, your daily struggles, your daily grind ... when you need him most.”

Prayer, added Hallesby, is as essential to life as air. “As impossible as it is for us to take a breath in the morning large enough to last us until noon, so impossible is it to pray in the morning in such a way as to last us until noon,” he said. “Let your prayers ascend to [God] constantly, audibly or silently, as circumstances throughout the day permit.”



God in my hands

When I was ready to give up on the Church, it was the sacraments that pulled me back.

When my faith had become little more than an abstraction, a set of propositions to be affirmed or denied, the tangible, tactile nature of the sacraments invited me to touch, smell, taste, hear, and see God in the stuff of everyday life again. They got God out of my head and into my hands. They reminded me that Christianity isn't meant to simply be believed; it's meant to be lived, shared, eaten, spoken, and enacted in the presence of other people. They reminded me that, try as I may, I can't be a Christian on my own.

—Rachel Held Evans





Thank you to all who participated in Souper Bowl of Caring. Virtual giving was a success with

North Texas Food Bank receiving exactly those items they can best use and Pleasant Grove Food Pantry benefiting from Amazon Smiles purchases.

So, you don't quite get the Amazon Smile thing? Let's walk through it, because this is an ongoing fund raiser for Pleasant Grove Food Pantry as well as Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services. Each are registered as charities.

Follow these simple steps:

- ◆ Sign into smile.amazon.com on your desktop or mobile phone browser. There are simple instructions to set up your giving.
- ◆ Select a charitable organization to receive your donation through eligible purchases before you begin shopping.
- ◆ Amazon will remember your charitable selection for six months, and then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a donation.

You can find answers to your questions about Amazon Smile on the Amazon website.

Paying it back — and forward

During the pandemic, acts of kindness seemed especially meaningful. Last spring, as Covid-19 hit Native American communities particularly hard, an interesting transatlantic outreach occurred. Donations from Ireland began appearing in a relief fund for Navajo and Hopi families, leading administrators to suspect the account had been hacked. Then they realized a cross-generational payback was underway.

In 1847, Choctaw Tribe members sent \$170 overseas to Ireland to help with Potato Famine relief. That generosity was never forgotten, and by May 2020, people in Ireland had contributed more than \$4 million toward pandemic assistance for relatives of people who'd helped their ancestors. Many donors included an Irish proverb meaning "In each other's shadows the people live."

The concept of paying it forward dates back to a 1784 letter by Benjamin Franklin. It also echoes Jesus' Golden Rule: "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:31). How might you live out this practice today?



Laud & honor on Palm Sunday

The Palm Sunday anthem “All Glory Laud and Honor” is one of Christendom’s oldest hymns. St. Theodulf of Orleans, who helped reform the church under Charlemagne, wrote the lyrics in the year 820 while imprisoned in France.

The lyrics recount Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, an event the medieval church reenacted every Palm Sunday. Clergy and townspeople processed from fields through the city gates, behind a Jesus figure riding a donkey. At the gates, children began singing the hymn in Latin — Gloria, laus et honor — and onlookers soon chimed in.

City gates may be a thing of the past, as the website Hymnary.org notes, yet we still praise our blessed Redeemer “because we know just what kind of King he was and is — an everlasting King who reigns not just in Jerusalem but over the entire earth. What more could we do but praise him with glory, laud and honor.”

All glory, laud and honor to you, Redeemer, King,
to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring.
You are the King of Israel and David's royal Son,
now in the Lord's name coming, the King and Blessed One.



When God giggles

Before dinner, our family was preparing to pray, which we do by holding hands. Upon discovering that one child hadn’t washed his hands, my husband struck a contorted pose to avoid physical contact. The mealtime blessing quickly dissolved into laughter as we each peeked at him. Afterward, as we passed around the food, I asked, “What do you imagine God thought about us laughing during prayer?” One child quickly replied, “I think he was laughing right along with us.” Yes! Although prayer is reverent, God invites us to converse with words, emotions — and even giggles!

—Janna Firestone

As the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, they longingly remembered some of the foods they'd had in Egypt. Which foods were not mentioned?

- A. carrots and potatoes
- B. onions and garlic
- C. fish and leeks
- D. melons and cucumbers



Answer: A (See Numbers 11:4-6.)

What is Love?

Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and just listen.

Bobby, age 7

When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So, my grandfathers does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis, too. That's love.

Rebecca, age 8

Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day.

Rebecca, age 4



Scripture Readings for March

1 - John 4:27-42
 2 - John 4:43-54
 3 - John 5:1-18
 4 - John 5:19-29
 5 - John 5:30-47
 6 - John 7:1-13
 7 - Mark 5:1-20
 8 - John 7:14-36
 9 - John 7:37-52
 10 - John 8:12-20

11 - John 8:21-32
 12 - John 8:33-47
 13 - John 8:47-59
 14 - Mark 8:11-21
 15 - John 6:1-15
 16 - John 6:16-27
 17 - John 6:27-40
 18 - John 6:41-51
 19 - John 6:52-59
 20 - John 6:60-71
 21 - Mark 8:31-9:1

22 - John 9:1-17
 23 - John 9:18-41
 24 - John 10:1-18
 25 - John 10:19-42
 26 - John 11:1-27
 27 - John 11:28-44
 28 - John 12:9-19
 30 - John 12:20-26
 31 - John 12:27-36

A bountiful life

“Life is given to you like a flat piece of land,” said actress Jeanne Moreau. “I hope that when I’m finished, my piece of land will be a beautiful garden.”

God, who put the first human in a garden to care for creation, blesses us with talents and resources to wisely manage. In gardening terms, God gives us the plot of ground, the seed, the wisdom and strength to bring forth beauty and abundance. Yet we do the work, with God’s help, to make it a reality. Like Adam, we till, but God gives the increase. God’s provisions and our labor bring the garden — and our lives of stewardship — to fulfillment.

As stewards, we ponder: When God calls us home, what will our garden be like, and what will it have produced?



Setting captives free

Though St. Patrick’s Day has become a secular “holiday,” March 17 commemorates the life of a Christian missionary. St. Patrick grew up in a Christian home in Britain but wasn’t very devout until he experienced crisis. As a teen, he was captured and sold into slavery in Ireland, escaping after six years. “The Lord opened my unbelieving eyes” in Ireland, Patrick later said. God led him back there, and he converted tribe after tribe to Christianity.

In Confessio 61, St. Patrick writes, “I testify in truth and in great joy of heart before God and his holy angels that I never had any other reason for

Feline-informed faith

I am the epitome of a “cat lady”: Each of my five felines has taught me a bit about faith. As I settle into bed, Piccolo presses his body tightly against mine. As I type, Tina sits on my lap, often reaching to rest a paw on my hand (the one on the mouse, of course!). Pumpkin cries persistently, even raising his front legs like toddler arms when he wants to be picked up. Yet, as any cat lover knows, these animals can be stubbornly aloof — at least until mealtime.

My cats’ actions make me think about how intentional daily Bible reading is like pressing myself against God. When I see God’s presence in nature or someone’s kindness, pausing to give thanks is like reaching out to touch God’s hand. When I feel needy, I can stretch my spirit toward God’s embrace with an honest prayer. And when I make myself aloof — as, alas, I sometimes do — I can rejoice that God’s love always calls me back, to nourish me again.

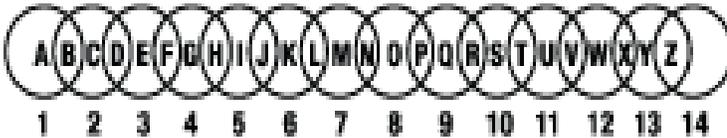


—Heidi Mann

Puzzle!

Use the code to complete the blanks — and find out how God wants us to treat people.

CODE:



1,2 3 6 5 7,8 2,3 1 7,8 2,3

2 8 7 8,9 1 10 10 5 8 7,8 1 10,11 3

10,11 8 8 7,8 3 1 7,8 8 10,11 4,5 3 9,10'

3,4 8 9,10 4 5 11,12 5 7,8 4 3 1 2 4,5

8 10,11 4,5 3 9,10' 5,6 11 10 10,11 1 10

5 7,8 2 4,5 9,10 5 10 10,11 4 8 2,3

3,4 8 9,10 4 1 11,12 3 13 8 11'

EPHESIANS 4:32, NIV

Answer: Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:32, NIV

“Always show kindness and love to others. Your words might be filling the empty places in someone's heart.”

—Mandy Hale

“No pain, no palm; no thorns, no throne; no gall, no glory; no cross, no crown.”

—William Penn

“If we dwell upon the harms that have been wrought on us by humankind, we amputate from our mind the power of dwelling upon God.”

—Macarius of Egypt (4th century)

That's the point!

If prayer stands as the place where God and human beings meet, then I must learn about prayer. Most of my struggles in the Christian life circle around the same two themes: why God doesn't act the way we want God to, and why I don't act the way God wants me to. Prayer is the precise point where those themes converge.

--Philip Yancey



MARCH



- Jennifer Benson 3-1
- Jacqueline Robert 3-9
- Jake Davis 3-13
- Sebastian Crouse 3-21
- Philis Knox 3-22
- Jim Bender 3-31



March 28 - April 4



**Eastminster
Session**

- Denise Bennett
- Betty Crabtree
- Kayla Dixon
- Ronnie Dixon
- Blair Garrett
- Kathy Kreger
- Jim Lee
- Michele Pappas
- Helen Randolph
- Vicki Thiebaud
- Charlotte Turner



- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Pastor | Sherry Holloman |
| Director of Music | Fred P. Watkins |
| Organist | Melody S. Davis |
| Administrative Assistant | Chandra Anderson |
| Hostess/Housekeeper | Minerva Hernandez |
| Child Care Provider | Betty Crabtree |

One Great Hour of Sharing Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>March 14</p> <p>When homes are destroyed by floods, One Great Hour of Sharing can help rebuild them. Give 50 cents for every year your home has remained standing.</p>	<p>15</p> <p>If you had to work today, put in a dollar and thank God you are able to work.</p>	<p>16</p> <p> "I was thirsty and you gave me drink." 50 cents for every drink today.</p>	<p>17</p> <p>People are in darkness this day. Give 25 cents for every window in your home.</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Did you eat out this week? \$1.00 for every one who ordered.</p>	<p>19</p> <p>50 cents for each TV and radio in your home. </p>	<p>20</p> <p>A cow can make all the difference. It provides milk for a family to drink or sell. Give 25 cents for each food item in your home that comes from a cow.</p>
<p>21</p> <p>Natural disasters bring with them not just physical damage, but also separation from family and friends. Give a dime for every hour your family or group spends together today.</p>	<p>22</p> <p>"Give us this day our daily bread..." 50¢ for every loaf of bread in your home.</p>	<p>23</p> <p>It's a good day today! 50 cents rain or shine. </p>	<p>24</p> <p>A hungry world is a dangerous world. Put in 75 cents today.</p>	<p>25</p> <p>75 cents if you don't have to wear glasses. 50 cents if you do. What a joy to be able to see!</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Are your clothes nice and clean? 75 cents for your washer, and 75 cents for your dryer.</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Trees help keep the soil in place so homes don't wash away and people have good soil for planting. Give 10 cents for every plant in your home and every tree in your yard.</p>
<p>28</p> <p>Staying clean helps keep us healthy. People need toothbrushes, soap and shampoos. Give 10 cents for everything you have that helps keep your body clean.</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Children are a blessing! \$2.00 for each one in your family. </p>	<p>30</p> <p>A dime for each between-meal snack you had today.</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Jesus said, "I am the door;" 25 cents for every door in your home.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>A dime for each time you opened the refrigerator  today.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>\$1.00 if you have not been sick this month. Thank God for good health!</p>	<p>3</p> <p>One Great Hour of Sharing helps deliver first aid and medicine – a luxury for many families. Give ten cents for every over-the-counter medication that your home is blessed with.</p>
<p>April 4</p> <p>After a flood, people need mops, gloves, sponges, detergent, and many other things to clean their homes. Give 10 cents for each thing in your house that you clean with.</p>	<p>This Sharing Calendar is a fun way for your family to make an offering to One Great Hour of Sharing while you learn about how contributions help people around the world.</p>	<p>Offering divided between the Denomination and Pleasant Grove Food Pantry. The denomination supports Disaster Assistance, Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People.</p>	<p>Each day, participate with your family in a different activity. Create a pattern of sharing, learning about the needs of others, and deepening the relationship in your home.</p>			



Special dates

- World Day of Prayer, March 5
- Daylight-Saving Time begins, March 14
- First day of spring, March 20
- Holy Week, March 28 – April 4
- Palm/Passion Sunday, March 28