

April 2020

editor Daisy Wilson

Spreading the Good News



First Presbyterian Church
Douglas, GA.



407 WEST WARD STREET E

www.firstpresdouglas.org

Sunday School 10 AM Worship 11 AM

912-384-1503

Apart, But Still Connected

Pastor Rev Mark Knowles



After you get past the crazy toilet paper hoarding, the coronavirus is perhaps making better people out of most of us. In a mustering of individual and collective unity on a scale that many alive have never seen before, Americans and others across the world are metaphorically joining our washed hands in an amazing communitarian spirit. [National](#) and [local](#) examples of positive response to the COVID-19 crisis are heartwarming.

Needy out-of-school children are being provided meals, including in some creative ways like delivering them to school bus stops for those who don't have safe transportation to get to the school or are prohibited from going because of stay-at-home mandates. Strangers are getting groceries for the elderly and those with a compromised immune system. In many cases, technology, which too often has inadvertently contributed to a weird sense of isolation, is now providing a lifeline.

More important on a national scale, we are shutting down our normal lives for the majority in order to protect the fragility of those whose health or advanced age makes them especially susceptible to this deadly virus. We are foregoing our normal work and leisure routines in a hopeful effort to avoid further overwhelming a healthcare system already scrambling for needed care-providers' protection and for treatment equipment for patients.

In the midst of the anxiety, economic ramifications, and, for some, unfathomable grief at the loss of a loved one to COVID-19, a surprising shift is happening: We're realizing that we're all in this out-of-control situation together, and we desperately need each other. Indeed. Maybe it's taking a global pandemic to remind us of a core truth about humankind - that God made us for relationship.

Three professors of sociology at the University of California in Los Angeles are calling for an [important adjustment](#) to the now-familiar term "social distancing": using *physical* distancing instead. These sociologists emphasize that the necessary call for "social distancing" is really a plea for increasing the physical distance between people. They worry that the seemingly innocuous term may inadvertently contribute to the isolation, exclusion, and loneliness that can easily accompany forced withdrawal from normal interaction. They write, "When we practice physical distancing, we need social connectivity and social responsibility *more than ever*." I couldn't agree more.

During this global crisis, we're finding how very much we need social connection, and humans are getting creative about how to manage it in the time of six feet of separation. In Italy and other places in Europe, people are taking to their balconies to sing or dance. Large families who aren't able to gather as normal are spreading out across a front yard to sing Happy Birthday to a loved one standing on the porch. Groups unable to meet in person, including faith communities, are meeting online. People may not be in physical contact, but they see and hear each other, which by itself boosts oxytocin, an important bonding hormone.





As your Pastor, I'm grateful for the increased emphasis on staying connected while we're staying apart. Along with the important medical updates on COVID-19, television and online reports are full of suggestions about ways to engage with others. It takes a lot more intentionality for sure.

Voice-to-voice and sight-to-sight connection is crucial for humans' wellbeing. Texting or Facebook messaging is convenient, but it's no substitute. If you're one of the millions required to stay at home, make a phone call (yes, gasp, an actual phone call) to someone every day. Better yet, have a video connection. A simple "in person" chat via Facetime, Skype, Zoom, or some similar app (maybe with a shared cup of coffee or glass of wine) can do wonders to provide support and encouragement.

Be especially mindful of the elderly or those who live alone. A laptop, iPad, or smartphone can be their lifeline. It may take some doing to teach them about apps, clicking, and scrolling (just imagine teaching someone who has never used any technology beyond a manual typewriter), but they may love connecting through Facebook, Skype, or Zoom. It's especially helpful now that in many cases outside visitors are limited for their safety.

Your Session has been working behind the scenes to help keep our church family remain connected and engaged in the worship and work of the Church. Here's what's happening:

- **Our** beloved women's group (known now as the Brunch Bunch) is looking for ways to stay connected with their twelve groups of church members and friends through such things as periodic Zoom meetings (in addition to their regular email, cards, and snail mail).
- **The** Session has been meeting together by Skype and Zoom meetings to coordinate methods to help our church family stay connected and engaged.
- **Our** Sunday morning Worship is continuing each Sunday at 11:00 am, streaming "live" on Facebook and later posting the service on our church's webpage.
- **The** Adult Sunday School class is considering continuing their study together by scheduling a Zoom Sunday School class meeting.
- **Our** Lenten Study has "morphed" into a video study by Dr. R.C. Sproul entitled "Surprised by Suffering". Each week the congregation is invited to watch a 40 minute [teaching video](#) and then log onto a 40 minute virtual discussion that I will moderate via a scheduled Zoom meeting each Wednesday at 6:00 pm. A Zoom "Invitation" link with the [Study Guide](#) (pdf file) will be emailed each week prior to the meeting.

Your Elders and I are working to offer worship, study, and congregational care through technology while we have to take a break from holding our usual activities face-to-face. It's time to use technology to connect, rather than to distance us. There's no reason to feel all alone during these stressful times. Connection helps, even when it's not in person.

Finally, I encourage you to be mindful that we are (and will always be) connected by God's loving Spirit as one Body with Jesus as our Head. God's Spirit is prayerfully interceding for us with groanings too deep for words. Nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus. And God is working all things together for good, for those who love him and are called to his purpose (Romans 8).



Thanks to everyone who has mailed in their tithes/offerings. Even though we are not able to have our traditional church services, our expenses continue. Please continue to mail your tithes/offerings to:

First Presbyterian Church

P.O. Box 1210

Douglas, Ga 31534

For those of you who would like to send your funds online, I will have the process completed soon. I will let you know when it is completed. God Bless,

BEH

Women of the Church
April



All Brunch Bunch activities (Hog-N-Bones meetings and White elephant sale) have been put on hold for the time being. You can begin to collect your items for the sale.

I have highlighted the talents of **Sue** (with her handmade cards and poetry writing) and **Judith 's** beautiful art work. But I was not aware of the outstanding talent that **Mary Charles** has in flower arranging until I saw her work displayed

at the installation of Rev Mark Knowles recently.

We are so Blessed that they share these gifts with us.

(If you know of other talents in our group please let me know.)



Becky Sims is celebrating the birth of her New twin grandsons

Finley and Oliver

Who Live in Hawaii





Bailey Chambers...April 11

Carmen Greenway...April 15

Lewis Stubblefield...April 19

Maggie Pitts...April 25

Julie Quincey...April 26

Tyler Chambers...April 27



Caught Smiling

*Stuart's
Birthday*



**Big
50**

Each Day Is a Gift from God



*A sweet, sweet soul has gone on to meet the Lord
Brenda Stubblefield.*

*"Precious in the sight of the Lord is
the death of his saints"*

Psalms 116:15

September 18, 1947—March 30, 2020



Remember to keep Lewis and his family in your prayers.

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed;
perplexed, but not driven to despair;
persecuted, but not forsaken;
struck down, but not destroyed;

- 2 Corinthians 4:8-9

"Our Strength in Jesus Christ our Saviour"

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<http://www.flickr.com/photos/vivobalague/>

Have You Heard?

I heard that they have arrested a man named Jesus. I heard that He is guilty of blasphemy.

I heard that the people cried out for Him to be crucified.

I heard that He has carried His cross to Golgotha.

Have you seen this **PRISONER**, Jesus?

Do you know Him?



I heard that the man called Jesus that was crucified is gone from the tomb.

I heard that some women went to anoint His body, but did not find Him there! The stone had been rolled away from the entrance to the tomb! I heard that His disciples, Peter and John, found only His linen cloths lying where His body had been!

Have you seen this **DEAD MAN**, Jesus?

Do you know Him?



I heard that the dead man Jesus is alive! I heard that He appeared to a woman, Mary Magdalene, and also to His disciples.

Have you seen the **RESURRECTED MAN**, Jesus?