



Count down to Resurrection Sunday

This week began the season of Lent. We do not count it a time so much for what we are to give up, as a time to particularly focus on the meaning, the hope, the victory of the cross, and to draw closer to the Lord Jesus Christ in our daily walk. Each Lord's Day leading up to Resurrection Day is a Sunday IN Lent. By design and intention, it is a reminder that even in a time of extended contemplation and repentance, the Lord's Day is a breath of fresh air, because Jesus the Son of God who humbled Himself even to death on the Cross, arose triumphant over death, sin and hell on the third day! The Christian day of worship is the First day of the week in celebration of the Resurrection of the Lord on that day. The "Christian Sabbath" is set apart for humanity. Physical, emotional, relational and spiritual re-creation is built into God's purpose in the faithful keeping of the Lord's Day! One focus of Lent is to create and reinforce healthy spiritual habits or disciplines in our lives. Ask the Lord to help you evaluate how you and your family are doing with this. And then make the most of this period of *Countdown to Resurrection Sunday!*

Please remember the **Youth Mission Team** as they head to Costa Rica on the 9th and return on the 16th. We are looking forward to hearing reports from them after their return.

The Personnel Committee also welcomes your prayers as they are in the process of filling two staff positions for FPC. We are well along the way in seeking a new **Facility Manager**. A number of interviews have taken place. We hope to have this position filled very soon. A huge "Thank You!" to Randy Gilde and David Mains, who have taken the lead in handling issues that are usually covered by the Facility Manager during this time! Also to staff members, Peggie McNeely, Billy Hogue and Kathy

Bruce who have helped covering different aspects of the position. We are so blessed to have each of them. Thanks to those who have also jumped in when asked to help with projects.

The Personnel Committee is also in the process of seeking candidates for the position of **Director of Contemporary Music Ministry**. Again, the Lord has blessed us tremendously with the leadership that Barbara Sewell has given to this essential area of ministry! We are thankful for her! Iglesia en Movimiento has now had two "preview services" for the church plant. This will continue on the 4th Sunday of each month, and grow as the Lord leads and as growth takes place. Barbara will be transitioning to assist her husband, Pastor Tim, with this new work. She will be leading through Resurrection Sunday. They will participate on more of a support basis after the transition, until the requirements of the Church Plant bring their full focus there. Job Descriptions are available and the position has been posted. Please PRAY for God's leading and provision to be forthcoming!

Thank you to our Mission Team for a truly excellent **Missions Festival** in February! The booths with information and goodies to sample from the various countries where we support missions was fun, informative and encouraging. Thanks to each of the Small Groups who took on that project and helped FPC grow in our awareness of what God is doing in the world and our small, but important, part in the Great Commission. Please continue to pray for **World Witness** and for the exciting ministry that was introduced to us by **Andrew Hart, PAK 7!**

Let us encourage one another (*Hebrews 10:24-25*) to be intentionally engaged in this *Countdown to Resurrection Sunday!*

Blessings, Pastor Ray



A Listening Ear

By Barbara Thayer



Barbara Thayer

One of the areas most needed in the church, in our homes and in our society is having the ability to listen. Hearing what another person has to say affirms that person, but our culture today walks around with smart phones, IPADS and lap tops. When I go into a restaurant, I often see couples more engrossed in their smart phones than in having a conversation. The same can be said of holidays. Everyone brings their devices with them when real people they can talk and listen to are standing in front of them. So how then, can we learn to listen with godly ears?

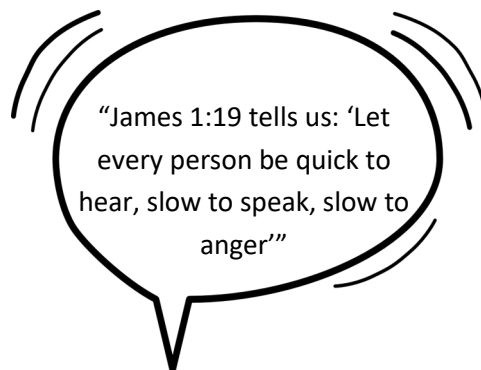
James 1:19 tells us: "Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger." While this verse sounds easy enough to understand, it is often difficult to live. Our natural man tends to be slow to hear, quick to speak and quick to anger. This often leads to misunderstandings. A good example is in a public school setting.

I volunteer on Mondays at my grandsons' elementary school. In the classroom, when the teacher is giving out instructions, some students listen while others are busy talking. Those who have been talking do not get the directions and have to ask the teacher to repeat them. Its time consuming for the teacher as well as other class members.

Within each of us is a desire to be heard. This is especially true in the church where we have widows, singles, divorced individuals and others who just need a friend. A listening ear means we do less talking and more listening. When we do this, we are better able to formulate what we want to say that might encourage the person. In addition, taking time to listen keeps us from jumping to conclusions which might cause us to respond in anger. I admit it does take time to stop our bad habit of being "Mr. or Mrs" answer person, but it is well worth the effort.

Even in our marriages we have to learn the give and take required to converse well. There are times when all I want to do is vent my feelings. I am not looking for answers or shortcuts. I just want a listening ear. I feel much better when I have been affirmed.

Another area that requires a listening ear is when we are sharing the Gospel with someone. People want to be heard. So if we start up a friendly conversation and



ask good questions, we will learn something about that person. They will feel that we are genuinely interested in them and will allow us to talk about our faith. On the other hand, when we sit down "cold turkey" and right away begin a presentation, the other person may be put off by that approach.

In order to improve our listening skills, here are some things we can do. First, put down your smart phone or tablet and really enter into a meaningful conversation. Your cyber friends will still be there when you are done. Second, make eye contact with the person with whom you are conversing. There is nothing more rude than to try to speak with someone who seems to be looking for someone, at their watch or like they are in a hurry. Third, we should truly listen and not be in a hurry to come up with an answer. If we are busy formulating our response, we certainly are not honestly listening to what that person is saying. Remember that listening often provides us with information that can build friendships and deepen relationships. There are many lonely people in our churches and communities that would love to have a shoulder to cry on or a friend who will just listen to them. Jesus was the expert in this department. Just read about his exchange with the Samaritan woman in John 4.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, German theologian and pastor, said: ""We should listen with the ears of God that we may speak the Word of God." Let us pray for godly ears that we can become a good listener in the Body of Christ and our culture.

Selah!





MUSIC Ministry



Personal Christianity: “Alas, and Did My Savior Bleed?”


Isaac Watts, the first English hymn-writer, was nothing if not prolific. The exact number of his compositions is hard to pin down, but most scholars put the total in excess of six hundred songs. For more than half a century after his death, his hymnals were the primary collections used in Baptist, Congregational, and Presbyterian churches, and a number of his Psalm and Scripture texts remain on the list of most popular hymns to this day. His influence is especially noticeable in conservative Presbyterian hymnals published in the U.S., in which he continues to hold the unchallenged position of best represented hymn-writer if one excludes King David writing the Psalms under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Watts was born in 1674, the son of a Puritan deacon who was imprisoned several times during Watts' childhood for his convictions. The young Isaac is supposed to have been a frail, precocious, and somewhat impish child. Watts learned Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, and in his late teens became greatly concerned about the standard of worship in English chapels. Many of the texts of the day were awkward and rough, with little sense of poetic flow or lyrical majesty, and were a poor reflection of the beautiful Scripture texts they were supposed to represent. At his father's suggestion, Watts undertook to “do something better,” the end result being three collections published in 1706, 1707, and 1719.

“Alas, and Did My Savior Bleed?” comes from the middle collection, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*. It is a meditation on our personal involvement in Christ's death and His atonement for us. It recalls the teaching of the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, which Watts doubtless would have known, on repentance unto life

as, “a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience,” (Q. 87). Similarly, it strongly highlights Christ's deity as our Sovereign and Maker. Much like the 21st century, the 18th was a time of religious confusion, with rampant immorality, unbiblical compromise, and widespread false teaching. Many of Watts' hymns seem to have been written to combat these errors and defend orthodox positions, and this is certainly the case here as we see him writing in defense of the necessity of the atonement, true repentance, and the deity of Jesus.

Several different tunes have been used with this text over the years. Perhaps none so captures the depth of personal reflection and intimacy as the Scottish tune MARTYRDOM (sometimes called AVON) collected by Hugh Wilson around 1800 and published by Robert Archibald Smith in 1825. The melody is one of a handful of Scottish tunes to become widely known and used in the United States, and may have been adapted from an old folk-tune. It uses only six of the seven tones of scale, a common characteristic of Celtic and early American music, and quickly became popular as a Psalm-tune on both sides of the Atlantic. It has been associated with this hymn since at least the time of the Civil War, and remains the most common setting today across denominational boundaries, no doubt because of its simplicity and unique ability to capture the depth and poignance of the text.

As we sing this hymn during Lent, let's take time to pause and reflect on the gravity of our sin that sent Christ to the cross, and the “love beyond degree” that He showed in bearing our guilt. May God's undeserved grace truly “dissolve my heart in thankfulness/And melt mine eyes to tears,” and lead each of us deeper into that personal relationship which is revealed in our living no longer for ourselves “but for Him who died for [us] and rose again,” (II Corinthians 5:15). 



MUSIC Ministry Continued...

Why Attend the Psalm-sing?


Are you planning to attend the Union Psalm-sing at 4:00 pm on Sunday, March 17th? I would encourage you to go even if you don't attend any other musical event or special service the rest of the year. Why would I say that? Because a Psalm-sing is special--so special I could write a book on its value, but I will try to be brief and hit just a couple of points here.

First, a Psalm-sing is good for your soul. The Bible says, "How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Psalm 119:103) and emphasizes that God's word is the very source of our life. In a Psalm-sing, we take these rich, life-giving words and roll them around on our tongues, we taste the riches of God's truth, and savor His promises.

Secondly, a Psalm-sing is good for your spirit. Asaph, the writer of Psalm 73, describes how discouraged he was--ready even to give up on God and His promises--until he went "into the sanctuary of God" (Psalm 73:17). Our lives are composed of a mixture of bitter and sweet experiences, but wherever we are, God meets us in the Psalms and draws us to Himself. Do we have doubts and struggles or worries about the future? So did the Psalmist, and as we follow in his footsteps, we too learn to trust God and walk with Him even "in the valley of the shadow of death" to the place where we can say, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows," (Psalm 23:5).

Thirdly, a Psalm-sing is good for fellowship. People who have attended community services at our church often come away hungry for the next one. A Psalm-sing is a time of sweet fellowship with other Christians, and one of the few events we organize in coordination with the other churches in our Presbytery. We read in Scripture how happy the Psalmist was when his friends said to him, "'Let us go to the house of the LORD!'" (Psalm 122:1) and how he longed for the fellowship of God's people in Psalms 42 and 63. In a day and age when we complain about loneliness and isolation, when people long for real, authentic

interactions, there are few things more special than coming together to sing and share a meal.

Maybe you're thinking that a Psalm-sing just isn't your cup of tea, that it's not something that you have time for in the busyness of your life. Maybe the idea of *singing* rather than just *reading* the Psalms seems strange to you (although singing a Psalm is exactly what we are doing every time we sing "Joy to the World" or "O God, Our Help in Ages Past"). I understand where you're coming from, and can only tell you that I know that I certainly need more time to meditate on God's word, be uplifted in my spirit, and brought into closer fellowship with other believers. As Philip said to his friend Nathanael, skeptical and doubting, I invite you to "come and see!" (John 1:46). 

Thank you!

A big thank you to all of the volunteers who helped with state bell festival on March 1st and 2nd! We maxed out the Genesis Center's capacity for chairs in hosting a conference for nearly 320 ringers and around 250 guests and concert attendees. The closing program was a one-of-a-kind experience, so be sure to check with friends who might have gotten some of it on video if you weren't able to go.

Tuesday, March 19th, 7:00 pm-Denver Bierman

Denver is a solo trumpeter who has performed with Bill Gaither and Jaci Velasquez and has provided music for conferences with Gary Chapman and Beth Moore. A native of northern Indiana, Bierman further enlivens his performances with his down-home sense of humor and interactive audience activities. *This is a Genesis Center concert.*



March Anniversaries



Thomas & Cynthia Waters

March 2, 1973

Years Married: **46**

Aaron & Marcia Osmon

March 4, 1983

Years Married: **36**

Ralph & Judy Seymour

March 5, 1960

Years Married: **59**

Tim & Becky Elder

March 16, 1985

Years Married: **34**

Harold & Florence Knoblauch

March 23, 1963

Years Married: **56**

Ralph & Ann Bell

March 25, 1975

Years Married: **44**

Dick & Sally Thompson

March 31, 1961

Years Married: **58**

Upcoming Events



Youth for Christ Banquet

Recently, Elder Tim Osterlund preached from Psalm 71, and he challenged us all to invest our lives spiritually into the next generation. Youth for Christ (YFC) receives monthly support from our church's home missions budget. Through weekly clubs, the ministry takes the good news of Jesus Christ into middle and high schools in our county.

Annually, YFC has a dinner banquet to help raise funds for its ministry. FPC is hosting this year's banquet on **Thursday, March 21st, at 6 pm in the Genesis Center**. The guest speaker will be Brenda Longshore, Highlands County's Superintendent of Schools. In addition, there are usually testimonies from several youth involved in YFC's ministry. If you would like to attend this free banquet, please call the church office at 465-2742. An opportunity to make a financial contribution will be provided. Your attendance will be a great way to learn more about YFC and to make a difference in the lives of our local young people. Thanks for your prayerful consideration.

Sharing Your Faith

Our personal relationship with God, through faith in Jesus Christ, is the best gift that we have ever been given. God designed this gift of salvation to be shared with others. We are all mere beggars, who have received the Bread of Life, and who are called to give it away to other beggars. In fact, being part of the Holy Spirit-driven process of someone becoming a Christian is by far the greatest blessing of being a Christian. Common reasons why we do not do so more often include fear and unpreparedness. **On Sunday, March 31st, from 12:30 pm to 6 pm, FPC is hosting a free "Sharing Your Faith" seminar in Friendship Hall**. The seminar will teach you how to tell someone else about the good news of Jesus --- all by using the five fingers on your hand. Lunch will be provided. Please pray about whether or not God is calling you to attend this seminar. You can sign up by calling the church office at 465-2742.





Foreign & Home Missions



Foreign Missions - Shane and Mandy Fugate

We serve at God's Grace Hogar de Ninos in Mixco, Guatemala. June of this year will mark the third year of service for this ministry. The founders of the ministry are from Hood River, Oregon. Fortunately, we get to see them several times a year and have weekly conversations with them and regular monthly board meetings.

Our ministry profile is to serve children 0-5 years- but, we currently house 22 children ages 3 months to 9 years. We have children older than 5 years because we also have their younger siblings with us. The children's service system in Guatemala does not like to separate the children if it is at all possible. We do not accept new cases over 6 years of age. The children with us will not age out of our care. The future vision of the ministry is to have individual family style homes for 7-8 children each home. This will help us to continue to love on the adolescents that our sweet littles will mature into...and maintain secure sleeping, living, and learning environments for our children requiring more temporal care.

We are a residential care children's home. The children live in the hogar with 24 hour, around the clock, care. Hogar is the word in Spanish for HOME. We have two shifts of live-in nannies that are with the children full-time on 48 hour shifts. So, basically, at any given time, we have 3-4 nannies caring for our littles. We have a collective total of 20 staff members that fill all of the roles in the hogar- including a doctor, psychologist, and social worker. We are tremendously blessed with a wonderful, hard-working, and faithful team of saints!

My family lives just 7 doors down in the same neighborhood- but, not in the hogar itself. But, we are extremely close and I walk to work most days. This also means that I am readily available for any emergency and live on-call. ☺



Home Missions - Youth For Christ (YFC)

YFC has been in Highlands County since 1998. We are actively involved in every middle and high school in the county.

Every day at thousands of community centers, high schools, middle schools, juvenile institutions, coffee shops, and local hangouts, YFC staff and volunteers meet with young people who need Jesus. We are rural and urban and we are always about the message of Jesus. YFC Highlands County is blessed to be in all of the local schools, and we ask that at the very least you pray for this to continue!

Since 1944, Youth for Christ has had a distinctive history of youth evangelism. In the early 1940s, during World War II, many young men, mostly ministers and evangelists, were holding large rallies in Canada, England and the United States. YFC quickly organized into a national movement. Billy Graham became YFC's first full-time staff member.

Since the 90s, YFC continues to develop effective relational ministry with different types of unchurched youth. 'Parent Life' mentors and equips young mothers and fathers with parenting skills as well as the love of Jesus Christ. City Life reaches out to the millions of young people in our major urban communities, partnering with the church and other organizations. YFC Core helps school-based adults lead teams of Christian students to reach out to their lost friends. Deaf Teen Quest ministers to the unique needs of hearing-impaired teens. And the theme of the YFC Camp program is "Where Everything Changes", intentionally targeting lost teens through the proclamation and the demonstration of the gospel message in an outdoor experience.

Throughout YFC's history there has been an unwavering commitment to youth evangelism and biblical Christianity. One of YFC's slogans over the past fifty years has been "Anchored to the Rock, Geared to the Times." YFC strives to both demonstrate and communicate this message of hope, grace and love in a variety of different cultural settings, and always pursuing teens in personal relationships. Your prayers and financial support continue to help change the lives of young people... one at a time. We refer to this pursuit as a 3 Story lifestyle, and offer resources and training opportunities to take a "deeper dive" in this way of life. ☺



ARP Women's Ministry



The ARP Florida Women's Ministries Spring Retreat, February 22- 23, 2019, was well attended and well worth the time and travel. The venue was the Florida FFA Leadership Training Center just outside of Haines City. The campus is situated on 120 pristine acres amongst oak trees and Florida scrub on the shores of beautiful Lake Pierce. Our very own Starla Shattler was the honored speaker and as always brought a wonderful, high energy and inspiring message. Praise and worship was lead by Barbara Sewell, Lyric Philips, and Emily Landgrin.

Starla spoke of women of the Bible who showed a spirit of submission, adoration, and passion.


Friday evening Starla discussed the story of Hannah, "Pouring Out Submission" through her struggles with having no child, while her husband's other wife, "her rival" had several children. She repeatedly provoked Hannah until she wept and could not eat. She wept and pleaded with great anguish and grief to the Lord making a vow, saying, "O Lord Almighty, if you will only look at your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life..." (1Samuel 1:11). She later had a son and named him Samuel, saying "Because I asked the Lord for him." (1Samuel 1:20) She was faithful to her vow and in great "Pouring Out Submission", she turned her very young son over to the Lord, as soon as he was weaned.

Saturday morning Starla inspired us with the story of Martha and Mary. Mary was "Pouring Out Adoration" for Jesus at his feet while Martha toiled with dinner

preparations. Martha went to Jesus, challenging him that he doesn't care that Mary has left her to do all the work by herself. Jesus lovingly acknowledges that Martha is "worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better..." (Luke 10:41-2) What a refreshingly loving and honest relationship these sisters had with our Lord Jesus.

After a break, Starla shared the story of Jesus raising Lazarus, Mary and Martha's brother, from the dead. He used this time to help his followers plainly see that Lazarus had truly died and could live again. Jesus said "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever believes in me will never die..." (John 11:25) Jesus was "deeply moved in spirit and troubled" (John 11:3) at the sorrow his friends Martha and Mary were experiencing at the death of their brother, that he also wept. They shared "Pouring Out Passion" for their deep love and devotion to one another.

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spirit of submission,**

We are truly blessed to have such a gifted author and inspiring speaker as Starla and the musical talents of Barbara, Lyric, and Emily from our very own church body at FPC here in Lake Placid. Our church was well represented with more than 30 from LP FPC in attendance. I heard much discussion of how wonderful it was to have so many attend from one church. But also heard, were many comments on what an awesome facility we have in the Genesis Center. We are truly BLESSED at FPC. 

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