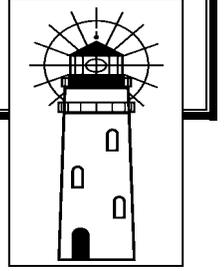


FRANKLIN BEACON

Franklin Presbyterian Church
February 2019



Pastor's Corner....

Dry Bones

"The hand of the LORD was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ...Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.'" So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet – a vast army."

-Ezekiel 37:1,9-10

If you have ever read the book of Ezekiel, you know that Israel was in horrible shape. They had forsaken God and given themselves to idol worship. They had gotten fat from the peace and prosperity to which God had led them.

It's an age-old story. When times are lean, we toughen up, turn to God and listen to Him. But when God redeems us, and leads us to sanctuary, we shun Him and look to our own comforts... as if we'd delivered ourselves and deserved our comfortable status.

The Israelites suffered for this attitude greatly. Taken into captivity by Babylon,

exiled from their homeland, they suffered greatly. Instead of turning back to God, they turned to the false idols of Babylon, and worshipped golden images.

By 586 B.C., Judah had fallen, and Jerusalem was completely destroyed. There seemed to be no hope. These events occurred right in the midst of Ezekiel' ministry.

Ezekiel heard the Lord and urged the Israelites to turn again to God; to listen to and obey Him. It was God, after all, who delivered them from slavery in Egypt.

Hard to get a people to be obedient though. They'd become used to their status... after all, it wasn't so bad in exile, was it? They had adequate food and drink, and Babylon wasn't a bad place to live. After all, it was a thriving nation with a strong army. Worship their kings and their gods and there was a great opportunity for advancement.

Therein the human condition: earthly solutions to eternal problems.

Before long, as Ezekiel knew, these people were dead to God. Hence, the words quoted above, from chapter 37: "in

the middle of a valley... full of dry bones."

How true. That is our status without God: dry bones. Oh sure, we might have a house and car, and a lot of other "stuff," but you can put an expensive suit or dress on dry bones, and it remains just that... a lifeless set of rotten calcium.

But there is a way to new life. God said, "[S]ay to these, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!'" (v. 4)

Isn't that beautiful? The dead bones, dry and rotting because they have chosen to reject the Lord, have a way to new life. And it's not their way... heck, they've tried every fleshly road to happiness.

The way, the *righteous* way, the *only lasting* way is to "hear the word of the Lord." Our culture might snicker at this... after all, we *are* such a brilliant and informed public.

But I would offer this: Look to where it all leads. Society's fleshly offerings, those advertised on TV and in magazines, look enticing for sure, but yesterday's commercials seem silly and meaningless today- they are so dated!

God's offering is eternal truth and life. His word, contained in the Bible applies yesterday, today and tomorrow.

But there's more to the story... God instructs Ezekiel to tell the bones to breathe; breathe the breath "coming from the four winds." Ahhh! The Holy Spirit has come to the dry bones, breathing new

and real life into them. Back from the grave comes the dead nation of Israel, through the strength, wisdom, breath and word of God.

I love the footnote in my Bible about this passage. It says this:

"The dry bones represented the people's spiritually dead condition. Your church may seem like a heap of dry bones to you, spiritually dead with no hope of vitality. But just as God promised to restore his nation, he can restore any church, no matter how dry or dead it may be. Rather than give up, pray for renewal, for God can restore it to life. The hope and prayer of every church should be that God will put his Spirit into it (37:14). In fact, God is at work calling his people back to himself, bringing new life into dead churches"

This is from the *Life Application NIV Study Bible*, and it is worthy of our consideration.

We are not close to being a "dead church," but a few years ago, we were hurting. Attendance was a bit off, several folks left or stayed home, a few elders abruptly quit the session, and we were hurt by the deaths of several of our brothers and sisters.

Then, look what happened. We didn't walk around with our heads down, or in the sand; we came to church and we prayed. We conducted meaningful and well-thought-out stewardship campaigns. We brought new and exciting groups to give concerts.

God called new and robust members to serve as elders; members who would honor their vows to lead, not just throughout their three-year terms, but through a second three-year term! And they are having a joyful time leading this church.

God has breathed new life into Franklin Presbyterian Church. Worship attendance has improved. We are seeing new faces. The scripture readers are enthusiastic. The youth are signing on for the Pulpit Club. The choir sounds beautiful. Reggie Saddler and his crew are coming back. In unity, church prayer is happening daily; prayers for the church as well as the community and world.

Our focus is where it should be; on Jesus Christ, not the petty things that divide us. It is on living anew in the Spirit, not on bells and whistles.

Let's join together and keep it up. Let's show the world that this "over-the-hill" gang ain't quite over the hill. Let's pray, join hands and do His work joyfully.

Dry bones? Shoot... not here.

Yours in Jesus Christ,

Pastor John

~February 2019~

Elder ~ Doug Foxworth

Greeter ~ Joe Grant

Announcers ...

3rd – Toby Morgan, 10th – Grace Lowe,
17th – John Singleton, 24th – John Lowe

Psalm Readers ~

3rd – Tom Pickett, 10th – Lisa Kluttz
17th – Jan Hollis, 24th – Cindy Grant

Lay Readers ...

Alternate:

3rd – Bonnie Williams
10th – Rick Leonard
17th – Andy Gardner
24th – Lisa Kluttz

Grace Lowe
Cindy Grant
Bonnie Williams
Frank Thomason

Money Counter – Toby Morgan

Greeters for 2019:

January - Lil Wehrle

February - Joe Grant

March - Ivan Jarvis

April - Nyoka Freeze

May - Naomi Rice

June - Eden Hager

July - Jan Hollis

August - Doris Mowery

September - Kaye Morgan

October - Julie Hager

November - John Jarvis

December - Our Youth

Thank you for sharing your time with us, a reminder will be mailed to you about a week before it is your turn to be the Greeter...you can do the greeting yourself or you can delegate out a Sunday or two...thanks again!

CONGRATULATIONS ...

Trinity Oaks gave a luncheon this week for their workers for their years of service ... for one year of service+. Just so you know our own Lisa Kluttz was presented with a certificate and a pin for 35 years of service at Trinity Oaks.

Lisa, we are proud of you and ***Congratulate*** you for your years of dedication and service.

Mission Committee

As of December 2, 2018, the church has initiated the church wide Prayer Warriors for praying to God daily in order to build a strong relationship with God, individually and as a church. The Bible tells us to pray without ceasing. Franklin has commitments from 45 members to pray daily using the yellow sheet as a guide each day. Please continue to talk with God each night, praying without ceasing for our church.

God is still working in the hearts and lives of our church. The Holy Spirit moved to have the same motivation sign in vestibule as what the Pastor was preaching about this pass Sunday. **“My faith does not rest on the wisdom of men but on the power of God.”** **1st Corinthians 2:5.** Oh and by the way, that sign was not to go up last week and God changed my mind. Nothing ever happens by chance or luck when it comes to the Lord’s business.

Don’t forget the Porch is coming March 2019, giving us all a chance to witness about our church and Jesus Christ. We are commissioned to reach outside the church’s four walls and this will give us a chance to do just that. We will pick a Friday late afternoon say late March so we have more sun and position ourselves either on Hwy 601 and/or West Ridge Road with chairs and each can have a sign which advertises our church’s name and promotes the Savior we serve. Signs will be made so they can also push down into ground in front of our chairs. Also give us a chance to fellowship, witness and advertise our church. I am really believing that we need to expose to as many people as possible and rush hour on Friday between 4:30 pm and 5:30 pm should do nicely. The exact spot has not yet been determined but working on it now. Whether end of our church drive, corner of 601 and west ridge or at a member’s yard.

Stay tuned for more from the mission committee.

Calling all who love Jesus. We need warm bodies for the choir. Don’t have to carry a tune or know music. God just wants us to make a joyful noise. Amen. Hope to see you in the choir.

Doug Foxworth

Christian Nurture:

The New Year is upon us, and we are looking forward to a great year of celebration in Christ here on the Christian Nurture Committee. Last year was a year of many great gatherings, and to all who helped us cook and serve at these gatherings... THANK YOU!

Once again, we will be called upon to help at church events. Coming up on the 24th of February is the Chili Cook-off, sponsored by the Youth. Extra help setting up and cleaning is always welcome, so let us know if you are available.

We will be doing more as the year progresses, with concerts, after-church meals and other events. The more help, the merrier. So please, if you have the time, join us on our committee. We have a grand time working together and serving the Lord.

In Him,
Rev. Elam

James

Worship Committee

How do you worship?

Worship involves more than coming to church, singing and prayer. People worship God in many different forms and many different ways. I am worshiping now as I write this. You are worshiping now as you read this. Soon you and I will be distracted and fail to honor God as we should. How can we keep our focus on God when we have so many responsibilities, so many things that require our attention?

We are told in 1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18 "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances".

In Romans 12, Paul says to "present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

Does God expect us to live a life "acceptable" to Him 24/7? When I was young, I had the idea that as long as I went to church on Sunday, that was all God required as my worship. While church attendance should be a part of worship, God expects your worship to continue after you leave. Ralph Waldo Emerson brings some help to this theme in his sermon "Pray Without Ceasing". Emerson made the following observation: "It is not only when we audibly and in form, address our petitions to the Deity that we pray. We pray without ceasing. Every secret wish is a prayer. Every house is a church, the corner of every street is a closet of devotion."

Paul in his letter to the Colossians said: "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

God knows you have responsibilities and duties. He likely gave them to you. Your schedule may include more than you think you can handle. You may think you don't have time to worship. Worship isn't what you do instead of something else; you do it "as" you do everything else. Worshiping like that takes commitment. Nothing we do should be placed before God. God alone deserves our worship. There may be things in your life you need to change. You can start today.

Draw near to God and God will draw near to you!

Stewardship and Finance:

Happy New Year to all! Here is what is happening with the Stewardship and Finance Committee.

Our friends at Lloyd Presbyterian Church in Winston-Salem, that same bunch who joined us during the last Reggie Saddler Family Concert, are in need of help. Their 200+ year-old sanctuary, which is a recognized historical site, is in dire need of repair.

Because their small congregation (around 20) is aging and of moderate income, they are falling short of the funds necessary to keep the building in repair. They've emptied their bank account to pay for those repairs that are absolutely necessary. The rest, such as painting on the outside, will have to wait.

The Stewardship and Finance will recommend to the session that we have a special offering soon, to assist our friends at Lloyd in repairing their church. This is, indeed, a worthy outreach; one Christ has brought to our attention.

We anticipate the session will get behind this and hope you will find it in your hearts to help!

In the grace of Christ,
Rev. Elam

Personnel Committee

Wow, It's February already! January has flown by and we are about to be sending Valentine cards and candy to one another, and a group of our members will be getting together for the annual dinner hosted by the Elam's. We are so fortunate to have such wonderful and caring people at our church!

The Personnel Committee has been asking for help during the past couple of months to assist in annual review for our Pastor, we have asked for feedback on our staff, to help as a money counter for the treasurer and help has been requested for the youth director on Sunday's to ensure that we have two adults in the class. It's sad to say that very few of our members volunteer their time for these opportunities which have the potential to make a difference in the life of our church. A few are stepping up, but they cannot carry the load that needs to be carried!

There have been many sermons and bible study sessions which highlight the opportunity to share the word of Christ outside the walls of our church, and Doug Foxworth has some really neat ideas coming to facilitate the opportunity. We can have a few leaders in the church with ideas, and they create opportunities for those who will step forward and participate. At times I don't understand how some of our leaders and staff continue on, how they carry the load, and why they continue to try!

Franklin Presbyterian is not a "dead church", this is a true statement because we have a core group who are not willing to give up and they will continue to carry the load.

I personally believe that each one of us have a role in the life of our church. I also believe that one day we will stand before the Master and we will be accountable for our actions, good and bad, and in some way, I believe that we will have to reflect upon the opportunities we passed over because we didn't have time for God's work.

In the past couple months, I had asked for help with the "Annual Review" of Rev. Elam and did get a volunteer or two. During my research and thoughtful consideration of what this review needed to include, I went back to the "Book of Order" for some guidance. It found that an "Annual Review" of the Pastor was not required, however we are required to make sure that his compensation and benefits fall within the guidelines per the Presbytery.

This being said- The Personnel Committee is considering the opportunity to provide "Annual Feedback" to the Pastor, and what feedback would be beneficial. We will be considering a wide range of topics and attributes that could be used for guiding our Pastor along a path that benefits the congregation. We will continue to provide updates on this as we move forward, and, anyone who feels that providing "Feedback" is something more appealing than an "Annual Review", the opportunity still exist.

The next topic is one that I have mentioned before and was in my January Beacon Article. I am going to include this again as I have not seen a lot of volunteers signing up on the clipboard that has been passed around the sanctuary on Sunday.

In addition to this, I'm sure that the Youth Director will be making an announcement for help once again as She continues to identify enough volunteers to make out a schedule.

During our annual staff reviews, I received some really good feedback from our staff and we will be making some subtle changes as a result. We will begin to list the name of the volunteers who assist the Youth Director in the Sunday bulletin so it is easier to keep up with, these will continue to be posted in the Beacon each month. It is very important that we have a second adult with the Youth Director so we follow the Safe Sanctuary Policy; on Sunday where we do not have a second adult in the class, the youth will have to come upstairs and miss out on the planned curriculum.

I have also received feedback from some volunteers who assist with children's Sunday School and Children's Church, these volunteers have expressed a desire to "have a role and be a part of the program" so here are the details on how we will work this out.

- A copy of the materials to be used during the Sunday School and Children's Church will be placed in the box on the wall above the copier the Sunday before- It will be the responsibility for each volunteer to pick up their copy so they can review it and be prepared to assist the following week
- The volunteer will have an identified teaching role during the Sunday classes, these will be identified in the copy of the materials you will pick up prior to your week to assist.
- Once the schedule is put together and published, it will be the responsibility of the volunteer to be on time and ready to assist for the youth services. IF you are unable to attend during the week you are scheduled- The volunteer should arrange for a replacement and notify the Youth Director of the change.

If anyone has any comments or questions concerning the staff, Please feel free to contact me directly. If you happen to miss me at church, Please share any positive comments or learning opportunities for our group at jlo582@aol.com or leave me a message in the Personnel box in the church office.

Thank you all, John Lowe

Christian Education:

Greetings from the Christian Education. We are humming along... moving forward in the Lord as best we can. The adult curriculum is exciting. Just a few weeks ago, the text covered false teachers and teachings. I wish everyone could have taken part in that lesson. We learned that God is adamant that false teaching must be expelled from His church.

That's a lot to chew on, here in the society in which we live. In fact, it's a red alert in our denomination as we hear more and more about the direction it has taken.

We strive, in all our Christian educational endeavors, to stay true to the word of God found in the Bible. When we are confident we have found that truth, we celebrate.

But the buck does not stop there. It is not enough that we find a truth, then tuck it away for someone else to act upon. God calls us to take the truths He gives to us into the world, in teaching and in action.

Join in the Christian educational process here at Franklin Presbyterian Church! Grow in the truth with us, so that, together, we can share this truth in the community, and gorge ahead wherever this truth leads.

Opportunities for learning abound. Join a Sunday School class, go to Tuesday Bible Studies, and/or help in the teaching of the youth. You'll be rewarded beyond your wildest imagination!

In Christ,
Rev. Elam

It's Strange ...

* It's strange how twenty dollars seems like such a large amount when you donate it to the Church, but such a small amount when you are shopping.

*** It's strange how 2 hours seem so long when you're at church, and how short they seem when you're watching a good movie.**

* It's strange that you can't find words to say when you're praying, but you have no trouble thinking what to talk about with a friend.

*** It's strange how difficult it is to read one chapter of the Bible, but how easy it is to read a popular novel.**

* It's strange how everyone wants a front-row-ticket to concerts, but they want to sit in the last row at Church.

*** It's strange how we need to know about an event for Church 2-3 weeks before the day so we can include it in our agenda, but we can adjust it for other events at the last minute.**

* It's strange how difficult it is to learn a fact about God and share it with others, but it's easy to report gossip.

***It's strange how we believe everything that magazines and newspapers say, but we question the words in the Bible?**