

FRANKLIN BEACON

Franklin Presbyterian Church

April 2019

Pastor's Corner: Resurrection at Urban Ministry

"If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you."

(Romans 8:11)

Easter is coming. It is a time when we celebrate the resurrection of Christ. The time is not complete unless we take joy in the new life given to us by Jesus Christ.

And it is not complete without our heartfelt thanks for the gift He has given us.

We need to remind ourselves of this daily, for it is our plight to fall back into our old, human ways. The day-to-day life, so familiar and comfortable to us, can make us forget who we are: blessed children of God.

In this season, I am reminded of a friend who touched me deeply when I was a preacher at Greensboro Urban Ministry noontime worship services. His name was Fred, and he had a special place in my heart.

I remember especially one day... it was a cold Thursday in mid-February, and I'd burst through the doors to the lunchroom, announcing the beginning of midday worship.

Slowly, deliberately, my friends made their way into the worship room. After warm greetings, all 16 of us joined in the singing of *Amazing Grace*. My homeless friends knew each word by heart.

I looked around and my heart sank. Fred's seat was empty.

The week before, I'd worshipped with Fred and something had changed. We shook hands, but he would get no closer than arm's length.

His skin, normally the color of fine walnut, had lost its radiant glow... giving way to an ashen-like quality that hinted at dwindling days. His smile was hidden behind two tightly closed lips.

And the eyes... the laughing, glowing, heart revealing onyx gems of eyes... they were covered with the tell-tale gauze. Their gaze was fixed on me, but the stare was straight through me, into that other world of drug-induced delirium.

And now, on this day, he was gone. He was somewhere on the street, a lost man of thirty. Money was being paid and drugs were being bought.

The presence of Christ in Fred's heart, a presence that rendered Fred, at once, alive, engaging, thrilled with joy and filled with love, was now but one more thing covered by layers and layers of feel-good-right-now.

But I couldn't dwell on that. The others were in the room, and we worshipped as community.

"Big Man" roared in laughter as he hit a bad note. He shouted, "Amen!" at the end of every line.

Latecia asked when we could talk about Babylon instead of Jesus (one need not speculate too much about her chosen profession).

Grady read his new poem about grace... then, promptly got up and left.

Marion told us about her new apartment, granted through God's grace. We all clapped.

Then there was the proclamation. Today's sermon: *The Lost Sheep*. At sermon's end, we talked, we gathered, we held hands and we prayed, as always.

We prayed this day in thanks that God woke us up. We prayed for food and shelter for all the poor. We prayed for the lost rich, that they would see through the idols of money, power, "success," and the attendant bangles, and come to worship the true Lord, Jesus Christ.

There was no guile, no arrogance, no pride, no hidden agendas; just a circle of people

from all walks of life, praying for the world to become the community of Christ.

Weeks passed. And then...

It was that first perfect day in Spring; that day when the air was warm and the sky was Carolina blue and the dogwoods blossomed and, were you still in high school, you'd be absolutely certain that hanging with your pals on a day like this was what heaven was like.

It was Thursday, and that meant another noontime worship. Greetings were shared, and all took their seats. *Amazing Grace* gave way to *A Mighty Fortress*, and on this perfect day given by God, not even the Mormon Tabernacle Choir sounded better than us folks at Urban Ministry.

We prayed. We read Bible verses. Then, the proclamation. The day's sermon: *The Kingdom of God*.

We spoke of time: No, the Kingdom of God is not something far down the road! God is not subject to our timeline... not hardly.

The Kingdom, the *Kingdom*... maybe we get glimpses and slivers even on this day, even there at that moment! Maybe even the joy we felt in that room was a glimpse of the Kingdom.

Maybe the creation; the limbs which, three weeks back, were skinny skeletal fingers, seemingly dead against a cold gray sky and were now bursting with flowers and shoots and buds in a glorious celebration of life... maybe that was a taste of the Kingdom.

And so, filled with joy, we ended with our prayer of thanks. I turned, and in walked Fred. He smiled. His eyes... they *glowed*. He laughed and said, "Thank you, Jesus." He was back, at least for a while. There was hope.

We hugged like brothers separated by years of war. Tears filled our eyes and spilled over.

And nothing has ever smelled so sweet to me as the odor of street stench that permeated Fred's old clothes...
A taste of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Friends, it is almost Easter. The time of resurrection. Let's join together with Fred, and one another, in proclaiming straight from the heart... "Thank you, Jesus."

"I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live."
Jesus Christ (John 11:25)

In the enduring love of Christ,
Pastor John

April

ELDER Heath Hager

Money Counter – John Lowe

Greeter ...

Nyoka Freeze

Announcers ...

7th John Singleton

14th Frank Thomason

21st Toby Morgan

28th John Lowe

Psalm Readers:

7th – Bonnie Williams

14th – Cindy Grant

21st – Jan Hollis

28th – Eden Hager

Lay Readers ...

Alternate

7th Ben Hager

14th Andy Gardner

21st Lisa Kluttz

28th John Singleton

Cindy Grant

Jan Hollis

John Lowe

Bonnie Williams

Stewardship Committee

The news for this month is that the audit of the financial records for 2018 found everything to be in good and accurate order. The audit reviewed the weekly money counting process, the activity of the current expense checking account and the account balance of all the church's deposit accounts. We are glad to report that all the financial activity and accounting of income and expenses were well documented. Our staff and money counting teams are to be commended for their good work throughout the year!!!

Here is a brief update about our church's tithes and offerings for the year as of March 17. We have been blessed with total giving of \$34,297.25 in tithes and offering. This more than covers our budgeted expenses [\$32,670.00] for the same period. Good news to have collected more offering than we currently need to cover our expenses. Thanks be to our Lord!!!!

Toby

Nurture

God blessed us with another great youth fundraiser, the youth have really grown in their people skills. With our Easter activities coming (April 20-21) we are looking forward to seeing even more people, having a good time and finding deeper joy in yet another gathering of our Christian community. Please bring all your friends and family members to this special Easter time celebration!

As the year goes on, with many special events planned, why not join us in serving on the Nurture committee? We have a great time planning and working together to make each event special and enjoyable. We looking forward to working with our youth, our Men and Women of the church groups, and with all of you in the service of our Lord.

“Teach a child to choose the right path, and when he is older he will remain upon it.” Proverbs 22:6

Remember: We are all children of God.

God Bless,
Sue Wilkey

Worship –

Easter is almost here!

We are more than half way through Lent. If you have been “with or without” anything extra as a way of “keeping” Lent, then that time is nearing an end. If, however, you didn’t quite do what you planned, I have an excellent suggestion for you. You can join me. This year I will be “walking with Jesus” during Holy Week. Holy Week is the week between Palm Sunday and Easter. Even if you have a bad knee or hip, don’t worry, we won’t actually be “walking”. Each day during this week I will focus on what Jesus did as close to the time He did it as I can determine. The last time I focused on this “walk”, I felt God’s presence in a special way. We have attached a copy of the timeline of Jesus’ activities. The timeline lists the day, what Jesus did and where that is found in the Bible. You can take a small New Testament with you, fold the sheet in your pocket and refer to it as discretely as you want. Or even better, do it with a friend. Except for Friday, I did not list the approximate times. Read the scriptures and try to decide if the events happened early morning, late morning, etc. This could be the most meaningful walks you have ever done as a Christian, and you don’t even have to get out of the chair.

God Bless You,
James

Mission:

Pray without ceasing. Please continue to build a relationship with our God both as a church and as the individual praying every day.

Don't forget the Porch is coming March 29, 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.

The Porch

March 29 Friday

Meet at church at 4:15 pm and be shuttled down to corner of 601 and West Ridge

Chairs and signs provided

Just need your witness to sit in chair with the sign of your choice at rush hour.

Isaiah 6

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? Who will go for Us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

Remember, Christ has no hands but ours.



Stay tuned for more from the mission committee.

Neighborhood Outreach coming this summer.

Don't forget Easter is upon us and the choir will sing the Lamb of God on Easter Sunday morning, featuring John Singleton as Narrator.

Doug Foxworth



Women of the Church News

The Women of the Church met Tuesday, March 12 and will meet again Tuesday, April 9 at 10 am. All women are welcome and encouraged to come.

We have prayer shawls available. Let us know if you know of anyone who needs one.

Session approved for us to put flowers in the windows of the Church. Rev. Elam's family supplied the flowers and they make the Church look spring like. Audrey Smith and Grace Lowe decorated the windows.

We received Thank You notes from the Battered Women's Shelter for the items we collected. Grace & I visited the Battered Women's shelter to take donations. Needed are trash bags (13 gal), paper towels, regular bed pillows and twin size sheets. Any and all donations are appreciated.

We helped with tea and desserts for the Chili Cook-off and Baked Potato & Salad bar for the Youth to raise money.

Sylvia McDaniel sends cards to sick & shut-ins. If you have extra card, please let Grace or I know.

We are having a hard time getting prices and times Easter Lilies are available this year. Garden Greenhouse gave us a price for Geraniums in white, red or pink (\$7.00 with basket.)

Please, give us your input. Would you rather stay with lilies and bring your own OR would you like to do Geraniums this year???

Bonnie Williams



Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee would like to share the results of the "Feedback Opportunity" that we extended to the members in attendance during the past several weeks. A two-page form was handed out to approximately 55 members including a few of our young adults. Out of the 55 forms handed out, I received 15 forms back which may seem to be a really low number. Not really when you consider that most people rarely provide feedback when things are going well, most people share their opinion when asked if they are unhappy or things are going well.

Let me go ahead and say, I received NO feedback which indicated that a member was unhappy with the job that Rev Elam doing!

I apologize for the length of this article, but I feel it is necessary to provide as much data as necessary for everyone to get the big picture about what our members shared and what they indicated was most important to them. So, here goes.

There were 10 different topics to be considered, each person was asked to "rank their importance" from 1 to 10 (1 being most important), so that the Personnel Committee could provide this feedback to the Pastor. The thought is that the Pastor only has so many hours in a week to do everything needed, and we need to help him to better understand what WE feel is most important. Here is a list of the way we ranked each topic, these are in order of Most Important to Less important:

- 1. Preaching and Worship Leadership – (26 points) average score 2.0**
- 2. Spiritual Maturity – (36 points) average score 2.8**
- 3. Motivator – (54 points) average score 4.2**
- 4. Collaboration - (56 points) average score 4.3**
- 5. Interpersonal Engagement - (64 points) average score 4.9**
- 6. Teacher - (66 points) average score 5.1**

- 7. Communicator - (67 points) average score 5.1**
- 8. Personal Resilience - (79 points) average score 6.1**
- 9. Willingness to Engage Conflict (84 points) average score 6.5**
- 10. Strategy and Vision/Leader of Change (95 points) average score 7.3**

Here are the complete descriptions which were provided with each topic:

- **Preaching and Worship Leadership** - Is a consistently effective preacher and worship leader, Is able to inspire from the pulpit, communicates a clear and consistent message through sermons that are carefully prepared and artfully delivered, Projects the identity and character of the congregation through worship leadership presence
- **Spiritual Maturity** - Shows strong personal depth and spiritual grounding, Demonstrates integrity by walking the talk and by responding with faithfulness of purpose, Is seen by others as trustworthy and authentic, Nurtures a rich spiritual life, Seeks the wisdom and guidance of appropriate mentors, Is able to articulate a clear and consistent theology
- **Motivator** - Creates and sustains an organizational culture which permits others to provide the quality of service essential to high performance, Enables others to acquire the tools and support they need to perform well, Influences others toward a spirit of service and meaningful contributions to mission accomplishment.

- **Collaboration** - Has a natural orientation toward getting people to work together; Shares wins and successes, Fosters open dialogue; Allows people finish and be responsible for their work, Creates strong feelings of belonging among group members, Is a good judge of talent and can accurately assess the strengths and limitation of others.
- **Interpersonal Engagement** - Displays a consistent ability to build solid relationships of trust and respect inside and outside of the organization, Engage people, organizations, and delivering results, Use negotiation skills and adaptability to encourage recognition of joint concerns, collaboration, and to influence the success of outcomes
- **Teacher** - Creates learning environments where students are active participants as Individuals and as members of collaborative groups; designs lesson plans that teach concepts, facts, and theology; effectively uses multiple learning tools to reach a wide variety of learners, Revises instructional strategies based upon ministry/organization context.
- **Communicator** - Advances the abilities of individuals and the organizations through active listening supported with meaningful oral and written presentation of information.
- **Personal Resilience** - Learns from adversity and failure; picks up on the need to change personal, Interpersonal and leadership behaviors, Deals well with ambiguity; Copes effectively with change, Can decide and act without having the total picture; comfortably handles risk and uncertainty; Seeks feedback; Expresses personal regret when appropriate
- **Willingness to Engage Conflict** - Steps up to conflicts, seeing them as opportunities; Reads situations quickly, Good focused listening; Can identify common ground and elicit cooperation from others crafting mutual solutions
- **Strategy and Vision/leader of Change** - Sees ahead clearly, keeping focused on the larger picture; can anticipate future consequences and trends accurately, Is future oriented casts a compelling and inspired vision for a preferred future, Sees possibility, Crafts breakthrough strategies.

The Personnel Committee would like to thank everyone who participated and provided feedback for the Pastor. If anyone has any questions relating to the information shared in this communication, please let us know and we will be glad to provide an explanation or answer your concerns.

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