

May Messenger

Preaching Notes

In this COVID wilderness, we and others we know have experienced a lot of suffering. Some of us have been greatly affected by it, others not as much. The Bible does not give easy answers to the “why” of our suffering, but it does tell us what God does through our suffering. The apostle Peter, in his letter “to the churches of the diaspora,” encourages churches experiencing suffering. He does so by reminding them of their unique calling as God’s people. For the month of May, I will continue to preach through 1 Peter as we walk through this wilderness.

May 3	1 Peter 2:4-10
May 10	1 Peter 2:11-15; 3.8-17
May 17	1 Peter 4:7-11
May 24	1 Peter 5:6-11
May 31	Pentecost

Online Worship

Come join us in virtual worship! The Pastor’s sermon will be streamed from our church YouTube channel (FPC1122) every Sunday. You can also view the worship services by visiting our church Facebook page, or by going to firstpresclarkston.org and clicking on the “Worship” tab.

FROM THE PASTOR

Wilderness. That is a good word to describe this season of life in which we shelter in place and reduce our interactions. The wilderness is the place of the unknown, the place where our dependence on God is magnified. In the Scriptures, God uses the wilderness as training grounds for his people. He shapes them into the people he wants them to become. In this COVID wilderness, God seeks to shape us by reminding us of old truths.

One of those is that churches exist to gather for worship. Yes, we can talk about how the church is the people and not a building or an address, but the church assembles. People from different locations, different stations in life, different backgrounds -- we gather. There is no such thing as a “virtual church.” We know this because our hearts long for the day when we can meet again -- a sign of the importance of gathering together on a particular day of the week. Without that weekly gathering, our lives begin to lose a necessary rhythm.

Yes, we can still observe the Lord’s Day, but doing so in isolation is a far cry from gathering together. Yes, we can still “watch” a sermon, but screens have a way of turning preaching into mere information -- no different than anything else we might watch on a screen. Yes, we can play a worship song over YouTube, but it is not done with the voices of a congregation that we can hear or sense. Yes, we can comment on one another’s Facebook page, or do a Zoom meeting, but it feels detached, even distant.

I think the Lord desires to teach us that gathering together each Lord’s Day truly matters for our lives. I think he wants to remind us of the rhythm he implanted in our beings at Creation itself for setting aside one day in seven. I think he wants to remind us that we are embodied people made to gather physically together. There is a reason the Scriptures so often compare God’s people with bodies -- it is not just a metaphor!

So here we are in a strange wilderness with lessons to learn. I am grateful for Internet technology and how it can help us stay connected. But I have also become more aware of its limitations and inadequacies for the kinds of embodied interactions for which God created us. As we continue in this wilderness, may we continue to lean on the Lord Jesus to teach us through what we do, as well as by what we miss.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Dave

Summary of Session Meeting

Session meetings of March and April. These meetings were held on Zoom.

During its time of study and reflection, Pastor Dave led Session in prayer for the church and community with readings from Psalms 48 and 16.

Session approved the following items:

- The Learning Club (TLC) after school tutoring program in cooperation with Grantham Elementary School is being suspended for the 2020-21 school year. This program has been a ministry of the church for the past 15 years or more.
- There will be an end of school year celebration event for the TLC program.
- There will be an end of school year celebration event for the Kingdom Kids preschool to include the retirement of Gena Monda as teacher/director of the program.
- Elders and Deacons are making a special commitment to be in communication and support of members of the church family who are isolated, alone and may have special needs.
- The church will be giving additional financial support to ministries in our valley who support special needs arising from the Corona Virus crisis.
- There will be a meeting of the congregation at a date to be determined for the election of church officers for the new term.

Financials

As of March 2020

	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Inc.	\$ 99,876.85	\$ 100,062.18
Exp.	<u>112,239.50</u>	<u>100,064.16</u>
Inc./Exp.	<u>\$(12,362.65)</u>	<u>\$ (1.98)</u>

Group Cancellations

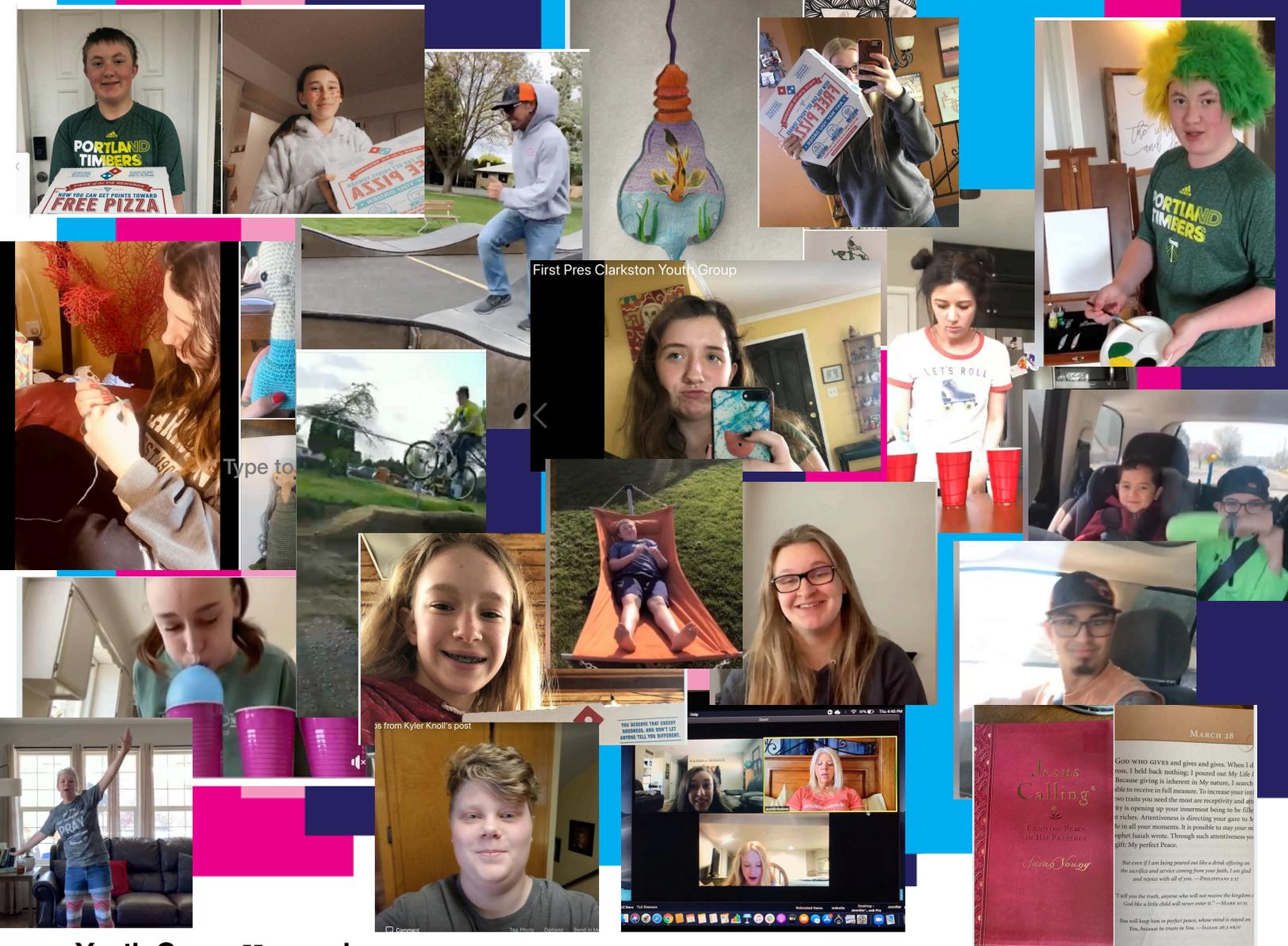
Due to the ongoing pandemic, group gatherings at the church will continue to be cancelled until further notice. We at First Presbyterian Church will continue to reach out and update everyone of any changes that may arise.

Ways to Give to FPC

Interested in donating to the church? Here are a few options:

- *Visit our church website and click the button that reads "Online Giving"
- *Set up automatic withdrawals with your bank to have the bank mail a check to the church
- *Mail a personal check (not cash) to the church

First Pres Jr & Sr High Youth Group



Youth Group Happenings During Quarantine Life

Things have looked a little different at youth group over the past six weeks. We've been working to stay connected with the teens through Zoom meetings, text groups and Facebook. Each week on Facebook we hold a new "challenge activity." We've had lip sync contests, scavenger hunts, a talent

show and minute to win it games. The teens post their videos participating on our group Facebook page for a chance to win a pizza delivered to them at home. High school Bible studies are happening through Zoom and text groups each week as a way to encourage everyone to be in God's word. We all miss gathering together, sharing a meal each week, singing in

worship and just "hanging out." Everyone is looking forward to the time when we can join together again. In the mean time, we are staying connected and thankful for social media and technology as a way to meet the teens where they are at.

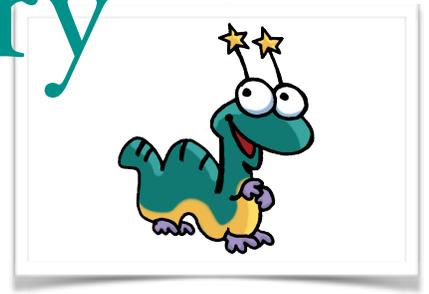


First Pres Clarkston Youth Group
Group
36 members

Children's Ministry

May 2020

First Presbyterian Church of Clarkston



A message from the Kingdom Kids Council-

For thirty-five years, Kingdom Kids has provided children in this Valley with a strong foundation for elementary school and beyond. The many teachers and volunteers made it their mission not only to prepare children in academics but also to cultivate Christian values. This school has been one of the strong ministries of First Presbyterian Church that has maintained an impact in the Valley. Those familiar with the program can tell you about the famous Three Piggy Opera, the Christmas Program, and the end of the year photo album full of memories.

Gena Monda has been an integral part of this ministry, serving as an aid, a teacher, and a director over her twenty plus years with us. Last fall, Gena sensed the Lord calling her to a new chapter of "retirement" and asked that this be her last year as director and teacher. The Session and Kingdom Kids council honors this decision and invites you to join us in celebrating Gena's time with us. Once restrictions are lifted we will hold a celebration for her. We have been blessed to have Gena over the several years training children in the ways of Christ and preparing them for kindergarten.

As for the future of Kingdom Kids, the Session, at the recommendation of the Kingdom Kids council, has hired Jennifer Babino as the new director. As we move into this new chapter of the Kingdom Kids ministry, we know the Lord will continue the school's strong legacy in our Valley.

Sunday School -

Each Sunday at 10:00am on the church Facebook page, "First Presbyterian Church of Clarkston", families are invited to join in for a live Sunday School broadcast. During the month of May we will be learning about:

May 3: Early Believers/God's people share with each other
Acts 2:43-47;4:32-37

May 10: God's House/God has a place for me
John 14:1-14

May 17: The Promise of the Holy Spirit/God's Spirit is with me
John 14:15-21

May 24: The Ascension/Jesus went to heaven
Acts 1:6-14

May 31: The Holy Spirit/God's Spirit guides us
Acts 2:1-21

