

Frist Presbyterian Church *September Messenger 2021*

FROM THE PASTOR

Once again we face an uncertain fall as we navigate this pandemic wilderness. We had hoped this trial had begun to ease, but now it has imposed itself again. As God's people, we travel this wilderness together, pursuing Christ's call to love God and love our neighbors. During times of trial, this command can be especially difficult even in the Body of Christ.

As I expressed at the worship service on August 29, I believe that given the surge in COVID cases, we need to consider how the commandment to love God and neighbor applies to facemasks and receiving the COVID vaccine. While Washington state has mandated vaccinations for certain workers, Christians do well to consider vaccination in light of the greater call to love our neighbor. This is especially true for those who interact with more vulnerable populations (children under twelve unable to receive the vaccination, older adults, and those with health challenges). Some, maybe many, will disagree with me that receiving a vaccine is a way to love our neighbor. Likewise, some, maybe many, will resist vaccination based on political, personal, medical, or religious grounds. (We can be grateful for a nation that allows individual freedoms.) I too have had my own objections over the last several months, and even wondered whether I should have received the vaccine in the first place. Yet, as I searched the Scriptures, prayed, and consulted people in the medical field my positive views toward vaccination have only strengthened. Naturally, I hope that more people will receive the COVID vaccination. Outside of a miraculous intervention by God, it is the best defense we have against this virus. Our community will be better off, as well as our nation. But not all of you will agree, and I respect your position. Truly, I do.

That said, to those of you opposed or hesitant to the COVID vaccine for any reason, I would encourage you to reflect on the great commandment (esp Luke 10:25-37). Even if you still find yourself opposed to receiving the vaccine, it will be a rich opportunity to deepen your relationship with the Lord. You might discover new ways to love God and love your neighbor in this difficult time. Even more than vaccines, our community needs disciples dedicated to loving one another and their neighbor. It goes without saying that just because you are not vaccinated does not necessarily mean you are not loving your neighbor. How is God calling *you to love your neighbor?* And how is God calling *you to be a neighbor?*

To those of you who are vaccinated, I would encourage you to do the same kind of reflection. For you too, it will be a rich opportunity to deepen your relationship with the Lord. I know that some of you feel angry at those not vaccinated -- maybe not at particular people, but perhaps at the general "unvaccinated population." (Continued on page 2)

Consider how you can love them, even in your frustration. Pray to the Lord about how you need to repent of your anger and bitterness. Recognize that just because someone chooses not to be vaccinated that does not mean they do not love God or their neighbor any more or less than you do. They might be more faithful than you in living out that command. How is God calling *you to love your neighbor? And how is God calling you to be a neighbor?*

Our church motto reads "Seek Christ, serve others -- together." It's a great slogan -- it even reflects the Great Commandment -- but it is difficult in times like this, especially the "together" part. Truth is, this has always been one of the great challenges of any church.. This is why I have focused on preaching James this Fall. James is one of our great teachers when it comes to seeking Christ, serving others -- together. Likewise, the session is discerning these matters, asking: How can we ensure the safety of those under our care, while also respecting the differences of opinion that exist? Our elders continue to impress me with their wisdom, humility, compassion, and prayfulness as we engage in these challenging conversations. As the session makes these decisions, do pray for them, and show them grace, compassion, and patience.

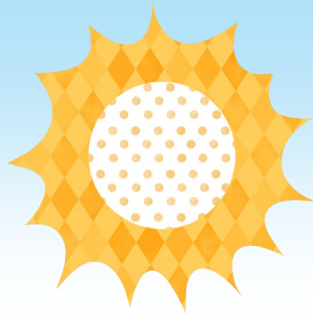
I confess, I do not like seasons of trial, but I am grateful I have the privilege of walking through these seasons with all of you, and especially the session and staff. If you have any questions or concerns about any of this I would encourage you to speak with an elder or myself. My door is always open and I would welcome the conversation.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Dave

PREACHING NOTES

James, the brother of Jesus, wrote this short letter to encourage churches under pressure between 40-50 AD (not long after Jesus' death and resurrection). As the early believing community faced these trials, they began to break apart into bickering factions. James, as one of the lead pastors in the Christian community, wrote to urge them towards a faithful way of life amid their suffering. Throughout the letter, we find a devoted servant of Christ -- a pastor -- dealing with areas of trouble in the life of congregations. The challenges James confronts remain with us today; the wisdom he presents remains just as relevant. James will not let God's people forget that the Christian life is not merely about believing the right things. It is about living the right way -- loving God, loving neighbor. After all, what good is a Truth, if we don't know how to live it, or by our living deny the Truth altogether?

- ♦ **Sept. 5 James 1:9-18 Every Good Gift**
- ♦ **Sept 12 James 1:19-27 Do the Word**
- ♦ **Sept 19 Steve Thomas Preaching**
- ♦ **Sept 26 James 2:1-13 No Favorites**



Session Report for Messenger

Summary of Session Meeting of August 15, 2021

In its time of study and reflection, Session read, reviewed and studied James 1: 1-5. "Testing produces perseverance...that you may be mature and complete. If you lack wisdom...ask God... and it will be given to you." Individually, as Session and for our church, these words are important in our daily lives. Can we be joyful in trials? Going beyond joy in our trials, we have joy in God to help us persevere that all things will work out. Trials come as a gift that we might grow to be more like Jesus.

Report from the Children's Coordinator noted that:

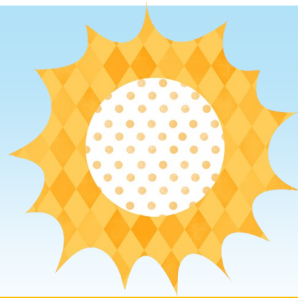
Sunday School for the fall will expand to include a 4th to 6th grade class in addition to current classes for age 3 to 3rd grade; and LeAnn Urban will be returning to run the church nursery for the fall.

Volunteers are needed to make these Sunday School classes happen.

Our church continues to be in negotiations back and forth with Catholic Charities of Spokane regarding possible purchase of our old youth/preschool building.

The congregation has final authority for finalizing any sale of property.

Session is concerned about rising cases of COVID 19. Session is requesting that all of us use facemasks at church events, maintain social distance and focus on being safe for ourselves and others.



PRAYER CHAIN MINISTRY-REMINDER OF HOW IT WORKS

We have a church prayer chain that is a ministry of the church and the Deacons. To start a prayer chain for someone please do the following:

- * During the week Monday-Thursday during office hours of 8am to noon please email or call Ginny at firstpreschurch1122@gmail.com or 509-758-3381. Outside of office hours you can contact Pat Paasch at ppaasch1961@gmail.com or by phone at 509-758-5643.

Just a few reminders....

- * If you ask for prayers for someone else please be sure to ask their permission first to respect privacy.
- * If relaying medical information its best to keep information concise and only share what they want shared.
- * When you receive a prayer chain email, please **do not** hit "reply all" in response. This prevents too many emails and confusion about the original email.

~Thank You, From the Deacons

FINANCIALS

Finances as of July 2021

	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET
INCOME	168,094.55	224,510.66
EXPENSE	212,157.40	224,510.76
INCOME/EXPENSE	(44062.85)	(.10)



Adult Bible Study

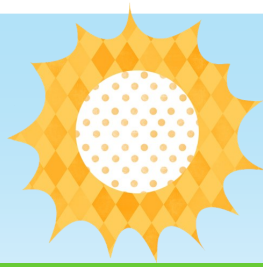
Thursdays at 10 a.m. and are now meeting in the Narthex.



If you are wanting to update your picture for the directory please stop in and see Ginny!

**Office Hours: Monday-Thursday
8:30am-12:30pm or email your picture to:**

firstpreschurch1122@gmail.com



September 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 10am -ABS	3 7 pm- AL Anon	4
5 10am-Worship & SS & Communion	6	7	8	9 10am -ABS	10 7 pm- AL Anon	11 7am-Second Sat
12 10am-Worship & SS	13	14	15	16 10am -ABS	17 7 pm- AL Anon	18
19 10am-Worship & SS	20 2:30pm-CASA 6:30pm-Session	21 FE PEO	22	23 10am -ABS	24 7 pm- AL Anon	25
26 10am-Worship & SS	27 6 pm- Deacons	28	29	30 10am -ABS	ABS-Adult Bible Study SS- Sunday Service	CASA- Social Services Training Program

Wyatt Auer 05

Mike Auer

11

Pierce Claassen

21

Bondell Phillips 05

Michelle Steiner 17

Pam Moore

22

Dorothy Locken 06

Molly Myklebust 18

Dave Webster

22

Happy Birthday