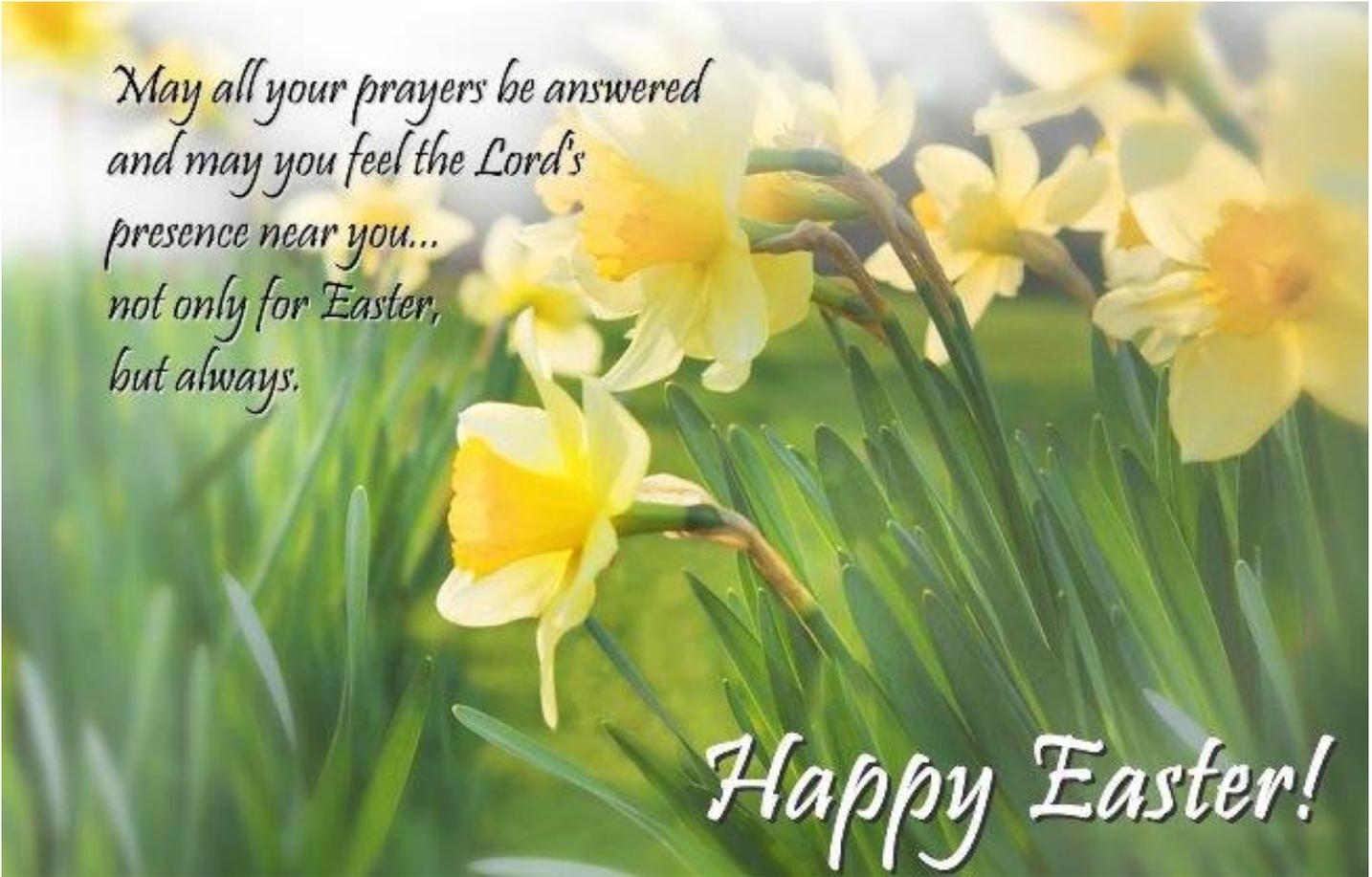


April, 2022

Northwest Presbyterian Church

Monthly Newsletter



*May all your prayers be answered
and may you feel the Lord's
presence near you...
not only for Easter,
but always.*

Happy Easter!

"Loving God by Serving Others"

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Pastor Andy's Closing Thoughts

It's hard to believe my five months at Northwest Presbyterian church is coming to close the end this month. It has been an experience I will cherish for the rest of my days. Let me just state this clearly and unambiguously... I love you guys. It has been a privilege and an honor to serve you.

You are embarking on a journey that will take you as a church to incredible places. I cannot help but to be excited about your future!

About a month ago I shared a two-day revitalization seminar that many of you were able to attend. During that seminar I recommended a book called **Simple Church: Returning to God's Process for Making Disciples** by Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger.

One of the key concepts presented in that book was the idea of having a simple mission and vision statement that everyone in the congregation knew and could repeat. It was to be a simple phrase that everyone could put in their back pocket and pull out on demand. How can you live what you can't remember? I was delighted to hear that the Session at Northwest recently adopted just such a mission/vision statement. I encourage each of you to learn it and live it. "*Loving God by serving others!*"

Soon you will have a new pastor. There is a real possibility this person will be a younger man or woman. You will need to care and nurture them so they can serve you fully and faithfully for years to come. To that end I have attached a letter from a great speaker and pastor named Marion Aldridge. This is advice that will serve you well.

Finally, it is my hope that you all will be "big-thinking, bet-the-farm, risk takers... never offending God with small-thinking or safe living." Trust God absolutely and completely to do great things.

-Pastor Andy

Advice to a Congregation with a Young Pastor

By Marion D. Aldridge

- 1. Don't expect your new pastor to be like your last pastor**—or any other pastor, ever. Not too many decades ago, seminaries produced cookie-cutter candidates to be pastors. Same theology. Same clothes. Same haircuts. Same gender. Their wives could play piano and teach Sunday school, two employees for the price of one. Your pastor could retire or move on, and your church could almost be guaranteed to get another man very similar to the last one. That is no longer so. Nowadays graduates of the same seminary vary theologically—from fundamentalist to liberal. They vary in worship style from traditional to contemporary. They may wear tee shirts to church on Sunday and have beards or shaved heads or both. Some of the best pastors are females. If you want an old-fashioned, twentieth-century pastor, you might as well put-up a **For Sale** sign in front of your church building now.
- 2. Love your pastor.** Pretend he or she is your beloved grandchild. Invite the new pastor to your house for a meal or meet somewhere for coffee and a donut. Remember your pastor's birthday. You are at least partly responsible for your pastor's success or failure. All pastors need support and encouragement, especially young ones. I made mistakes as a newly minted seminary graduate in my first church. I needed help, good advice, a listening ear, wisdom, and grace more than I needed judgment.

3. **The job of being a pastor looks easier than it is.** Pastors don't think jokes about working one hour each week are funny. Believe it or not, a twenty-minute sermon may take twenty hours of preparation. Make sure young pastors have coaches, mentors and support systems that can help them successfully navigate the inevitable challenges in a congregation made up of human beings—an organization that operates in real time with real money and with real problems. Make sure your pastor does not have to choose between vacation and continuing education. No pastor graduates from seminary with all the requisite skills needed to be a competent pastor. Allow them time and money for continuing education experiences.
4. **Most conflicts in a church are about power.** Even if the conflict is about the color of the pew cushions, it's about power. He said/she said/he said/she said is always about power. Power is often about change—a marriage, a birth, a death, a retirement, a hospitalization, a bankruptcy—something that may look as if it has nothing to do with the church. Pay attention. The issues under dispute are almost never the real issues. God advises patience. God advises listening more than talking. God advises kindness. Reducing anxiety is a worthy goal. Everything young pastors attempt to do won't work. Make sure you, as a member of the congregation, are a part of the solution and not a part of the problem. Blessed are the peacemakers.
5. **Every generation has new insights about Jesus, Holy Scripture, and the Christian faith.** With a young pastor, be prepared to hear something different than what you were taught in Sunday school fifty years ago. The Bible is a Big Book. Every generation, every culture, every denomination, even every family emphasizes aspects of faith unfamiliar—maybe even anathema—to older ears. Many members of my first congregation after seminary, in 1977, deep in the segregated South, did not want to hear anything about race relations. Or, about peacemaking. Or, about an expanded role for women in the church. They heard it anyway. They grew (at least some of them did). I grew.
6. The Christian faith, while acknowledging sin and failure, also highlights faith, hope, love, joy, peace, freedom, gratitude, being born again, resurrection, salvation, hospitality, rites of passage, baptism and blessing. Churches that find occasions to celebrate, to eat together, to laugh, to praise God, and to acknowledge successes are doing something right. Have you ever noticed how important festivals and holidays (holy days) were in the history of Israel? Milk and honey, bread and wine. Find reasons to recognize, honor and dedicate people, places, events, or memories. Your church and your pastor will, by doing so, not only be more faithful, but happier as individuals and as a congregation.



Betsy's Blessing

LESSONS FROM A MISSION TRIP

For the second year in a row I had the opportunity to go with our youth group on a mission trip to Atlanta to serve with Frontline Response (formerly known as the Atlanta Dream Center). This is a ministry that is on the front lines serving the homeless, and trying to help them get off the streets; helping rescue women caught in sex trafficking (which is the biggest illegal business in Atlanta); and ministering to children in need. We went with 8 youth and 4 adults, and as before, it was life shaking and powerful. Here are a few of the things that I learned and would like to share.

Let go of your expectations, and be willing to be vulnerable.

Because I had done this trip last year, I had certain ideas of how it would go, and the role I would play. However, this year was not like last year. For one thing, it seemed like more ministry happened within our group than out on the streets. There were moments when I struggled, and briefly sharing that gave others permission to talk about the burdens they were carrying. Another difference was in the outreach ministries. God showed up in unusual and unexpected places and times. For example, there was one man living on the streets who was strong in his faith. I asked if I could pray for him, and he said he was all prayed up. So I asked him if he would pray for me, and the Holy Spirit poured out powerfully from him to me.

***“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,” says the Lord.
“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and
My thoughts than your thoughts.”***

Isaiah 55:8-9 AMPC

Look for the good, and speak words of life.

One of the things that is part of this trip is a time that is set aside and designated as Team ministry time. It is called Words of Life. One person sits in the middle of the group and each person goes around and tells that person the things they see and appreciate in them. (This year I wrote them down so there would be a record for each person of what was said.) Because we want them to be authentic and deep we encourage the kids to watch each other and notice the good things about each other. This was so powerful to speak and hear! Many tears of joy were shed, and hearts and relationships were strengthened.

And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Philippians 4:8 NLT

Worship God and be changed.

Each of us has a unique way we can worship God with our life. It is not just about doing something because the actions without the heart are meaningless. Being in the presence of

God is the key. We do best when we operate from this focused center. This requires an intentional mindset to seek God in all we do, to live a life of worship. There are many different ways to worship God. Some of the typical ways we think of are through music, singing and speaking out praise. Another way to worship God is by using your gifts and talents to serve Him. Some in our group organized a mobile clothes truck so those in need of clothes could come in and easily find beautiful clothes in their size. Others played football or Uno with kids, spending quality time with them and valuing them. Some prepared meals, handed out water bottles and asked each person their name. There were encouraging cards made and given out, and there were times when prayers were offered up for the hurting. Because we were doing this: serving with a purpose, the work we did was empowered and transforming. This helped me realize that I want to live like this everyday.

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life- your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around-life- and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for Him.

Romans 12:1 The Message

(Jesus said) "It's who you are and the way you live that count before God. Your worship must engage your spirit in the pursuit of truth. That's the kind of people the Father is out looking for: those who are simply and honestly themselves before Him in their worship."

John 4:23 The Message

One final lesson I learned this year.

Trust God to work all things for good, even the small things.

For the second year in a row, the vans which had been reserved for our trip were not there when it was time to leave. One of the leaders going with us kindly offered both of her family's SUV's for the trip. When we stopped for lunch, our youth director and I were talking and I was telling him that I would be glad to help drive. He told me I had not been approved to drive by our conference insurance. My driving ability is a well known joke among those who know me, and I really do not enjoy driving, yet I was embarrassed that I was not able to help with that. However, God's grace redeemed even that. I was able to put aside my pride, and see God's greater plan. I was not able to drive, but I could interact and engage with the kids. And I was able to get to know and encourage those driving. Not having to focus on the road gave me the opportunity to focus on the people with me, and to play, pray and worship with them.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. Romans 8:28 NKJV

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you always, having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. 2 Corinthians 9:8 NKJV

May God comfort and strengthen each of you as we remember and celebrate our Savior's death and resurrection this Easter. And may we all let go, trust, worship, and serve Him in spirit and in truth. God bless you.

Betsy O'Callaghan

CHOIR CHAT

I was recently asked, "What is Lent"? I didn't have a ready answer because I've always assumed people just knew. An easy answer is this. Lent is a period of 40 days during which Christians remember the events leading up to and including the death of Jesus Christ, whose life and teachings are the foundation of Christianity. the 40day period is called Lent after an old English word meaning "lengthen".

During the month of April, the choir will be present our annual Cantata. It is the same one we've done before, but with some slight changes. Andy asked that he would have enough time to present a sermon. Therefore, thanks to the fact the we have Asha to play piano we will be able to shorten some of the hymns. In the past we had to rely on CDs and videos which could not be shortened.

On the first Sunday I will be singing a communion solo entitled "Hymn of the Last Supper". This song would usually be done on Maundy Thursday since that was the time of the Last Supper. However, since we are not having a Maundy Thursday service, I've chosen to do it on our usual communion Sunday.

On Palm Sunday, Asha, Char, and I will be doing the song "I'd Like to have Been in the Garden with Jesus". It is from the Easter Cantata upon which our current cantata is based. On that Sunday we will repeat the song we presented on March 27th, "Amazing Grace/My Chains Are Gone". Why? Because we love it so much and feel it sends a wonderful message. We hope that more people will be able to hear it.

On Easter Sunday we are hoping that many people will attend our very meaningful Easter worship in service. Sadly, this is Andy's last Sunday with us. He and Lori will be returning to their new home (which they love very much) in Portugal. We will all miss them very much!!

The last Sunday the choir will sing, "And Can It Be" based on Romans 5-8 "While we are still sinners, Christ died for us"

Each month I write the story behind how certain hymns are written. I decided to give the story behind the two solos I will do this month. I could not find information about "Hymn of the Last supper", but keep finding information on what the possible hymn was that Jesus sang with his disciples. It is written: "The last supper had just ended, and his disciples sang a hymn." According to Passover tradition, participants sang Psalms 113-114 earlier in the meal, and Psalms 115-118 after the meal ended. It is possible that on that Thursday night, when Jesus prayed in a garden with a heart full of sorrow before one of the Twelve came to betray him, he first would have sung the words of Psalm 118:24, "This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it!"

When my stepson, Andrew Beery, was ordained, he asked me to sing the song "Via dolorosa". I had never heard it before, but quickly found the music and asked my song writer, piano player, and good friend, A. Paul Johnson to play it for me. I have sung the song to the Glory of God many times since and it has become on of my favorites. But I decided now to find the story behind the writing of the song. The lyrics and music were written by the pop singer and songwriter Billy Sprague and Christian music writer Niles A. Borop. It is inspired and named after a street in the Old City of Jerusalem which is traditionally held to be the path Jesus walked on the way to his Crucifixion.

Years ago, when I first came to Northwest Church the choir met in a room across from the Pastor's office. Because the choir was small and the youth group large at that time, we traded rooms. The youth leader told us, "You are really going to get a good air conditioner".

Well, it did give the choir a lot of cool air, along with loud noise and wind that blew the music all over the room. So, the old relic sat unused. Jim and I wanted the choir to be more comfortable while rehearsal. We decided to donate a new window air conditioning unit to the choir room. THE ENTIRE CHOIR WOULD LIKE TO THANK, JIM, WAYNE, AND MIKE FOR INSTALLING THE UNIT.

See you in church: Rose

Please continue to pray for God's help for the following people:

March 4: Rev. John Harland and his wife

March 4: Katie Sistar

March 7: John Parrish

March 14: Several of our people suffering from falls: Laurie, Pastor Andy's wife; Carol O'Shea, Pam Fonte, and Jim Phillips

March 15: Pat Blydenburgh asked us to pray for Laurie, daughter of Barbara Christopher

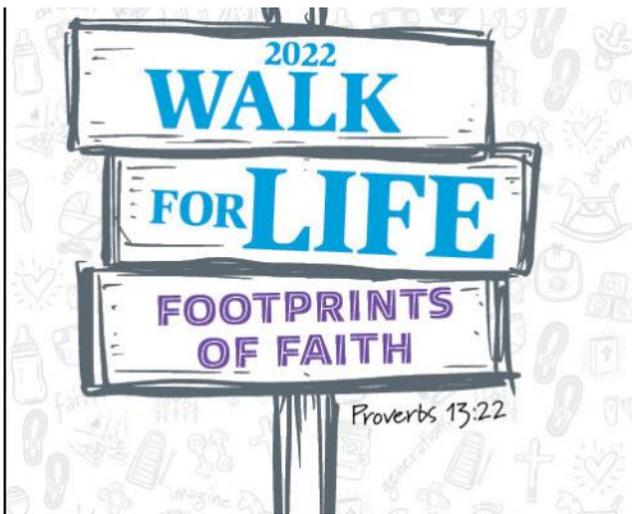
Note: Praise the Lord! Katie Sistar is back home to Florida, and she came to church on Sunday! Mike also has been back to church, working at our sound tech. We thank the Lord for His healing touch!



Report from the Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC)

Northwest Church has appointed the following people to discern God's will to find the person whom God has called to be our new pastor: Jim Leiby, chairman, Chuck Barksdale, Pam Fonte, Wayne Hilding, Sue Parrish, and Barb Piwonka. We have met several times along with our liaison from the Presbytery, Pastor Bobby Musengwa, who is a pastor at Maximo Presbyterian Church. Bobby is advising us how the process works. We have completed information about our church to share with potential candidates. Next we will receive personal information documents from candidates from anywhere in the U.S. and the world.

Please pray for us to have God's wisdom and discernment in this important task.



Thanks to the many Northwest Church people who donated generously last year to the Walk for Life. As you know, your monetary gifts help save the lives of babies. Also, your gifts aid women who need help in a crisis pregnancy; they need the caring personal attention of volunteers and professionals of the New Life Solutions. Not only do families get baby cribs, strollers, diapers, and other equipment needed to welcome the newborn; also, there are parenting classes, counseling, and opportunities to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Please let me know if you would like to make a pledge to the Walk for Life this year; just tell me the dollar amount you'd like to give. I will hand in your name, address and pledge information to the Walk for Life, and then they will send you a reminder by mail. You may join me in the Walk at the waterfront park downtown St. Petersburg on the Saturday before Mothers' Day.

It's a festive occasion with many churches represented, people of all ages take the 2-mile walk. (It's not a race!)

Barb Piwonka

"Lent is a time of going very deeply into ourselves...What is it that stands between us and God? Between us and our brothers and sisters? Between us and life, the life of the Spirit? Whatever it is, let us relentlessly tear it out, without a moment's hesitation."

— Catherine Doherly

Weekly Events

"Loving God by Serving Others"

SUNDAY:

WORSHIP SERVICE.....10:30AM

SUNDAY THRU SATURDAY:

INTO ACTION AA.....5:00PM

MONDAY:

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS.....7:30PM

MONDAY THRU THURSDAY:

*ESOL CLASSES..... 5:30PM -8:30PM

MONDAY THRU FRIDAY:

*ESOL CLASSES..... 8:30AM-1:30PM

FEEDING PINELLAS DINNER.....5:30 - 6:30PM

TUESDAY:

FEEDING PINELLAS FOOD PANTRY.....2:30-4:30PM

BAYCARE.....2:30 -6:30PM

AL ANON.....8:00-9:00PM

3RD TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH:

EPIC MOBILE - HIV TESTING.....2:30 - 5:30PM

WEDNESDAY:

FOOD PANTRY.....8:00-11:00AM

BICYCLE MINISTRY.....8:00-11:00AM

HOMELESS OUTREACH.....8:00-11:00AM

AL ANON.....7:00PM

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS.....8:00PM

THURSDAY:

BIBLE STUDY.....10:30-11:30AM

FEEDING PINELLAS FOOD PANTRY.....2:30-4:30PM

BAYCARE.....2:30-6:30PM

FAMILY HEALTH CARE FOUNDATION.....2:30-6:30PM

WOMEN'S NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS..... 8:00-9:00PM

3RD THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH:

GULF COAST LEGAL SERVICES.....2:30-4:30PM

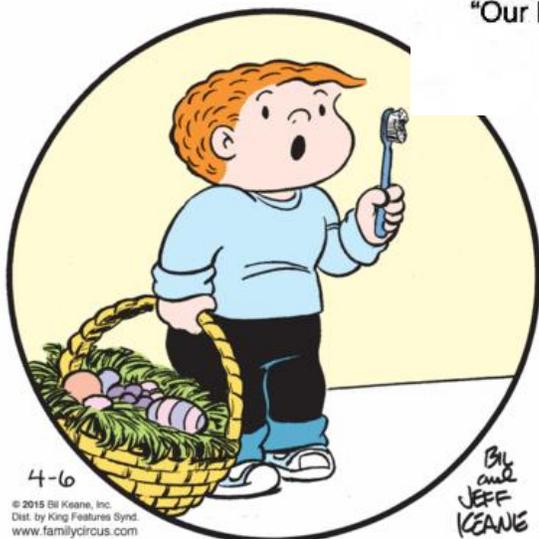
***English for Speakers of Other Languages**



1 Sally Ross
 10 Stella Adams
 25 Charlotte Ogilvie
 28 Jim Leiby



"Our Father, who art in heaven,
 how did You know
 my name?"



"Why did I get a new toothbrush
 in my Easter basket?"



"If you're ever headed the wrong way in life, re-
 member the road to Heaven allows U-turns."



EASTER

WORD SEARCH



P L S A C R I F I C E K
S A B B A R A B L A M B
J P C P I L A T E T M C
B E W H L P M W N V Y E
R E S U R R E C T I O N
S A A U Y I T F V N F A
D N D C S Y S P X E P M
R G U L B U V T S D W E
A E J V N M L S I R X S
U L K R E V O S S A P H
G S I Z T R B T T G N T
W S M V C F L X C T W E
E D K X E D C K Z B D G
C R U C I F I X I O N C
L Z B L A H T O G L O G

JESUS
ANGELS
LENT
SACRIFICE

CROSS
GARDEN
JUDAS
PILATE

RESURRECTION
CRUCIFIXION
PASSOVER
GETHESEMANE

GUARDS
ALIVE
SUNRISE
GOLGOTHA

TOMB
CHRISTIAN
LAMB
BARABBAS

April 2022

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 Palm Sunday	11	12	13	14 Maundy Thursday	15 	16
17 Easter Cantata	18	19	20	21 Session Meeting 6pm	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30