



The Profile

November
2019

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Pastor's Ponderings



Our Presbytery's Commission on Ministry has been asked to revise the wording regarding the Presbytery's Study Leave Guidelines for pastors and churches. So the Commission has been working on that, with the intent of updating the wording but leaving the policies about the same. Since I serve on the Commission on Ministry, I have a copy of the first draft of the revised wording, and am about to share some of it with

you (how exciting for you!):

“When a pastor or other leader of a congregation grows in grace, knowledge, love, and service, members of the congregation will grow in like manner. Spiritual growth occurs in the nurturing environment of continuing education. This can take many forms, often unique to a particular pastor or the needs of the congregation. The goal of a study leave is for self-development in the work of ministry and not to extend vacation leave, or for recreation, or leisure. While not exclusive to these examples, study leave opportunities may take the form of advanced formal training at a seminary, short courses or workshops at universities, independent study projects, or specific programs of research and reading.

“The Presbytery on Southeastern Illinois has a long-standing policy of providing two weeks annual study leave for pastors as a component of each call.”



My study leave this year took place in October. Laurie and I attended two “Wee Kirk conferences” with different subjects and speakers; one was in Western Pennsylvania and one at Montreat Conference Center near Asheville North Carolina.

“Wee Kirk” is Scottish for “small church,” and is really a bit of a misnomer now, as the conferences are geared primarily for churches of 200 members or less – which is now the normal size for most Presbyterian churches.



Both conferences were very well done with very good, helpful content (and as a bonus, both were located in the woods in the mountains, where fall leaf color was near peak!). I’ll be sharing with you some of what we learned in bits and pieces over the next few months. Here is an overview of the topics covered, some in presentations to the entire group and some in workshops:

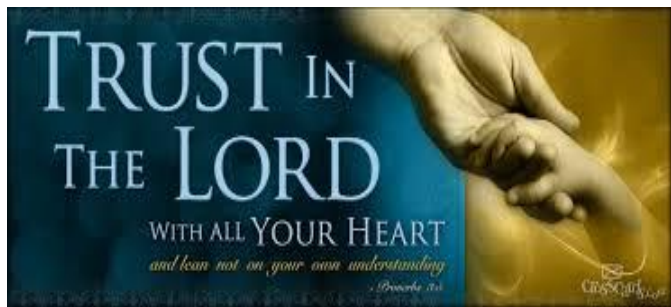
- ② **Creating Positive Life Patterns for Doing Ministry**
- ② **How Do We Approach Difficult Bible Passages (main example: Nahum)**
- ② **Concrete Strategies for Local and World Mission**
- ② **Resources Available to Pastors, Sessions, and Congregations**
- ② **Connecting with Our Neighbors (literally: the people and businesses right around us)**
- ② **Disciplines to Promote Personal Healing and Spiritual Formation**

There was also a daily worship which we appreciated, as participants, not leaders; and times for fellowship.

Thank you for your willingness to follow the “Study Leave Guidelines” and allow us these opportunities.

— Rodger

Steve on Stewardship



LIVING GENEROUSLY BEGINS WITH TRUST is our 2019 stewardship theme.

***“Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not rely on your own insight.
In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.”*** (Proverbs 3:5-6)

The Bible declares that our very existence in faith begins with trust. Psalm 22:4 tells us “In you our ancestors put their trust; they trusted and you delivered them.”

Marcia Shetler wrote in *Voices on Stewardship* - “*Trusting in God is part of our responsibility as followers of Jesus. It allows us to joyfully and generously let go of what we think is ours and release it for God’s use. Those acts of generosity are our witness to the world, sharing God’s abundance as channels of God’s love.*”

And as Rodger so appropriately stated in his sermon on June 2 –

“We are called to trust in God in the use of our finances, to give generously out of that trust . . . when we give through our trust in God’s abundance, then our generous giving is out of Christian freedom.”

When it comes to generosity in the church, what image of God do we reveal in our giving? Do we give out of a spirit of fear — fear that the righteous God is going to punish us if we don’t? Or do we give in a spirit of trust and gratitude for the grace that our loving Creator has given us? Do we trust God in our gratitude?

At our birth, God claims us as God’s own. God loves us even before we know what love is, or even who God is. Trust in God begins at birth and we begin to understand that trust as we grow older.

Everything we have — everything — has been graced to us by God. And so, as children created in God’s image, we give generously, because our loving and just Creator first gave to us and we trusted him.





CHOIR NEWS & NOTES

SANCTUARY CHOIR NEWS

I ended my last Profile article telling of my dream of a crowded choir loft and a crowded sanctuary on October 6. Well, dreams don't always come true, do they? However, I don't give up on my dreams, so those images of a full choir loft and crowded pews are still in my mind's eye. Even without the "crowd," we enjoyed good music, good messages, good fellowship in worship – goals for every Sunday morning service.

Now we are into November, and plans are being made for the 42nd annual Advent Choral Service, to be held at 3 p.m. on December 8 in our sanctuary. Mark your calendars now! Rehearsals are scheduled for November 8, 18, and 25, and December 2 and 5.

Listen to our songs of praise in this month of Thanksgiving as we rejoice in our many blessings. And join us, as many Sundays as you possibly can, in those waiting pews.

--Susan



November birthdays

- 1 Amy Church
- 6 Joanna Hebermehl
- 7 Drew Bradshaw
- 9 Vicky Jewell
- 12 David Boland
- 13 Michae Jewell
- 16 Wilma Johnson
- 25 Marty Jipp
- 27 Jani Howrey
- 29 Steve Blair
- 30 Phil Scott



November anniversaries

- 11 Jerry & Mabel Benson
- 29 Kirby & Chris Clawson

DID YOU KNOW . . .

. . . that Rev. Rodger served as the on-call volunteer chaplain of Paris Community Hospital for the month of October?



NEWS FROM SESSION

Business at the October meeting of the church Session included:

- + Discussion of this Fall's Stewardship campaign, types of income available to us for the remainder of 2019, and beginning the development of the 2020 budget
- + Receiving, and acting on as needed, reports from six church committees which had met since the September Session meeting
- + Approving three mission disbursements recommended by the Mission Task Force, including the Paris Ministerial Fellowship Emergency Assistance Fund and Edgar County Homeless Shelter
- + Our monthly prayer time for one of our committees was for the Personnel Committee and the church staff they work with
- + The November meeting was scheduled for Monday, November 11 instead of our usual second Tuesday of the month.

HELPING OTHERS

During October, members of our church volunteered at the Paris Compassionate Clothing Closet. **THANK YOU** to Liz (who coordinated the effort), Tom, Kathy, Rodger, Joanna, Christie, Jane, Jani, Carolyn—and any “last minute volunteers” of which we were unaware at the writing of this announcement!

CHURCH FAMILY OF THE WEEK

Our “Church Family of the Week” program gives us a chance to lift up a different family (group or individual) of our congregation each week, include them in our daily prayer for our families and friends, and to send cards or greetings or in some other way to let them know we are glad they are part of our church family.



The “Church Family of the Week” is listed in our Sunday bulletins. If you missed one or more of those recent announcements, I'll bet those families wouldn't mind if you prayed for them this week. Those recently listed are:

*Ruth Anthony
704 E. Court St, Apt. 16., Paris.*

*Jane Bittner
230 W. Madison, Paris*

*Kenisha Davis
C/O 241 W. Court St., Paris*

*Mary Anna Ludington
3 Magnolia Manor, Paris.*

PRAYERS FOR AND END TO HUNGER

During the month of October, the Deacons collected donations for the Edgar County Food Pantry – one of their annual projects (It is not too late to contribute). Another effort to help those without enough food is provided to us by the organization “Bread for the World”: a week of Daily Prayers for an End to Hunger. Perhaps you would like to designate a week soon to include these in your prayers:

SUNDAY:

O God, I pray for all those around the world who struggle with hunger and suffer from malnutrition. Grant them strength and courage as they work to create a better life for themselves and their communities. May conflicts cease, crops flourish, and good governance grow. In the name of Jesus, who is the Bread of Life for the world. Amen.

MONDAY:

Heavenly Father, I pray for the one in five children in our country who lives in a family that struggles to get enough to eat. Grant patience and wisdom to parents who work so hard to see that their children have the food they need to grow and learn. Amen.

TUESDAY:

Lord God, I pray for our President, the members of Congress, and other elected leaders. May they be moved to make ending hunger in our own country and around the world by 2030 a priority for our nation. Grant them clear minds and generous hearts to sustain and improve those programs that provide help and opportunity to so many people. In the name of Christ, who came not to be served but to serve. Amen.

WEDNESDAY:

O God, look with compassion on the one in seven Americans who face hunger in this country. Preserve their dignity as they struggle to get enough to eat. May those looking for jobs find new opportunities to earn a living. May those who are unable to work be supported and sustained by their communities. Amen.

THURSDAY:

I give thanks for my church and all other churches that work together to end hunger. Bless the efforts of those organizations that offer relief in times of emergency as well as those who support long-term development. May our witness to the Gospel of your love and compassion shine ever more brightly. Amen

FRIDAY:

O Christ, you gave your life on the cross to overcome evil and injustice. May your abundant love inspire those who volunteer and work in food pantries and other feeding programs in my community. May they offer both kindness and respect to those who depend on the food they provide. Amen.

SATURDAY:

O God, may the Spirit of the Risen Christ inspire me to rededicate myself to ending hunger in the world you created for us. Grant me boldness and courage as I seek to persuade our nation’s leaders to change the policies and conditions that allow hunger to persist. I ask you to bless my prayers, my actions, and my giving. Amen.

THE CHRISTIAN CALENDAR

November 24 is "Christ the King" Sunday, and reminds us that Jesus is Lord over all things: "Christ reigns supreme. Christ rules in peace. As Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, Christ is the center of the universe, the ruler of all history, the judge of all people. Christ triumphs over death and, in the end, over all the forces of evil." (The Liturgical Year, PCUSA). You might think of hymns like "Crown Him with Many Crowns," "Rejoice, The Lord is King," and "Majesty."



December 1 is the first day in the Season of Advent, which will be described in the December newsletter.

YOUTH EVENT

The next event for the Paris Christian Youth Fellowship will be a movie on Sunday, Nov. 17 at 3:00. Please mark your calendars; more details to follow.



EXTENDING A HAPPY THANKSGIVING TO OTHERS

The Board of Deacons will be purchasing food items to pack in boxes (our form of baskets!) to take to 6 families in need of assistance in Paris.

THANKSGIVING WORSHIP

Don't forget to make giving thanks to God part of your Thanksgiving celebration! The Annual Community Thanksgiving Worship Service, sponsored by the Paris Ministerial Fellowship, will be held at First Assembly of God Church, 213 W. Blackburn St., on Sunday evening November 24 at 6:00.



DECORATING THE CHURCH FOR ADVENT/CHRISTMAS

The date to decorate our sanctuary for the Advent and Christmas season has been set for Saturday, November 23 beginning at 9:30 a.m. Please join us for an enjoyable time of fellowship!



EXPLORING OUR FAITH

The four Gospel accounts of Jesus' life (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) each present the coming of Jesus in a different way. The Monday evening "Exploring Our Faith" discussion group will be looking at those descriptions in its meetings leading up to Christmas, using the study "Christmas Accounts in the Gospels." The group meets from 5:15 to 6:30 (and some of us go out to dinner together after). Our November-December meeting dates, all on this topic, will be: November 4 and 25, December 2 and 9.



Thank You

THANK YOU'S

The Deacons, as one of their annual projects, contact local schools and provide supplies they say they need. Responses this year include:

"Thank you very much for the generous donation of school supplies for my classroom. It really means a lot to receive such a wonderful gift!"

Kansas Music Teacher

"My class and I wanted to tell you 'thank you' for the board games and volleyball you provided for us! The kids have already enjoyed them tremendously! I cannot tell you what it means to have people like you helping out in the world. It means the world to us teachers! God bless you all for what you do and continue to do."

Love, Kansas 6th graders

Other Thank you's:

"Dear Friends in Christ:

Thank you for your gift of \$450.00. Your support makes a difference! Marion Medical Mission will use 100% of your donation for the purpose that you have designated.

A Marion Medical Mission well is one of the extreme rural poor know how to maintain and one they can afford to maintain. This is a Well Program where everything is purchased, made, and administered in Africa by Africans. The Africans are the experts.

The impact of MMM's Well Program has been dramatic. Its importance can't be overemphasized. It represents self-help and is a means for people to get up off their knees. Self-help frees people."

Uchindami Kwa Chiuta

"Glory Be to God"

(Our donation fully paid for one well)



"Thank you for helping make the Relay for Life event a success. Together, we honored all cancer survivors and remembered loved ones lost. Because of your support, we're able to take action against this terrible disease.

You are helping boost our efforts to provide patient programs and services, emotional support, and trusted information for those facing a cancer diagnosis – and their families. And you're helping lead the fight to end cancer for our loved ones by supporting vital research.

We sincerely appreciate your generosity, and thank you for helping the American Cancer Society attack cancer on all fronts."