



THE TOWER



MARCH 2020

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, TITUSVILLE, PA

Dear Church Family,

This month I want to share a little about denying ourselves and bearing our own crosses. The interconnected themes of denying ourselves and bearing our own crosses may not seem attractive or desirable to us, but they are foundational to discipleship and spiritual growth. Denying self and taking up our own cross are primary elements in the teaching of Jesus (Mt. 16.24; Mk. 8.34; Lk. 9.23; Mt. 26.39; Mk. 14.36; Lk. 22.42; Jn. 12.24-26, 6.38). These 2 themes are also the topics of chapters 2 and 3 in Calvin's *A Little Book on the Christian Life*, which is the book we will be discussing in our Lenten Family Night Dinners. This little book is a gem! I hope our Family Night conversations of this book are well-attended. Even if you do not plan to attend the dinners, feel free to pick up a copy of the book from the church office. The cost is \$5 per book.

Denying ourselves and taking up our own cross are highly desirable because they result in deep, wonderful peace and in exciting spiritual growth.

Regarding peace, in his 15th century classic, *The Imitation of Christ* (a book so important and popular that only the Bible has been translated into more languages), Thomas À Kempis writes:

1. Whensoever a man desireth aught above measure, immediately he becometh restless. The proud and the avaricious man are never at rest; while the poor and lowly of heart abide in the multitude of peace. The man who is not yet wholly dead to self, is soon tempted, and is overcome in small and trifling matters. It is hard for him who is weak in spirit, and still in part carnal and inclined to the pleasures of sense, to withdraw himself altogether from earthly desires. And therefore, when he withdraweth himself from these, he is often sad, and easily angered too if any oppose his will.

2. But if, on the other hand, he yield to his inclinations, immediately he is weighed down by the condemnation of his conscience; for that he hath followed his own desire, and yet in no way attained the peace which he hoped for. For true peace of heart is to be found in resisting passion, not in yielding to it. And therefore there is no peace in the heart of a man who is carnal, nor in him who is given up to the things that are without him, but only in him who is fervent towards God and living the life the Spirit.

(Book 1, chapter 6, Translated by Rev. William Benham)

We will learn more about the key themes of denying self and taking up our own cross from Calvin's *A Little Book on the Christian Life*. As a foundation on which to build, I offer this excerpt from my sermon from 2/23/20. Deny self. To deny ourselves is to **stop** acting as if **we** were God. To deny ourselves is to **set aside** the *illusion* that **we** are in control. To deny ourselves is **accept** that **we** do **not** make the rules, and we do **not** know what is best. To deny self is **give up** our **plans** and our **claims** on ourselves. To deny ourselves is to accept the fact we do **not belong** to ourselves; we belong to **Jesus**, who **bought** us with his own blood.

Take up your own cross. For **Jesus**, taking up the cross meant **embracing** the plan of God the Father. And *that* is what it means for us. Taking up our own crosses means **embracing** God's will, God's agenda. Taking up our own crosses has *NOTHING* to do with paying the penalty for our sin. **Jesus** paid for **our** sins on **his** cross! Taking up our own crosses means **embracing** God's will, God's agenda. Taking up our own crosses *also* means accepting the additional suffering that comes our way **because** we follow *Jesus*—*additional* suffering, ridicule, rejection, or even literal martyrdom because we follow Jesus.

The **prayer** Jesus prayed in Gethsemane illustrates *both* denying self and taking up the cross. Jesus prayed, "*Father... not MY will, but YOURS be done*" (Lk. 22.42).

This lifestyle to which God calls us is **challenging**, but it's also **rewarding**, *both now and in eternity*, and GOD **helps us** every step of the way!

Love, grace, and peace in Christ to us all!



Session News

Session Meeting Highlights

Your Session met to discern God's leading for our congregation on Monday, February 24, 2020. Actions included:

- Restoration of the Chase Gospel Window was tabled;
- Nathaniel Licht will find musicians for the Good Friday service;
- Annual Reorganization: President: Connie McIntyre; Vice-President: Gail Billig; Clerk/Secretary: Gloria Taylor; Treasurer: Rose Nystrom; Committee Chairs were chosen;
- Removed Lauren Long, Kristen Arendash, Mary Ellen Arendash, and Megan Arendash per their requests;
- The annual John Henn Charitable Trust letter has been sent;
- Church parking lot's limestone will be spread by Chris Hipple for \$140.00;
- A letter has been sent to Presbytery regarding the church rolls and per capita;
- 5 Confirmands Joined our church on February 23;
- A letter was sent asking for a donation for the completion of the window project in the sanctuary.

Five Join Church

For the last six months, five young adults made a commitment to attend confirmation classes with the hopes of joining as a member in February.

On February 23, Julia Enright, Cole Enright, Lance Enright, Bella Middleton, and Laird Stover became members of our church. Please welcome them.

Dr. Smith to speak the TAM Lenten Services

On Wednesday, March 18, at 12 noon, Dr. Smith will give the message during the Titusville Area Ministerium Lenten Service at the United Methodist Church. Following the service, the ladies of our church will serve a luncheon in their social hall. The menu will be chicken or egg salad sandwiches, chips, dessert and beverage for \$5.00.

Fundraiser Luncheon to be Served on March 22

On March 22, the youth of the church will host a fundraiser luncheon immediately following the morning worship in Scheide Hall to support the Water Well Project that we are currently collecting funds.

The meal will be Chicken ‘n Biscuit, side dish, and dessert. The cost of the luncheon is on a donation basis, but please be generous as this is a means of raising funds for the Water Well Project.

Lake Erie Presbytery to Hold Event

On March 28, 2020, at the First Presbyterian Church of the Covenant located at 250 West 7th Street in Erie, PA, the Lake Erie Presbytery will hold an event called “The Big Event – ‘Where’s the Light?’” from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The cost for this event is \$15.00 (includes lunch) per person and the church will pay for anyone eager to go. There are several workshops to pick from, or if you need more information, speak with someone in the church office.

Registration must be made no later than March 10th, 2020.

For more information, see the brochure located on the table to the left of the church office.

Good Friday Service to be Held Here

On Friday, April 10, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., a Good Friday Service will be held here in our sanctuary. Speaking on the 7 last words from the cross, Dr. Vaughan Smith, Father Walter Packard, Rev. Tim Maybray, Rev. Larry, Rev. Robert Luther, and others will be at the pulpit.

Upcoming Committee Meetings

All Meetings take place in the Conference Room unless indicated otherwise.

Evangelism – Sunday, March 1, 12:15 p.m., Conference Room

Heritage – Sunday, March 8, 12:15 p.m., Conference Room

Mission – Wednesday, March 11, at 12 noon

Spiritual Formation – March 11, at 1 p.m.

Finance – Thursday, March 12, at 5:30 p.m.

Deacons – Thursday, March 12, at 7 p.m.

Session – Monday, March 16, at 7 p.m.

Sunday School News

Sunday School

- Senior High and Adult Sunday school classes meet at 9:45 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. If you are coming to an adult class, please feel free to bring your children as they will be welcomed to our supervised young people's area, located in the nursery to wait for you before church begins.
- All children in Kindergarten up to the 5th grade will meet for Sunday school during the church hour. They will come to the sanctuary with their families; stay for a short portion of worship (about the first 15 minutes); then be excused to their Sunday school classroom.

We hope that you will be able to join us at these times.

Spiritual Formation

Lenten Family Nights to Begin March 4

The Lenten Family Night Dinners/Programs will begin March 4, at 5:30 p.m., in Scheide Hall. Those attending are asked to bring a dish to share according to the food theme of the week. March 4: Breakfast foods, March 11: Comfort food, March 18: Italian food, March 25: Mexican food, April 1: American food

Beginning at 6:30 p.m., Rev. Dr. Vaughan Smith will lead a study on John Calvin's book entitled "A Little Book on the Christian Life." Books are available in the church office. The cost for the book is \$5.00. Scholarships are available.

On March 25, a guest speaker will talk to us about the Water Well Project. We are currently raising funds for this project.

Transformation Tuesdays

Transformation Tuesdays, our after-school program for children in K-5 through 5th grades, meets on Tuesdays, from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Walkers will be escorted from Main Street Elementary to the church by adults. Snacks, a Bible lesson, crafts, games, and music will be provided.

We are always in need of volunteers; so, if you would like to help, contact Gail Billig at 827-3122 or Nancy Roeder at 827-6349.

Note: After-school Programs follow the School Calendar.

No School – No After-School Program

Men of First Breakfast Bible Study

MOF meets each Wednesday at 7 a.m. in Scheide Hall. Men of the church and community come for a Bible Study, a delicious breakfast, good fellowship, and conversation on a passage of the Bible, leaving well-nourished and fulfilled.

If you would like to help prepare the morning breakfast, speak with Tom Newcombe.

Senior High and Middle School Fellowship

Senior High Fellowship will meet at 6 p.m. this month.

Middle School Fellowship will meet each week at 5:30 p.m.

WHAT: **GROUPS CHOICE**

WHO/WHEN: Senior High – Sunday, March 1, Youth Room
Middle School – Wednesday, March 4, Scheide Hall

DETAILS: Senior High Youth, Youth Room
Middle School will meet in Scheide Hall to eat at the Lenten Family Night Dinner, prior to going upstairs for fellowship.

WHAT: **THE CHOICE IS YOURS**

WHO/WHEN: Senior High – Sunday, March 8, Youth Room
Middle School – Wednesday, March 11, Scheide Hall

DETAILS: Senior High Youth, Youth Room
Middle School will meet in Scheide Hall to eat at the Lenten Family Night Dinner, prior to going upstairs for fellowship.

WHAT: **ME, MYSELF, AND I**

WHO/WHEN: Senior High – Sunday, March 15, Youth Room
Middle School – Wednesday, March 18, Scheide Hall

DETAILS: Senior High Youth, Youth Room
Middle School will meet in Scheide Hall to eat at the Lenten Family Night Dinner, prior to going upstairs for fellowship. We will examine Luke 19:1-10 and Philippians 4:13 and how they relate to you and me.

WHAT: **OVERCOMING STRESS IN CONFLICT
WITH YOUR FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**

WHO/WHEN: Senior High – Sunday, March 22, Youth Room

DETAILS: Meet upstairs for fellowship

WHAT:	LEADING A HELPING HAND (A SERVICE PROJECT)
WHO/WHEN:	Middle School – Wednesday, March 25, Scheide Hall Senior High – Sunday, March 29, Youth Room
DETAILS:	Middle School will meet in Scheide Hall to eat at the Lenten Family Night Dinner, prior to going upstairs for fellowship. Senior High Youth, in the Youth Room

Missions

Fifth Fridays

Other 5th Friday meals will be held on May 29; July 31; and October 30.

Water Well Project Challenge

A challenge was introduced to our congregation, last month, to help raise funds to provide water wells to those in need of clean, drinkable water. The congregation has been asked to collect coins or donate to this water well project, as all collected funds received by June 1 will be matched by an anonymous donor. If you have any questions, please speak with Connie McIntyre. Thank you in advance for your generous support.

Worship

Communion

On the First Sunday in Lent, March 1, communion will be served by intinction. On Palm Sunday, April 5, communion will be served.

Ushers March Ushers: Tony DeDionisio and Eric Mowrey

A Note from the Director of Music

At First Church, the worship choir is a major part of the “Sunday Experience.” I encourage anyone with a heart for worship and a song in their heart to consider joining this long-standing ministry! The choir meets every Wednesday at 7 p.m. from September through May. They sing a wide variety of anthems that please most musical tastes, as well as lead the Sunday hymns. No experience is necessary and I am always available for “on-the-job training” for any choir member, not only in vocal production, but in ear training, music theory, sight-reading, and Christian understanding. As Marty Haugen wrote, “All are welcome in this Place!”

Respectfully Yours,
Nathaniel F. Licht, Director of Music

Fellowship News

SAM's (Senior Adult Ministry)

All those 55+ are invited to participate in all SAM's Club events. If you have a suggestion for a movie/event, would like to make the soup for the day, or need a ride, call Tom Newcombe at 827-3665.

SAM's Weekly Programs

Each Wednesday join the SAM's Club group at 1 p.m. for an afternoon of needlecrafting.

Each Thursday join the SAM's Club group at 1 p.m. for an afternoon of card playing.

SAM's Club Lunch and a Movie

On Friday, March 6 and March 20, at 12 noon, in Scheide Hall, join the SAM's Club for Lunch and a Movie. Homemade soup will be served, followed by a movie. Mark your calendar today!

Breaking Bread Together

Breaking Bread Together will meet at UPT Cafeteria on Tuesday, March 10, at 12:30 p.m. Anyone who would like to join this group should call or stop by the church office to make a reservation. Reservations need to be in by the Sunday prior to the luncheon. We will carpool from the church parking lot at 12 noon.

PW News

PW Holds Jane Stromboli Fundraiser

The PW Women are holding a Jane Stromboli Fundraiser until Sunday, March 22. Anyone wishing to purchase pies, strombolis, apple dumplings or pumpkin rolls, should see the order forms located in the church office. If you have any questions, please speak with Sandy Swanson or Terry Davitt. Orders will be in just in time for Easter!

Gently Used Books Needed

Anyone who has gently-used books and would like to donate them for the upcoming book sale is asked to bring them to the church office or place them in the Daub Doors. Please no encyclopedias, magazines or school books.

The PW Women will hold its annual book sale. A presale for congregational members will be held on Sunday, March 29 from noon to 1 p.m. On Monday, March 30, and Tuesday, March 31 hours will be from 9-4 p.m., with Wednesday, April 1 from 12 noon to 6 p.m. All are welcome to come.

Birthdays

Kasey Harroun	2	Dion Young	12	Tammy Root	23
Claude Lemley	3	Sarah Jones	13	Heidi Wonderling	23
Diane Sharer	4	J. L. Love	14	Barb Frye	24
Ernie Axton	7	Donna Yoas	15	Adam Sutley	24
Courtney DeDionisio	7	Betty Kriner	16	Becky Keebler	26
	7	Julie Patterson	16	Lynn Cressman	28
Martha Warren	9	Uriah Sampson	18	Tom Tarr	30
David Fitz	10	Helen Boemmel	19	Robert Herps	30
Terry Funk	11	Desirae Patterson	20	William Martin	31

If we have missed your birthday – please let us know.

Church Mission Statement

First Presbyterian Church

A Christian community that welcomes all people and equips them to proclaim, witness, and teach the good news of Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, and caring service.

Flowers for the Sanctuary

If you would like to place flowers in the Sanctuary on any Sunday throughout the year, let Terry Davitt know at the church office (827-3665) by the Wednesday prior to them being in the sanctuary. This way, she can place the dedication in the bulletin.

Community

Lenten Series at United Methodist Church each Wednesday at 12 noon

The First United Methodist Church will once again host the Ecumenical Community Lenten Lunch Series from 12 noon to 12:30 p.m. Area pastors will take turns preaching each Wednesday during the Lenten season. Following the service, at 12:30 p.m., a luncheon fundraiser will take place for a \$5.00 donation.

Below is a list of who will be preaching:

DATE	Preacher	Lunch Fundraiser
March 4 th	Larry Reitz	Beers Family
March 11 th	David Southwick	Heaven's Loving Hands
March 18 th	Vaughan Smith	Presbyterian Missions
March 25 th	Chad Kaminski	Nazarene Ladies Ministry
April 1 st	TBD	Kenya Orphanage
<u>No Service</u>	Holy Week	

Other Lenten/Easter Community Events

- Wednesday, April 8th at 6 p.m., Seder Meal at First Baptist Church contact Pastor Brian Borger to reserve your spot by April 1st at 814-673-3715
- Maundy Thursday service at First Presbyterian Church and First United Methodist Church April 9th at 7 p.m. with communion.
- Good Friday Services will be held at First Presbyterian Church, Friday, April 10th, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Seven pastor from the community will lend their voices by supplying a mini-sermon on one of the seven words said from the cross.

Alzheimer Caregiver's Support Group Meeting

An Alzheimer Caregiver's Support Group, led by Marcia Garrett and Carol Morgan, meets on the first and third Tuesday each month in Emerson Parlor at 2:30 p.m. This group will meet on March 3 and March 17.

A difficult challenge to face alone, Marcia and Carol have participated in special training to equip them to lead the group. All those who live with or care for those afflicted with Alzheimer's or dementia of any kind are welcome to participate. If you have questions about the group, call Marcia Garrett at 827-7404.

The 'If You Missed It in 2017' Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

On October 17-29, 2020 the Rev. Norma Prina Murphy is again co-hosting a pilgrimage to the Holy Land on both sides of the Jordan River (Israel and Jordan) stretching 'from Dan to Beersheba' and more. Upon arriving, we spend our first night in the wilderness of the Negev and take a gentle walk or serious hike (your choice) though an oasis with a waterfall. Spending succeeding nights in Petra and Amman, Jordan, seeing the hidden city of Petra, Mt Nebo, and the most likely site of Jesus' baptism on the eastern shore of the Jordan, we return to Israel for 2 nights in Jericho, seeing Masada, Qumran and swimming in the Dead Sea. Then on to Nazareth, the chapel commemorating Jesus' teaching the Beatitudes, a boat ride across the Sea of Galilee, and a special time of worship at the main headwater of the Jordan in Caesarea Philippi after seeing the ancient gates in the city of Dan which Abraham and Serai entered on their way from Ur into Canaan.

After those 2 nights in the Galilee we finally follow Jesus to Jerusalem, with stops at the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, Bethlehem, the Old City of Jerusalem including walking the Via Dolorosa to Holy Sepulcher Church and the Western Wall. We have built in a free morning for you to do whatever you desire in Jerusalem before flying home.

If you are interested in joining Norma and her colleagues, the Revs. Jim Farrer and Mark Unruh, there are more detailed itinerary and information sheets available from the church office (on the table to the left of the church office?) We would be honored to have you be our companions on this next great adventure through scripture in the places where it actually happened.

Boy Scout Troop Meets on Mondays

Each Monday at 6 p.m., in Scheide Hall, all boys and girls in grades Kindergarten - 5th, interested in joining a great club are invited to come and check it out. Questions should be directed to Geri Whitney at (814)564-1179.

Arts and Scraps Space

Did you know that upstairs in the old Kindergarten classroom there is a place for anyone to do arts and crafts? If you like to fellowship with others while painting, scrapbooking, quilting, or other creative hobbies, this is the place for you.

If you have the opportunity, stop in when Jessica Decker is up there, you will find a pot of hot water for tea or hot cocoa simmering, light snacks to enjoy, and good tunes on the radio. The space is warm and welcoming. Check it out!

For more information, call Jessica at (814)449-4681.

Food Pantry

The Food Pantry needs our help. It is always collecting food items for its shelves. Gift cards (for personal hygiene items and toiletries) are always appreciated too.

Crisis Hotlines

Drug and Alcohol Crisis Line: (844)643-5766

Case manager available 24/7 to assist in seeking treatment and to get screenings/assessments and appointments made

Mental Health Crisis Line: (814) 724-2732 or (800) 315-5721

To access help in case of an emergency

Warm Line: (800)951-2055 When you need someone to talk to on a bad day.

Contact Us

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Staff

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