



A day or two after the riot at the Capitol on Epiphany, January 6th, Herbert Peel – our congregation’s Poet Laureate – called me to express his concern for the state of our country. He asked that I address this violence in my February newsletter article, especially given that so many who participated or condoned it professed to be followers of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. I am grateful to Herbert for reminding us that we are accountable for the power our words wield in the world. If anyone truly knows the power words have to incite or subdue violence (or anything else, for that matter), surely it is the poet among us!

Jan Edmiston, the General Presbyter of the Presbytery of Charlotte, has a brilliant blog called [A Church for Starving Artists](#). I’ve learned so much from her over the years and I frequently use her articles to do leadership training for new Elders and Deacons. She wrote a powerful piece following the Capitol Riot observing how our words can perpetuate a culture of violence, even if that is not our explicit intention. She recalls this incident in the 1980s:

I was in seminary when a would-be assassin severely wounded President Reagan. One of my classmates – a second-career student with a young child – was not a fan of Reagan, but she was staggered by a conversation with her daughter that night. At the dinner table, the daughter said with all seriousness, *“Mommy, we’re glad that Reagan got shot, right?”* My friend dropped her fork and said, *“Oh honey, no. We don’t agree with him, but we never want him to be hurt.”* My friend was mortified and it was a good reminder for her to be clear in teaching her child that even when we disagree with people, we don’t wish them harm.

This seminary student clearly had no intention or desire for President Reagan to be harmed, but how she spoke about Reagan gave her young daughter the distinct impression that harming those we disagree with is both right and good.

It makes me think about how often I carelessly use and misuse words without considering the power those words may have on those around me. Even when we don’t mean violence with our words, we are not the only ones who make meaning out of our words. Others make meaning too: children, neighbors, friends, and others. Jan Edmiston offers two questions that I think are worth our consideration as we try to nurture a culture of peace rather than perpetuate a culture of violence:

1. **What are we doing to give our children and our neighbors the idea that physically hurting people with whom we disagree politically, theologically, culturally is ok?** Do we casually blurt out things like *“Nancy Pelosi should be strung up”* or *“Somebody should punch Ivanka Trump in the face.”*?
2. **What are we doing to curb the meanness in the world?** Do we laugh off friends and family who make violent statements? Do we claim to have “no enemies” but we make it clear that we “hate” everyone we disagree with?

Let’s be peacemakers!

Peace,

Pastor Daniel Ervin



MISSION & OUTREACH

Food Pantry



The cart continues to be put outside the front door to collect non-perishables for the food pantry. Thanks to all who have been helping in this way.

Good Samaritan Fund



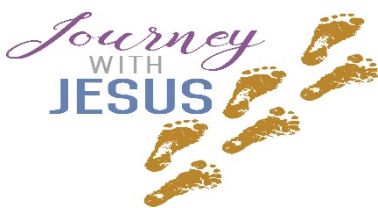
We continue to have people call the church needing help with gas vouchers, rent or utility assistance, etc. The Good Samaritan Fund was started with loose offering when we (seems like ages ago) used to pass the offering plate on Sunday mornings. You can continue to help support this ministry when you make your offerings via check, online, or however. Just add whatever you feel is right for you and indicate that on your offering. Again, thank you on behalf of some of the most vulnerable in our community.

Booth House and Saturday Café



If you have a heart for feeding the hungry, as Jesus taught that we should, helping with meals at the Booth House and/or Saturday Café is a great opportunity for you. The Booth House is a homeless shelter operated by the Salvation Army in Alton. They do not have a meal prepared for them on Sundays. Six times a year we have agreed to prepare the Sunday evening meal to feed the approximately 20 people they may have. During these pandemic times, meals are dropped off and they serve themselves. Saturday Café is a ministry of First

Presbyterian in Alton, serving anyone needing a meal. We handle this meal on the first Saturday of March, June, September, and December. Let Brenda Donohoo or Karen Wilson know if you'd be willing to help with this.



"Journey with Jesus" is the Lent Spirituality "Box". You will walk with Jesus through his 40 days in the wilderness. Each week will have scripture to focus on and a journal to write about your wilderness journey. Your "Journey with Jesus" will begin Ash Wednesday and end Easter. There will be guides for you to use throughout the season of Lent.

If you would like to receive one of these "boxes" sign up online. The link is available in the Tuesday Reflections. If you have any questions, please let me know. Lisa Hemphill 618-593-7066. The cutoff date is February 11th.

PRAYER FOR PRESIDENTS' DAY



Lord of heaven and earth, we offer you our deepest appreciation for this blessed land. Stir up a sense of stewardship in every citizen so we all may care for our nation and each inhabitant of it.

We pray especially for our leaders. Prompt everyone in a position of authority, from local to national leaders, to strive for righteousness, justice and the welfare of all citizens.

Finally, we pray that we may be ever mindful of the psalmist's teaching that "Happy is the nation whose God is the LORD..." (Psalm 33:12, NSRV). May that promise become real "from sea to shining sea."

VALENTINES TO GIVE YOUR CHILDREN



- Acceptance – Teach kids that you love them for who and what they are. Give this gift with a kiss.
- Self-Confidence – Help children understand that they can trust themselves. Give this gift with a hug.
- Life without needless fears – Don't let your kids see you as a worrier. Give this gift with laughter.
- Appreciation – Help children acquire a spark of gratitude and enjoy all of life. Give this gift as they go out the door.
- Faith – Introduce your children to God, the best friend they'll ever have. Give this gift by taking them to church every Sunday.



Since the Middle Ages, Christians in the Western Church have observed Ash Wednesday (the seventh Wednesday before Easter) as the first day of Lent. On this day, in many churches, worshipers receive ashes on the forehead as a reminder of their sorrow for their sins. The ashes are often made by burning palm branches left over from the previous year's Palm Sunday. **Ash Wednesday** is February 17th this year.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LENT



Lent is the fourth season of the Christian year. Its length is the 40 days preceding Easter Day, not counting Sundays. This means Lent always begins on a Wednesday, known as Ash Wednesday.

Lent commemorates Jesus' fast and temptation in the wilderness of Judea Province, which, according to the Gospel, lasted 40 days. Just as Jesus confronted his temptation during these 40 days, Lent helps Christians focus on our basic need as sinners: forgiveness.

The only way our Lord's forgiving power can become effective in our lives is by our taking the initiative to confront our sins, confess them and repent of them. In short, Lent is a season of penitence.

Some Christians fast during Lent. This denial of bodily comforts can help encourage self-reflection about the need for Jesus' forgiveness.

Care Team Deacon list for 2021

1. Alice Buzzard 618-462-7765 leopbuzz@sbcglobal.net
2. Kathy Steinmann 618-466-6203 ksteinmann@sbcglobal.net
3. Jackie Roberson 618-259-4186
4. Robert Musgrave 618-420-9226 robertmusgrave@wildblue.net
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6. Barb Pitt 618-792-0854 bpitt48@gmail.com
7. Linda Allen 618-660-7594 staytunedpianoservice@gmail.com
8. Carol Foraker 618-610-0446 4acres@sbcglobal.net
9. Tony Levan 618-251-5578 tlevan2@charter.net
10. Hershel Henson 219-363-5555 hershenson@gmail.com
11. Janet Workman 618-795-9745 wdworkman@aol.com
12. Paula Raymond 618-466-5949 pkaraymond@gmail.com



Prayer Concerns

Please keep these people in your prayers and contact those you know to extend a message of support and love.



JoAnn Moss, Scott Shelton's Mother, Carol, & his sister, Tina, Mary Trudell, Pat Fletcher, Kate Trudell, Lexie Suerig (Debbie Suerig's daughter), Jim White, Rachel, Ralph Thompson, Terry Allen, Judy Ballard, Alma Cooper, Judy Luck, Marilyn Twigg, Cheryl Strohbeck, Shelly Devore (Brenda & Debbie's niece), John Lindquist, Herbert Peel, Terry Tiller (Leukemia), Glenna Donohoo, Katie Davis, Bill Meyers (Neighbor of Henson's), Jama McPeak, Nancy Yarnell (friend of Slayden's), Vickie Aldrige, Patrick Bone, Tollie Family, Jack Kleinert, Mary Ann Roney (Barb Roney's mother), Glenda McDonald, Kathy Testori (Glenda

McDonald's sister),

Vickie Hastings, Gayla Boehm, Debbie Goskie, Rebecca (Rev. Pam Laing's daughter), Dorothy Kelley, Sam and Sue Taylor (friends of Tim and Nanette Cerny), Larry King, Laura Martin, Daniel (Friend of the Humbert's), Edwin Ehlers (friend of the King's), Dorothy Freeman (Joe Freeman's mother), Annabel Gibson and Christine Cunningham (Annabel's daughter), Dane (Kathi Cooper's Grandson), Deborah (friend of Paula Blair).

Food Pantry prayer list: Gary, Carolyn, Herbert, Cynthia, Stephanie, Marisa, Tonya

NURSING HOME RESIDENTS

Riverside Care Center, Alton Ron Franke.

Highland Healthcare, Alma Cooper

RETIREMENT HOME RESIDENTS

Integrity Healthcare, Wood River – Herbert Peel

The Cottages of Carlinville, Carlinville – Shirley Martin

Villa Rose, Bethalto – Beth Forrester

Aspen Creek, Troy – Susanne Randall

Cedarhurst, Bethalto – Cliff & Mary Barnes, Shirley Burris.



FEBRUARY

7 SUPER BOWL SUNDAY???, NO YQ

14 The Centurion's Servant *Matthew 8: 5-13*

21 Walking on Water *Matthew 14: 22-23*

28 The Vineyard Workers *Matthew 20: 1-6*

MARCH

7 Jesus Heals Two Blind Men *Matthew 20:*

29-34

14 Early Believers *Acts 2: 43-47; 32-37*

21 Peter & Tabitha *Acts 9: 36-43*

28 Holy Week Stories

APRIL

4 EASTER; EGG HUNT???, NO YQ

11 Matthias the Apostle *Acts 1: 15-26*

18 The Armor of God *Ephesians 6: 11*

25 YQ FINALE???, TBA



for the Birthday Wishes

From Mary Barnes:

Cliff had a great 95th birthday in January. Thanks to all who remembered him with cards and/or phone calls. He enjoyed them all.

Thanks

“In the coldest February,
as in every other month in every other year,
the best thing to hold on to in this world is each other. “



Birthdays of the Month



01 Tara Caputo
04 Kathleen Chappell
05 Virginia Shelton
07 Elise Gremler
08 Michael Rust
09 Bob Hagaman
09 Pat Cooper
11 Nora Bristow
11 Taylor Pruitt
14 Beverly Kowalewich
14 Brenda Creasey
15 Alex Hayes
16 Carol Bouyea
17 Darvin Bloemker
18 Rev. Dr. Mark Russell
22 Jonathan Carnes
23 Edie Chappell
24 Jim Cerny
24 Ken Ringhausen
24 Susan Johns
25 Alex Cunningham
25 Jean Utnage
27 Paula Blair



God's Artwork Herbert J. Peel

O what are the great churches and
chapels compared to the beauty of
nature?

For what is Rome compared to the
great Rocky Mountains?

For in the beginning God created
nature.

Nature is treasure.



















There is great green forest.

There are vast, deep blue oceans.
There are mountains that touch the
sky.

So, God also made fish, the whales,
the lions, the deer, the redbirds, the
birds in the sky.

There are great houses of God, but
nature is the greatest house.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																		
6 	1 	2 11:00am Staff Meeting 	3 10:15am Online Bible Study 7:00pm Online Evening Prayer 1:00pm ACE Committee	4 	5	6 																																																		
7 9:00am Online Adult S.S 10:15am Online Worship	8 9:00am Food Pantry 	9 11:00am Staff Meeting 6:30pm Deacons Meeting 	10 10:15am Online Bible Study 7:00pm Online Evening Prayer	11	12 "It is impossible to rightly govern a nation without God and the Bible." George Washington	13 																																																		
14 9:00am Online Adult S.S 10:15am Online Worship 	15 Office Closed 	16 11:00am Staff Meeting 	17 10:15am Online Bible Study 7:00pm Online Evening Prayer 	18 6:00pm Online Finance Committee Meeting 	19	20 																																																		
21 9:00am Online Adult S.S 10:15am Online Worship 4:30pm LoveJoy United Philanthropic Crusaders	22 9:00am Food Pantry 	23 11:00am Staff Meeting 	24 10:15am Online Bible Study 7:00pm Online Evening Prayer	25 6:30pm Session Meeting 	26	27 "If you have only one smile in you, give it to the people that you love." Maya Angelou																																																		
28 9:15am Online Adult S.S 10:15am Online Worship							<table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="7">March 2021</th> </tr> <tr> <th>S</th> <th>M</th> <th>T</th> <th>W</th> <th>T</th> <th>F</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td>6</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> <td>9</td> <td>10</td> <td>11</td> <td>12</td> <td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14</td> <td>15</td> <td>16</td> <td>17</td> <td>18</td> <td>19</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>21</td> <td>22</td> <td>23</td> <td>24</td> <td>25</td> <td>26</td> <td>27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>28</td> <td>29</td> <td>30</td> <td>31</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	March 2021							S	M	T	W	T	F	S	1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31			
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