

A Voice in the Pines

Presbyterian Kirk in the Pines newsletter

Volume XXXVII, Issue 4, April 2021

How COVID has affected Kirk members

By Jan Holtberg

We have passed the first anniversary of living with the COVID pandemic in the United States. The Kirk has had 14 members – 5 percent of the congregation – affected by the virus. Each has his or her own story to tell.

The cases have varied in severity, some experiencing mild symptoms, others requiring hospitalization. Some experienced similar symptoms and a few exhibited unique characteristics. Some required treatment, most did not.

Some ventured out only to shop for essentials, others visited family. All practiced safety measures while out in public. Some were left with long-lasting sequelae; some had no lasting effects. All have either received or are in the process of receiving vaccines.

Kirk members' contact with the pandemic started last June. **Ed Russell and Beverly Bongard** returned from a trip to Branson. Ed was coughing up blood and both he and Beverly had slight fevers. They quarantined for 10 days after testing positive for the virus. They have had no further symptoms and felt their experience was quite mild.

In August, **Nancy and Jim Patton** traveled by car to a family reunion in Oklahoma. They arrived on a Tuesday feeling fine. By Wednesday, Nancy began experiencing fatigue, a scratchy throat, loss of appetite, a low-grade fever, some confusion, an inability to concentrate, and hair shedding.

She went into quarantine during the reunion. After

returning to the Village, Nancy tested positive for the virus.

Two weeks later, Jim began experiencing a cough, extreme fatigue, and loss of appetite. He and Nancy quarantined for 21 days and still weren't feeling at 100 percent. To this day, Jim is still stiff, fatigued, and complains of sore muscles.

Nancy says it has taken more than three months for the confusion and lack of concentration to improve. She can now work on a jigsaw puzzle and read, and she has stopped shedding hair.

Nancy and Jim describe their COVID encounter as mild. Jim has donated plasma after six months as his blood plasma antibodies are still high. Parenthetically, 11 of the 14 family members at the reunion experienced mild symptoms after returning home.

In October, **Bob and Suzy Still** became the next victims.

Bob has a pre-existing condition which put him in a high-risk group, so he had been diligent about not venturing out and always wearing a mask if he did. Suzy practiced all safety measures while running errands.

Even following proper safety measures, Bob began experiencing a scratchy throat, lost his sense of smell, taste, and appetite, ran a fever of 100.1, and suffered chills. He tested positive for COVID.

Bob said he was miserable for one day and improved slightly each day for four to five days without treatment. His sense of smell was his only long-term effect and it

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When we meet

Sunday worship service
begins at 10 a.m.

Wednesday Bible Study
9-10:30 a.m. Hoffius Hall

Saturday informal service
5 p.m. In Hoffius Hall

For more meeting times see
www.kirkinthepines.org/calendar



After missing one Easter, it's time to be joyful

Presbyterians at the Kirk will join almost a billion Christians all over the world and celebrate Easter on April 4. We will have triumphant music with hymns and strong hallelujahs. We may even hear a sermon that is inspirational.

All of us will give thanks to the one who has conquered death and who promises life eternal.

Easter this year will be especially meaningful, I think, since last year's celebration was canceled due to COVID. For many of us, it was the first Easter we have missed in years.

We will continue to be careful and ask you to wear your masks. But we are expecting a joyful service of thankful praise.

Easter reminds us we need not be afraid of death. We can live our lives with joy and hope, trusting our futures belong to a God who raises the dead. "Christ died, was buried and has been raised!" So, the church confesses and so we believe – this is our hope.

It is also important to remember that Easter is not just a single day in the church's liturgical calendar. For us, Easter is a season – the seven Sundays of Easter extending until Pentecost, May 23 this year.

For the earliest Christians, as well as for us today,



every Sunday – indeed, every day – is a celebration of the new life we share in Christ. Every day is an occasion for us to offer thankful praise for our Lord's gift of life.

It is my hope your faith and hope will be renewed in this season of Easter. I hope to see you at the Kirk as we all rediscover the power of hope.

I will greet you this Easter Sunday with these ancient words: "Hallelujah, Christ is risen!" And you will respond with Christians all over the world, "Christ is risen, indeed!"

Glory to God.

Bill

January was the worst month for Kirk members

Continued from page 1

returned six weeks ago. Suzy experienced very mild symptoms such as a stuffy nose and body aches which lasted one day. They quarantined for 14 days.

In November, **Ray and Linda Bates** drove to Vanderbilt Hospital in Nashville for a doctor's appointment. They masked, distanced, and practiced hand hygiene. Once home, they had Thanksgiving lunch with a friend.

The following Monday, they came down with symptoms. Ray experienced a head cold and fatigue, lost smell, taste, and appetite, had aches from his knees to his toes and bottom of his feet, and an excruciating headache for 10 days.

Linda's symptoms were fatigue, brain fog (couldn't come up with words), loss of taste (could only eat fruit and drink fruit juices and Gatorade), and a red itchy rash between her fingers.

They both were sleeping 18-20 hours a day and were unable to care for each other. Linda lost 10 pounds and Ray lost more than 15. After 10 days, the symptoms began to subside. Their sense of smell and taste and energy level increased, and the brain fog decreased over the next month.

Ray, to this day, cannot eat bread due to its repugnant

taste. Linda describes the experience as very isolating and vivid in her mind and they are worried about catching it again. Ray and Linda describe their symptoms as severe.

In December, **Bob Foster** (Nancy Patton's father), who had accompanied her to the reunion in Oklahoma and had not contracted the virus at that time, tested positive along with several other residents in the senior living facility where he resides.

He voiced no verbal complaints but was weak and did not wish to eat or drink. He was taken to National Park Hospital where he was hydrated and returned later that day to his facility where he quarantined for 21 days.

January was the Kirk's worst month for COVID.

Arnie Holtberg's experience started us out dramatically. His ordeal was described in last month's *Kirk Voice*.

In the first week of January, **Judy and Bob Corwin** made a road trip to visit Judy's sister in Indiana. During the five-day visit, Judy experienced a cough, lack of smell, and a headache.

All symptoms resolved, except for the lack of smell, by her return home. She sought medical care and was

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Jerral looking forward to coffee and cookies again

Loss of valued Kirk Members:

Mary Carol (Mac) Throckmorton, passed away Jan. 28, 2021, in Hot Springs. Memorial arrangements are pending.

Betty Powell passed away March 15, 2021 in Hot Springs Village. Memorial arrangements are pending.

Church Statistics as of March 15, 2021:

Memberships – 281.

Family Units – 192

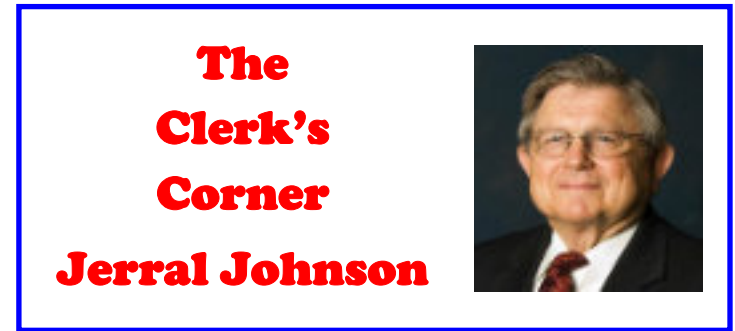
Barron Gage and his committee deserve a round of thanks for all they have done to begin the clean-up in the Kirk following the water damage. **Bob Morrow, Mel Kuntz, Richard McPheters, and Beverly Schaumburg** are committee members working with Barron on the clean-up.

Chip Johnson, the Sexton has been very active in the water damage clean-up. He was already working hard before the water damage to make sure the church is properly sanitized as well as helping in the Memorial Garden. Chip is owed special appreciation for his dedication.

Church attendance has been on the rise as more of our congregation get their vaccine shots and feel more comfortable coming to church. We are happy to see those members returning to church and hope more will soon return to take part in worship.

The Kirk has always been known as a friendly church. Hopefully we will soon be back to the old days!

Here are some of the steps taken to help make the Kirk a safe place to go during the pandemic. Seating is



arranged so social distance is maintained between the congregants during the service and when leaving following the service.

Everyone is asked to wear masks when entering, during the service, and leaving the Kirk. With the proper seating spacing and using masks, it is hoped everyone will appreciate the Kirk is concerned about preventing virus exposure.

We all hope the virus will soon cease to be the problem it is now. I can remember three years ago Session members saying they felt we were having too many summer suppers. I don't know about you, but I would enjoy a good summer supper, a picnic at the Balboa Pavilion, and having coffee and cookies after the Sunday Service.

Scholarship deadline is June 30

Applications for the \$2,600 Maack-Ormsbee Scholarship are being accepted until June 30.

The fund began with a gift from Kirk member Pat Ormsbee.

Applications and information are available from the church office or call Pat Kuntz at 501 204-4385.

Members' virus rate was lower than others in area

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diagnosed with COVID pneumonia and was treated for the next seven days with antibiotics and steroids.

Bob was experiencing a cough, fatigue, and lack of appetite on the way home from Indiana. He tested negative but was treated with the same medical protocol as Judy. After four days, all his symptoms were resolved and neither experienced any sequelae.

Two additional Kirk members were said to have had COVID but could not be reached to share their experience.

The conundrum of this virus is evidenced by the disparate stories our Kirk members have described. Our membership has fared better than the rest of the population in Saline and Garland counties where most

of our members live. Five percent of our congregation has had COVID compared to 9.5 percent in Saline and 10.0 percent Garland counties.

The Kirk has experienced no fatalities as compared with more than 100 deaths in both Saline and Garland counties.

We are thankful for the Session's recommendations for masks, member spacing in meetings and worship services, myriad hand sanitizers strategically spaced throughout the building, and for the diligent care of our Sexton, Chip Johnson, to keep us all safe.

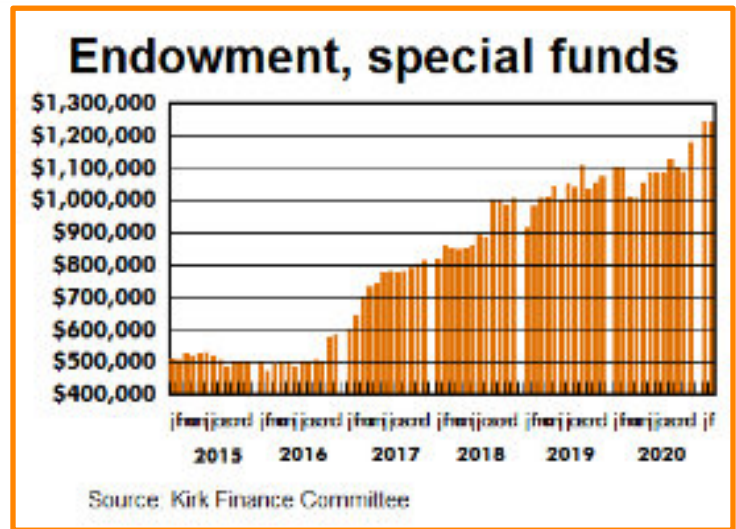
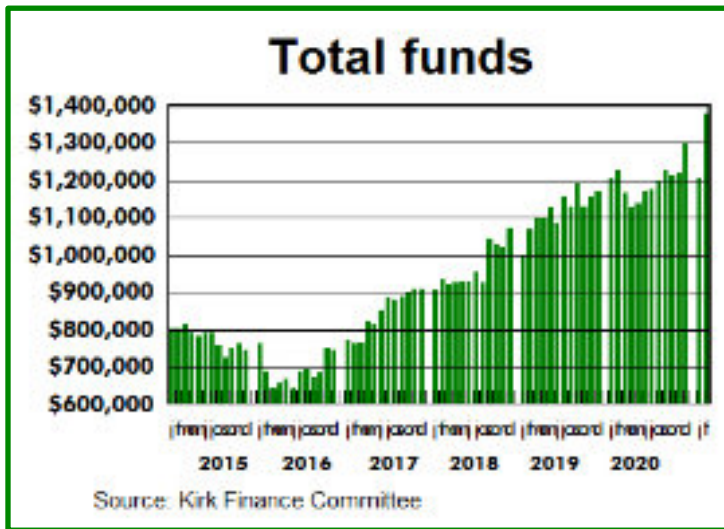
We all need to remain vigilant for at least the near future and get our vaccine shots as available. Be well.

Jan Holtberg is a member of the Communication Committee.

Kirk in the Pines Financial Report

Year to date as of February 28, 2021

	Month		Year to date	
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
General Fund:				
Receipts	\$ 36,670	\$ 34,443	\$ 73,340	\$ 98,264
Disbursements	\$ 36,670	\$ 26,925	\$ 73,340	\$ 69,740
Building Fund:				
Receipts	\$ 4,412	\$ 2,801	\$ 8,824	\$ 11,126
Disbursements	\$ 4,412	\$ 2,625	\$ 8,824	\$ 4,574
Total all funds:				
Receipts	\$ 41,082	\$ 37,244	\$ 82,164	\$ 109,390
Disbursements	\$ 41,082	\$ 29,550	\$ 82,164	\$ 73,314
Checking balance				\$ 138,542
Special funds:				
Memorial fund				\$ 71,356
Luke 12:48 fund				\$ 290,207
Programs fund				\$ 62,796
Endowment fund				\$ 747,278
Maack-Ormsbee Fund				\$ 68,338
Total special funds (as of Jan. 31, 2021)				\$ 1,239,975



\$180 for Mission

Thank you for generously supporting our Mission Dollar campaign by placing your single dollar bills in the offering plate.

A total of \$180 was collected in February.

If you wish to give more than a dollar, please use the envelopes in the pew racks.

We are always grateful for your generous gifts and prayers.

Thinking of you ...

Each Saturday and Sunday the Congregational Care Committee asks Kirk members to sign a beautiful card to be mailed to a church member who has not been able to attend services due to illness or disability.

Please add your signature to these cards and join the congregation in wishing others well.

Thank you.

It's business as usual for Beverly Schaumburg

By Bob Morrow

You may know Beverly Schaumburg as one of the cheerful people who greets you when you enter the Kirk office, where she works with Chris Taylor-Wilmoth, the Kirk secretary. Or you may know her as the person who notifies you when your pledge envelopes are ready to be picked up.

As Kirk Business Administrator, Beverly's duties range far and wide. And fortunately for the Kirk, during the pandemic, it's been "business as usual," thanks to Beverly.

"During the pandemic I was still responsible for accounting for all the contributions that are received by mail or through Saturday and Sunday offerings," Beverly said.

"I still had the monthly bills that have to be paid and all the end-of-the-month financial reports to produce. I was there to help the Session members with any problems or questions they encountered.

"My position has not been greatly affected during this time."

Beverly goes on to say, "Due to the COVID pandemic and the CDC guidelines, which Session members decided to follow, the Kirk was closed down to all outside activities," so her relationships with outside groups were minimized.

With office activities declining slightly, Beverly says, "Chris and I decided to cut our time at the Kirk by one day per week each, on alternating days.

"This gave me the opportunity to work on some

Second Mile Giving still needs your assistance

Thanks to all who have responded to the Kirk's Mission initiative, Second Mile Giving.

As the COVID-19 crisis continues, families are still reeling from the economic effects. Five local charities – Arkansas Food Bank, Project Hope Food Pantry, Jackson House, Potter's Clay, and Cooperative Christian Ministries/Clinic – are helped by the Second Mile Giving. They all continue to struggle with increased demands for services.

If you are interested in making a gift, make checks payable to Presbyterian Kirk in the Pines and indicate on the memo line: 2nd Mile Giving.

Matthew 25:40: "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."



Rudy and Beverly Schaumburg at their 60th wedding anniversary celebration in 2019. (Michael Schaumburg photo).

projects that needed to be done. One project was to look at all the financial files which accumulated over the years I've been at the Kirk.

"This meant deciding which files could be purged, retaining others. After going through 40-plus boxes, files identified to be destroyed were shredded on site by Arkansas Records Management of Hot Springs.

"I located and assembled the Kirk History and Annual Session reports in binders which are now in the office. I also located numerous photo albums and they are now in the storage room."

Reflecting on how the pandemic impacted her personally, Beverly said she and her husband, Rudy, "are so thankful to the Lord, that the pandemic has not affected our families.

"They either have jobs where they can work from home or are considered essential employees and can continue to go to work."

It may be easy to take Beverly for granted as she always can be counted on to go about her duties quietly, efficiently and professionally, even in a pandemic. And now, with the damage to the Kirk during our winter weather, Beverly is front and center in the restoration process.

As the go-to person for insurance, contracts and other business matters Beverly continues to play a key role in getting our Kirk back to "business as usual".

Bob Morrow is Moderator of the Communication Committee.

Here's what our choir has been doing in lockdown

By Rick Federick

COVID-19 grabbed our lives a year ago last March effectively ending the Kirk's normal choir activities.

What have members of the choir been doing over the last 12 months? We asked them. Here's how they've been working and playing through it all.

How long did you quarantine once you first heard about the virus?

None / Don't remember / Have stayed pretty much at home except videoing the church services / Staying as safe as possible / Still am / Can't remember / Are still following CDC guidelines and double masking / Three weeks / Two weeks / Three weeks / No quarantine, followed guidelines.

Have you been tested in the last year, and why did you think it was necessary?

Yes, before traveling out of state and periodically while singing in small group ensembles to alleviate concerns of other group members / Tested before surgery / Yes, once after a friend told me she tested positive and we had been together / No / No / No / Yes, because of shortness of breath / Yes, before my shoulder replacement / Four times, mainly due to travel / No / Tested before surgery.

How long was it before you went to church, to the store for groceries, doctor's office etc.?

Immediately with masks, gloves, sterile techniques and sterile wipes. I even noticed cars in the parking lots are socially distanced these days / Haven't been to church since last March and do grocery shopping online / Church, sing and video. Groceries online. Doctor for tests / errands with masks, gloves & sanitizers / two weeks to the store with mask / We keep our appointments, Walmart pick-up / One week. Grocery store, cancelled all medical appointments, eight months, church until September when Covid-19 spiked / About three weeks / Church until COVID-19 spiked, doctors with precautions / Church services after three-week quarantine, no doctors until June, dentist cancelled / Doctors yes, Church no, only sing in small groups / No doctors, dentists, only groceries.

During the past year have you played golf, tennis, pickleball or other outdoor activities, including walking your dog?

Outdoor walks on Village trails / golf, walks and lots of miles on Terra Trikes / Walking everyday / Walks, music, TV, reading, fitness center, telephone time and napping / Tennis, walking, yard work, Smores over the fire pit / Lots of golf / Tennis, golf and walking dog / golf and cycling / walk multiple dogs / Vacuuming, mopping, sweeping, and walking the dog.

What did you do to occupy your time?

Cards, puzzles, board games, computer, reading, listening to music, TV, etc. Organized Zoom meetings and Zoom training for HSV Quilt Guild, continued work on the Voice in the Pines newsletter, prepared virtual PowerPoint slide shows for Quilt Guild, continued to sing like a "new species of bird" (my grandson's words), loved talking on FaceTime with my grandsons, and played games virtually with my favorite 6- and 10-year-olds on Together App. They are much better at videogame skills than I am / computer, knitting, car rides / computer projects, crocheting, scanning photos / cooking, cooking, cooking, computer, computer, computer, TV, TV, TV ... ain't life grand? / New recipes, lots of TV / Card games, puzzles, reading, cooking, music, calls, letters and emails to friends and family / Games, puzzles, computer, Facebook, iPad, TV, TV, / woodworking, reading, music / workout three days a week, music, "good" TV series / a stack of books and a 20-year-old craft project.

In the past year there have been 7.8 billion birthdays in the world. How did you celebrate yours?

With my favorite 6- and 10-year-olds in California. We had a cupcake decorating frenzy to celebrate / Spent my birthday eating lunch in the car in Little Rock / Food from Blue Springs / Quietly with special friend / Red Chili Enchiladas / Golf, shrimp, and steak. Second birthday: fried chicken mashed potatoes, veggies and cherry pie (all cooked at home) / Met

WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING





Springtime is in the Air

Springtime is in the air,
I can feel its warming trend
Though it's not really here
I know it's around the bend.

Each day I eagerly await,
For the blessings of Spring
Knowing in my weary soul
God will do a new thing.

Springtime is in the air,
I can see its early bloom
Melting away the aches
Of winter's chilly gloom.

For Springtime brings,
Re-birth and revival
A heart-rendering calm
Upon its sunny arrival.

Springtime is in the air,
I hope you can feel it too
For it's God's promise...
The winter soul He'll renew!

– Deborah Ann Belka

*Photo by Jamie Federick
Poem submitted by
Dotty Rector*

Some travel, Zoom, meeting friends in last year

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family members in Branson, Mo. / Dinner at Via Roma
with my love / St. Louis with my son and his family /
Quietly with wine, steak and ice cream / no birthday as
yet /

Have you been out to dinner with family / friends?

Unfortunately, little / No / No / Daughter visited in
June / Have been out some, but stopped in November
with the Covid-19 spike / No / No / Yes with family and
friends, numerous times / several dinners but none since
July / No / No dinners out (boring, aren't I ???)

Have you done any traveling? Where? What was your mode of transportation?

To California 4,000 miles in an RV beside my favorite
trucker on the road. / We drove to Wisconsin for a
couple of months in our isolated cabin / Drove and spent
a week in an Arkansas Park cabin / Twice to Texas by
car with a friend / Drove to Bismarck, Ark., to cut a
Christmas tree and lunch at Lake DeGray / Yes, to look
after ailing parents / No / Branson by auto / Dallas by
car to visit family on Father's Day, friends from Bella
Vista visited, friend from Dallas visited after her
husband passed away / Mount Magazine and Subiaco by
car / drove to St. Louis and flew to Boston / No / No, too
much potential Covid-19 exposure.

Have you participated in Zoom / facetime calls with family or friends?

Yes, the only way to go. Just hit the mute video
button and who cares how you look! / For a family
gathering at Thanksgiving and Christmas / Lots with our
Chorus and Treble in the Village / Some with family /
No / No / Yes / Every week for Bible study, camera club,
P.E.O. meetings and family birthdays and holidays /
Zoom meetings with organizations / No / No, we just
email / Yes, frequently to play and talk with grandkids.

Have you purchased anything special with your stimulus check?

Yes, it helped us pay for our westward "wagon train"
adventure to California! / No / Bought a washer and
dryer and helped a friend in need / No / New freezer /
Missions and a family member in need / No / No /
What's a stimulus check? / No.

Have you received your COVID-19 immunization vaccine?

Yes, as a healthcare worker. Waiting until the
appropriate phase comes into play / Yes / Yes / Yes /
First injection in Little Rock ... second one in March /
Yes, 2nd Pfizer / Yes 2nd Pfizer / Yes / Yes 2nd Pfizer /
64 and healthy ... low on the list / No / Not yet, hoping
to be scheduled before Christmas.

*Rick Federick is a member of the Communications
Committee.*



Photos
by
Robert
Sonnen

Pastor Bill Bailey used *Psalms 90* and the film *The Doctor* as the basis for his message to the PW Gathering on March 8.

PW's March Gathering was marked by a rising number of members enjoying each other

By Dotty Rector

Twenty-one Presbyterian Women met for a Gathering March 8 in Hoffius Hall. The choice of using Hoffius Hall was a good one, as it seemed to promote more a feeling of intimacy than the sanctuary, which is customarily used.

Moderator Vicki Rosenquist welcomed the members and said we will meet again as a Gathering in May, at which time she hopes to have our customary luncheon. She asked members to think about the Woman of Faith award, which will be announced in May, after the members vote at their April circle meetings.

After the initial welcoming, a traditional worship service led by Pastor Bailey followed.

A snowstorm on Ash Wednesday precluded Pastor Bailey from giving his sermon to the congregation. The Presbyterian Women were fortunate to hear it at the Gathering. A scripture based on selected verses of *Psalms 90* was the text.

As is typical of Rev. Bailey's sermons, he used a moving example from the film *The Doctor*. In the film, the protagonist, a surgeon, was all about science, and not compassion or care. That is, until he himself became sick.

When scientific doctors treated him "matter of factly" as he had previously practiced, he finally says to the scientific doctors: "Yes, there's a person here."

Later, another patient teaches him there is more to life than rushing around in busyness. Facing his own mortality, he says: "Doctor, I don't have time to rush anymore."

Lent is a season reminding us not to get so fixed on rushing to a destination. We can, in the rushing, miss what's before us, right now.

Ash Wednesday reminds us we are dust, and to dust we return. It reminds us to focus on things that really matter. We flourish for a time, but not forever.

"Teach us to number our days," not necessarily to extend our time, but to be wise with the time we have left and make our lives count, Pastor Bailey said.

Since virus vaccinations have provided us with more freedoms, attendance at Gatherings has grown. It is expected this will continue, and in May there will be a good crowd, with the added benefit of a good luncheon.

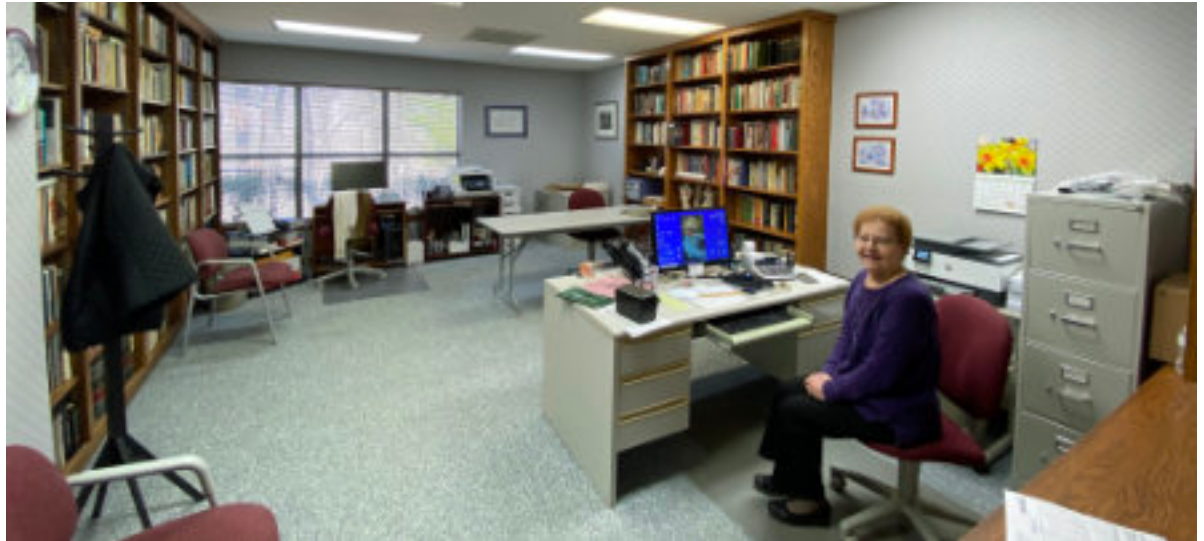
Dotty Rector is member of the Communication Committee.



Twenty-one PW members met March 8 for a Gathering in Hoffius Hall (above). Becky Wakefield welcomed Marilyn Johnson to the PW worship service (left). Sharon Collar (below left) provided special music and accompaniment of hymns. Norma Stevens (below) extinguished the Christ Candle at the end of the PW Gathering.



Progress in fixing damage caused by broken water pipes



Kirk Business Administrator Beverly Schaumburg (top) in the re-opened Kirk office. The choir room (above) is usable again, but the copy room has a lot of work to be done. *(Bob Morrow photos)*



By Bob Morrow

In our last issue of *A Voice in the Pines* we reported on the sad damage of our Kirk offices. Since then, a great deal of progress has been made. While we are a long way from restoring “normality,” we have made serious progress.

First, as reported in our Kirk Voice emails, office operations have been largely restored. Thanks to Chris Taylor-Wilmoth and Beverly Schaumburg, we have a well-functioning office. It is business as usual thanks to these outstanding and dedicated Kirk employees and Kirk family members.

We are still expecting a multipurpose copier to arrive by first of April.

A special thanks needs to go to Beverly and Chris for making a seamless and professional adjustment to the new and challenging situation. A special thanks, too, to Chip Johnson, our Sexton, who stepped up in a big way to make sure we have a clean and safe environment to work. Thank you, Beverly, Chris, and Chip!

Our insurance company has made an assessment and asked the Kirk for itemized detail of the damage to ceilings, flooring, walls, and equipment. Your Kirk damage remediation committee is taking a divide-and-conquer approach to meeting the insurance company’s requests and should have this work completed soon.

The committee is led by Barron Gage, Moderator of the Facilities Committee, and includes Beverly Schaumburg, Kirk Business Administrator, Mel Kuntz, member of the Facilities Committee, Bob Morrow, Moderator of the Communications Committee, and Richard McPheters, Kirk Treasurer.

In the coming weeks, we will make decisions on replacing flooring, dry wall, insulation, painting, ceilings, equipment and more. At this point things generally slow down as interactions with our insurance provider and contractors occur. Stay tuned as we continue to update you on our progress.

Bob Morrow is Moderator of the Communication Committee.



Happy dates



Birthdays

April 1	Joe Milligan	April 16	Marty Volkema	April 23	Jean Fisher
April 4	Pat Kuntz	April 17	Lu Otto		Claire Rhodes
April 8	Ron Lovett	April 18	Michael Erickson		Doris Simmons
	Tom Martick		Gloria Pickett	April 24	Cheryle Dean
	Steven Klomsten	April 20	Bob Smith	April 25	Bill Bailey
April 9	Judy Sonnenburg	April 21	Cal Sloma	April 26	Sheri Swan
April 10	Stanley Luczkowski	April 22	Georgia Hill	April 28	Ken Poole
April 14	Blair Stroud		Ruth Richards		
April 16	Darlene Spiller	April 23	Sandy Adams		

Anniversaries

April 3	Sandy and Jim Adams	28 years	April 15	Bev and Charles McFadden	15 years
April 4	Cindy and Frank Morgan	48 years			

Interpreting the cross in the season of Easter

By Lowell Gardner

Alchemy, the ancient predecessor of modern chemistry, feverishly pursued chrysopoeia, the artificial transmuting of baser metals like lead into gold. Its repeated failure stemmed from the failure to yet understand the atomic makeup of individual matter. Nuclear fission, the splitting of the atom, lay in the future.

The Season of Lent closes with Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday, an agonizing carnival ride of pompous celebration, ignominious tragedy, and glorious transformation. It was as if it was a genuine spiritual transmutation.

In his first letter to the Corinthian believers, the Apostle Paul certifies, “Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the



wisdom of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:22-24 NIV)

The revolutionizing good news of Paul’s message was the crucified Messiah as the resurrection hope for the human race.

Today the ancient symbol of horrendous execution adorns churches and persons. In Roman Catholic sanctuaries the crucified Messiah remains impaled. Protestantism’s focus is the empty cross and equally empty tomb. Worn on individuals, the display remains open to interpretation.

Paul made clear to the Corinthian church the cross was both the power and wisdom of the eternally merciful Father.

However you observe or display the cross, always be cognizant of Paul’s words and God’s gift, the power of real transmutation.

Lowell Gardner is former Moderator of the Communication Committee.



The Greenhorns met on March 9 for their monthly cooking and planning meeting. Pictured (from left) are Judy Rosenthal, Ellen Marshall, Marcia Bauer, Becky Wakefield, Rosalyn Halbert, Sue New, and Carol Clark. Carol Clark shared her traditional Pistachio Pudding Cake (right) with the group. She makes the cake every year in honor of St. Patrick's Day. (Jamie Federick photos)



Kirk staff

William B. Bailey – Senior Pastor
Randy Toney – Director of Music
Donna Toney – Organist/Pianist
Janie Smith – Visitation Coordinator
Chris Taylor-Wilmoth – Secretary
Beverly Schaumburg – Business Administrator
Arthur “Chip” Johnson – Sexton

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