

“THE MEADOWS MESSENGER”
A Communication of Quaker Meadows Presbyterian Church
March 2019, Issue



January and February Financial Reports

We hope that you find this information helpful as you pray for this congregation and evaluate your giving and participation in the worship, work and mission of this part of the Body of Christ. Sincerely, the Session and Pastor.

Tithes and Offerings needed for each week of 2019 = \$1,709.06. This figure is based on a total 2019 budget of \$88,871.00 which was approved by the Session.

JANUARY

Total Tithes and Offerings needed (4 weeks)	\$6,836.23
Actual Tithes and Offerings received (4 weeks)	\$4,176.00
This results in a budget shortage for this month	(\$2,660.23)
Total Expenses (4 weeks) resulting in a shortage for the month	(\$1,085.79)

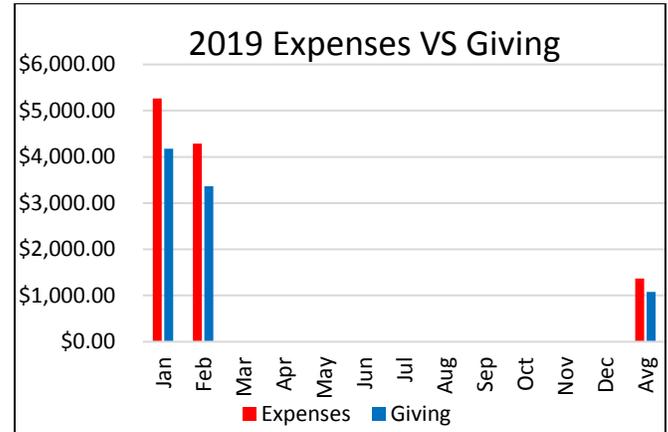
FEBRUARY

Total Tithes and Offerings needed (3 weeks)	\$5,127.17
Actual Tithes and Offerings received (3 weeks)	\$3,362.00
This results in a budget shortage for this month	(\$1,765.17)
Total Expenses (3 weeks) resulting in a shortage for the month	(\$924.92)

YEAR TO DATE

Total Tithes and Offerings needed (7 weeks)	\$11,963.40
Actual Tithes and Offerings (7 weeks) received	\$7,538.00
This results in a budget shortage to this point	(\$4,425.40)
Total Expenses (7 weeks) This results in a shortage to expenses for the year	(\$2,010.71)

For those of you who understand a chart better than a bunch of numbers, below is the 'picture' of our YTD finances for February 2019 (through week 3 of 4):



Some Bible Trivia

The Theme for this month is: prophets.

1. What bald prophet was the performer of many miracles and the successor to another great prophet?
2. What prophet was an exile in Babylon and is famous for his vision of the dry bones?
3. What elderly woman recognized the infant Jesus as the Messiah?
4. What king of Israel, in his early career, was associated with a group of prophets?
5. What man of Tekoa was a simple laborer who had the audacity to confront the king's priest at his shrine?
6. Which two prophets spoke against Nineveh?
7. What prophet was famous for his marriage to a prostitute?
8. What prophet's work is quoted in the New Testament more than any other?

Session Highlights

Stated Meeting – January 20th

The Session:

- Reviewed and approved the financial reports for November and December 2018.
- Approved the following calendar items:
 - The annual congregational meeting to

be held on Sunday February 10th, following worship.

- Communion to be served on the first Sunday of every month AND April 18th (Maundy Thursday), August 25th (Homecoming Sunday) and Tuesday, December 24th (Christmas Eve).
- Lunch for the Over the Mountain Men group in September or October (the date to be determined)
- Two Chicken Pie/Country Ham Suppers: one in spring and one in fall
- Vacation Bible School for Saturday, August 17th.
- Re-elected Judy Galey as Clerk of Session for 2019.
- Elected Ann Dietz as the Session representative for the Elder Nominating Committee for 2019.
- Discontinued the Elder on Call list.
- Allocated a \$3,000.00 donation from Doris Wilson to the new carpet fund.
- Approved the hanging of a ‘Lord’s Supper’ picture in the fellowship hall.
- Approved the repair of the sign in front of our parking lot.
- Briefly discussed how to fund a discretionary fund for members on an ongoing basis. Action on this was postponed until the next meeting to give them time to think about options.
- Shuffled the Elder Shepherd’s List. The revised list is included at the end of this newsletter.

It’s Scholarship Application Time!

The deadline of **May 01st**, for applications for scholarships awarded from the Henry Harney Scholarship Fund, is quickly approaching. We all know how fast time flies, so please do not delay in obtaining and completing a scholarship application. Neither the application committee nor the Session will consider incomplete applications or applications not received by us after **May 01st**.

INTENT of the Scholarships: to provide financial assistance to one or two students yearly who is/are currently enrolled in an undergraduate college, university, trade school or apprenticeship.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Completion of an application, which includes answering several essay questions, providing a current official transcript of grades (with a minimum GPA of no less than 3.0) and two reference letters.
2. The student must be a recent high school graduate or currently enrolled in a college, trade school, university or apprenticeship. We will not award scholarship funds for graduate schools or to pay back a student loan.
3. All documents must be received by **May 01st** before the fall of the year the student wishes to receive the funds.
4. Scholarship checks will be made out to the academic institution only.
5. Only 2 scholarships will be awarded each academic year.
6. If the student does not complete the coursework for which the scholarship is awarded, Quaker Meadows Presbyterian Church will require that the money be returned by the student to the scholarship fund and no further scholarships will be awarded to that student.

PRIORITY of SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS:

1. Members of Quaker Meadows Presbyterian Church
2. Members of other Presbyterian Churches with 125 members or less located within the Presbytery of Western N.C.
3. Students with a financial need.
4. Relatives of members of Quaker Meadows Presbyterian Church.
5. Other residents of Burke County.

Applications can be obtained from the Henry Harney Memorial Scholarship Committee c/o

Quaker Meadows Presbyterian Church, 2698 NC 181; Morganton, NC 28655.

Endowments and Donations to the Henry Harney Scholarship Fund, may be sent to the address above.

The Pastor's Ponderings

As the weather is becoming increasingly and more consistently warmer and sunnier, many of us are getting outside and enjoying the beauty of the area where we live. And many more of us are thinking about some of the fun things we want to do this spring and summer.

Well, have you ever thought about whether God plays or not? And if God plays, what kinds of activities might God engage in?

The following is an article from the February 13th issue of *The Christian Century* which revolves around that topic.

A God Who Plays
By Debie Thomas¹

Every few years, I return like a wanderer coming home, to a scene in C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Aslan [the lion] has just come back to life after being killed by the wicked White Witch. Although the majestic lion's resurrection foreshadows the novel's happy ending, the land of Narnia is in immediate peril. War is ravaging the land, Aslan's faithful followers are dying, and the White Witch is gleefully certain that she has triumphed over her enemy. It is a dire moment.

And at this dire moment, Aslan takes a break from the solemn business of world-saving to play a rousing game of tag. "Oh children," he shouts to the kids who have witnessed his resurrection, "I feel my strength coming back to me. Oh children, catch me if you can!" And off he goes, leading them on an exhilarating, joy filled chase

through the hills until they finally collapse "in a happy laughing heap of fur and arms and legs." "It was such a romp," Lewis writes, "as no one had ever had, except in Narnia."

The first time I encountered this scene – as an adult, reading the Narnia books to my own kids – I cried. The possibility that God might laugh, romp, and play with his children stopped me in my tracks. How could such a scandalous thing be true?

Growing up, I never heard a word about God laughing, joking, or doing anything for fun. No one invited me to imagine the Jesus of the Gospels smiling, much less goofing around with his disciples, playing hide-and-seek with the children who flocked to him, or basking in the sunshine on a gorgeous summer day. The list of characteristics [which] I associated with God – [things like] omniscience, holiness, righteousness, transcendence – did not include playfulness. It did not include an affinity for tag.

Yet play is a fundamental part of human childhood, and it features elsewhere in creation as well. Many wild animals play – even though it burns up their energy for survival without providing food, shelter, or safety. Why would evolution favor such a useless activity?

The Bible is chock-full of references to play, too. The book of Proverbs describes Lady Wisdom playing with God in the act of creation: "I was his delight day by day, playing before him all the while, playing on the surface of his earth; and I found delight in the sons of men" (8:30-31, NAB). Psalm 104 describes the sea creatures God made specifically to play with. What if ... playfulness characterizes God's instruction to Abraham to name his son Isaac, meaning "let him laugh"? And how can Jesus exhort his disciples to become like children if he doesn't value play?

My first encounter with Aslan's romp in the hills was a revelation. It opened up the possibility of a

¹ Debie Thomas is director of children and family ministries at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Palo Alto, California.

wilder, roomier, and more beautiful God – a God who knows how to have fun, who isn't afraid of pleasure. A God who takes seriously the business of play and invites me – a creature made in God's image – to reflect that playfulness back.

But what does spiritual playfulness look like? I think it looks like deep attentiveness: a willingness to gaze, attend to detail, and enjoy rather than to use, abuse, or consume. It looks like collaboration and fairness, a mutual commitment to the pleasure of all involved in the game.

And it involves a steadfast and creative refusal to default to boredom, cynicism, [laziness], and contempt. ... G. K. Chesterton describes this refusal, as God might practice it:

Because children have abounding vitality, because they are in spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things repeated and unchanged. They always say, "Do it again," and the adult does it again until he is nearly dead. For grown-up people are not strong enough to exult in monotony. But perhaps God is strong enough to exult in monotony. It is possible that God says every morning, "Do it again," to the sun; and every evening, "Do it again," to the moon. It may not be automatic necessity that makes all daisies alike; it may be that God makes every daisy separately, but has never got tired of making them. It may be that he has the eternal appetite of infancy.

I love the possibility that God delights in each sunrise, each daisy, each individual act of creation and recreation. I love the possibility that I might approach life in the same way, finding even in repetition and sameness infinite opportunities for joy, creativity, and pleasure. I wonder how my approach to life would change if I no longer needed to "kill" time but instead learned to bask in it.

I'm not particularly keen on New Year's resolutions. But as I start 2019 and face a world like Asian's – a world in peril and need, desperate

for hope and justice – I'm drawn to the power of play as an antidote to despair. To play is to trust, to resist anxiety. It is to believe that the ending will be a happy one and to bravely co-create that ending with God. Sara Maitland writes in A Big-Enough God that "every old-fashioned sin list" should include the failure to have fun. That would completely change the way I practice my faith.

A few years ago, a friend who knows how much I love the Aslan story sent me a small stuffed lion. She tied a note around his neck: "May you always know a God who romps with you." I hope I will. (End of article)

Some of you have heard me (your pastor) comment on the last verse of the hymn "Morning Has Broken". Here are the words to the entire hymn (as found in 1990 Presbyterian Hymnal), but notice the words of the last verse – especially the word in bold type.

Morning has broken like the first morning,
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing!
Praise for the morning!
Praise for them springing fresh from the Word!

Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from heaven,
Like the first dewfall on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,
Sprung in completeness where God's feet pass.

Mine is the sunlight!
Mine is the morning
Born of the one light Eden saw play!
Praise with elation, praise ev'ry morning,
God's **recreation** of the new day!

We usually sing the word 'recreation' using this pronunciation: re-creation. The meaning is that God is performing an act of re-creation each day. But what if we use this pronunciation: rec-reation? The meaning of that pronunciation is that God is having fun in his creation each day – God smiles at the sunrise, God sings with the birds, God enjoys the rain and the dew, and maybe God even

dances a little as he watches all of the flowers and animals and people, also enjoying the creation again, each day.

Anyway, I think God laughs with us, and smiles for us and sings over us more than we know. And by the way, God singing over us is in the Bible. Look it up: Zephaniah 3:17.

May all of you who read this newsletter, have some fun in the month of March and maybe God will show up in your fun with you.

Pastor Yvonne



Amen!!



Some Bible Trivia Answers

1. Elisha – 1 and 2 Kings
2. Ezekiel – 37:1-14
3. Anna – Luke 2:36-38
4. Saul – 1 Samuel 10:1-13
5. Amos – 1:1 and 7:10-17
6. Nahum and Jonah – both books focus on Nineveh
7. Hosea – 1:2-3
8. Isaiah – most of the Messianic prophecies are found in the book of Isaiah.

Doings at Quaker Meadows Presbyterian Church

Ministry with the Children

- March 03rd – Pastor Yvonne (sermon), Rita Whisnant (downstairs)
- March 10th – Heather Kramer (sermon), Christine Rose (downstairs)
- March 17th – Kathy Staton (sermon), Rita Whisnant (downstairs)
- March 24th – Ruth Pershing (sermon), Lelia Bruder (downstairs)
- March 31st – Heather Kramer (sermon), Lelia Bruder (downstairs)

Upcoming Events

- Sunday, March 10th – the beginning of Lent
- Saturday, March 16th – Chicken Pie/Country Ham Supper – 4-7

Birthdays

- Kara Cali – March 03rd
- Katelyn Reel – March 04th
- Ainsley Kramer – March 19th
- Caroline Reel – March 19th
- Mary Lou Furr – March 23rd
- Kathy Staton – March 28th
- Becky Pollard – March 28th

Panda cartoon: <https://www.eatliver.com/animal-comics/>

Cover image: <https://www.gardenersworld.com/plants/five-bulbs-for-march-flowers/>