

“THE MEADOWS MESSENGER”
A Communication of Quaker Meadows Presbyterian Church
June 2020



April and May 2020 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 2020 = \$1,485.13. This figure is based on a total 2020 spending plan of \$77,227.00 which was approved by the Session.

APRIL

Total Tithes and Offerings needed (4 weeks)	\$5,940.54
Actual Tithes and Offerings received (4 weeks)	\$5,113.00
This results in a budget shortage for this month	(\$827.54)
Total Expenses (4 weeks) resulting in an overage for the month	\$5,052.26 \$60.74

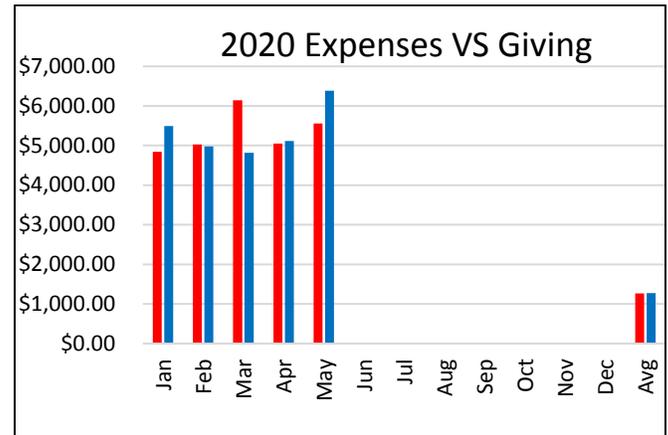
MAY

Total Tithes and Offerings needed (4 of 5 weeks)	\$5,940.54
Actual Tithes and Offerings received (4 of 5 weeks)	\$6,383.00
This results in a budget overage for this month	\$442.46
Total Expenses (4 of 5 weeks) resulting in an overage for the month	\$5,559.40 \$823.60

YEAR-TO-DATE

Total Tithes and Offerings needed (21 weeks)	\$31,187.83
Actual Tithes and Offerings (21 weeks) received	\$26,785.00
This results in a budget shortage to this point	(\$4,402.83)
Total Expenses (21 weeks) This results in an overage to expenses for the year	\$26,625.60 \$159.40

For those of you who understand a chart better than a bunch of numbers, below is the ‘picture’ of our finances for 2020 (21 weeks):



Expenses VS Income

When the state and religious leaders asked us to “stay at home” and not meet for in-person worship in mid-March, I expected our financial situation to worsen significantly. I expected our shortages would increase dramatically, but I was wrong! As you can see, from the numbers and the graph above, we are slightly over expenses for the months of April and May, and year-to-date. This is some better than where they would have been under “normal” circumstances and is largely due to the fact that many of you have continued to send in your tithes and offering while staying at home. Thank you for your faithful support of this congregation.

Session Highlights

Called Meeting – May 24th

A meeting of the Session was called to discuss and determine what our plan will be for returning to in-person worship. Below is a summary of the plan the Session approved.

- Temperatures will be checked as people enter the narthex.
- Wearing face masks is strongly encouraged, but optional.
- We will practice social distancing of 6 feet or more. Family groups are considered to be the equivalent of 1 person. That means we will no

longer participate in the “meet and greet.”

- Bulletins will be placed on the pews instead of in the narthex.
- We will not have a choir, to protect the pastor’s space.
- We will not pass the offering plate, or allow the children to collect the Million Pennies Fund. They will be collected after worship in the narthex.
- We will leave the sanctuary after worship by rows, using as many exits as possible.
- I will no longer stand in the narthex after the worship service.
- Every person who uses a restroom, will be required to disinfect it before leaving. That means wiping down the toilet, sink, light switches and door handles with Lysol or a similar cleaner.

The Session unanimously voted to resume in-person worship on May 31st, but we will not resume any activities beyond Sunday worship until at least July.

Adjustments to this policy will be made as the Session and I agree are necessary. The ultimate goal is to provide for in-person worship for the congregation while also providing best practices to help insure the health and well-being of everyone.

Some Bible Trivia

The theme for this month is: the company of the apostles

1. According to tradition, who was the “beloved disciple”?
2. Which apostle was traditionally supposed to have been crucified in Egypt?
3. Which apostle, originally a disciple of John the Baptizer, was supposed to have been crucified on an X-shaped cross?
4. Which of the apostles were fishermen?
5. Which is the only one who is supposed to have died a natural death?

6. Who is supposed to have provided the background information for the Gospel of Mark?

Below is a poem Naomi Kramer wrote for a poetry contest at Table Rock Middle School. They could write about the effects of Covid-19, spring, or teachers’ impact on students. She won 2nd place for the 6th grade and received \$10 for her poem!!

Naomi, your church family is proud of you.

Our Place by Naomi Kramer

The world is a place of beauty and light,
A place where swift breezes collide with
great might.

The place we are born,
The place where we live,
The place we grow up,
The place we get big.

The place where we learn,
The place we must earn.

The place we make friends,
The place where it ends.

The place we enjoy,
The place we destroy.

The place we advance,
The place we enhance.

A place full of green,
A place full of blue,
A place where we sit and watch fresh
morning dew.

But when times get hard,
We’re forced to stay home.

All the things that we love to play, to do,
Are put on hold,
Where we can’t reach,
For risk of the dangers we don’t seek.

But through the dust, good people stand,
They reach out far,
They lend a hand.

Because this is our place,
We won't let it fall,
We'll get through this, all and all.

So instead of living in fear and dread,
We pull out some hope from the back of
our head.

We find ways to have fun,
While still staying safe,
While still staying in touch,
With the things we love much,

We'd love to go back,
To things that we lack,
But deep down we know,
That we must not go,

So we find things to do,
We find things to play,
We're getting through this, day by day.

Though one question remains:
What will YOU do?
What will YOU say?
And while thinking of that,
I'd like to say,
The poems are read,
We're going to bed,
And to all those who might,
Go well, and good night.

The Pastor's Ponderings

We are now moving into the third month of social distancing and hyper-vigilance with hand washing. Many of us are weary of being "cooped up" in our homes and might be spending a lot of time focusing on what we cannot do. Therefore, as you pastor, it is partly my calling to help you refocus your attention on the bigger picture, on how we might understand this pandemic in light of our Christian faith.

Therefore, I share with you now, a modified version of an article in the April 27th issue of The Presbyterian Outlook, written by Donald McKim. Donald K. McKim is a retired Presbyterian minister, who lives in Germantown, Tennessee.

Because of COVID-19, our lives have been disrupted in so many ways, beyond what we could have imagined just weeks ago. There are no quick cures for a pandemic. We cannot escape its reach and its effects touch us all. What we can do, however, as Christian people, is to look to the resources of Christian faith. Through the centuries, the church has endured pandemics and epidemics and much else, sustained by faith in the God who has created, sustains and loves the world in Jesus Christ. Our theological understandings of God and of ourselves help us through the very worst of times. They give us grounding, a foundation, to face the pandemics of life with the grace and confidence of the children of God (1 John 3:1).

What resources can strengthen and nourish us "in the midst" of our current situation? What can we ponder in this pandemic?

1. We Are Part of the Human Community
Dramatically, the pandemic has linked us – one to another – across all barriers of society, nationality, ethnicity and beliefs. We are, first of all, humans created by God. The human family is a whole, each of us uniquely God's creation, and we all share this common origin. So, we are joined to one another. As John Calvin commented: "We ought to embrace the whole human race without exception in a single feeling of love." We are not exempt from human suffering and the [troubles] of our fellow creatures. So our hearts reach out in genuine love to those all over the earth and those surrounding us, in genuine care for them as we all face dangers. We love others because we love God (1 John 4:19).

2. Human Life Is Fragile
Tribulations come to us. In our whole human race as well as in our personal lives, sufferings and

difficulties envelop us. We face the fragility of life at every turn. During a pandemic we have nowhere to turn to [escape] that which blankets the earth and the whole human family. Now, as at no other time, we admit our weakness, our frailty and our vulnerability. Hope has to come from beyond ourselves. Our support and power to endure has to come from God. It is God who “consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God” (2 Corinthians 1:4). We join, globally, to seek help from our creator and sustainer.

3. Some Things Are Beyond Our Control

To admit our need for God’s help is to acknowledge our lives are beyond our control. When times are good, we tend to think we are navigating nicely and have things managed well. That myth is shattered when troubles come and we feel more that life is a lottery with no safeguards or safety to be generated on our own. Our help must come from God who protects us through all things (Psalm 46; Psalm 121). We must trust that God is the guide and protector of us all and give ourselves over completely to trusting in God, as Calvin wrote in the “Institutes.” Only turning to God in humble trust can help us abandon our sense of self-sufficiency. Only then can help come.

4. Faith Is Basic for Us

Martin Luther usually spoke of faith as “trust.” In pandemics, as in every pain of life, faith is basic for Christians. We trust God. We trust the God who loves us and is revealed to us in Jesus Christ. Our faith is not “a leap into the dark.” It is realizing we are being upheld securely by God’s love. As the psalmist knew, God’s people are “not afraid of evil tidings; their hearts are firm, secure in the Lord” (Psalm 112:7). In the midst of our trials, God’s people trust. So, said Calvin, “the confidence which they place in God enables them to rise above all the cares of the present life.” We endure our trials by seeing beyond them, by

trusting the God who loves us utterly in Christ Jesus.

5. Jesus Christ Is God with Us

We can trust God – and that God holds us as God’s people – because we believe Jesus Christ is God with us. This was the promise given before Jesus’ birth, that Mary and Joseph “shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us” (Matthew 1:23). We are never left alone in life – even in pandemics. God is always “with us” in Jesus Christ. In him we see “the human face of God.” As Calvin put it, “God is known only in the face of Jesus Christ, who is [God’s] living and express image.” No other word can sustain us – now or ever: God has become one of us human creatures; and God is always with us through all things in Jesus Christ.

6. The Holy Spirit Is Active

More than ever, in pandemic times, we need to look for and rely upon the sustaining and guiding work of God’s Holy Spirit. We need to claim the promise Paul pronounces that “the Spirit helps us in our weakness” (Romans 8:26). Jesus promised his disciples the Spirit “abides with you” and “will be in you” (John 14:17).

The Spirit is with us and helps us in many ways. During tough times, we look for the Spirit’s activities all around us. Mr. Rogers famously spoke of his mother’s advice during scary times: “Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.” The Spirit brings people to help us. Then, in these days, as a Florida newspaper headline put it: “Coronavirus: As worries mount, ‘look for the helpers’ – and if you safely can, be one.” The Holy Spirit is active in ways, and through people, we do not expect. Hope in the Spirit.

These ponderings point us to three theological emphases of our Reformed tradition: God is sovereign; God can bring good out of bad; and we can use the means God gives us.

God in Jesus Christ is “the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords”

(1 Timothy 6:15). Our faith is in the sovereign God we know in Jesus Christ. God is sovereign in history – even through pandemics – and in our own lives. God’s purposes will be fulfilled, now and forever.

God brings good out of the bad we experience. More than ever we claim the promise: “We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28). Through all we face, even pandemics, God can work for good, even when things seem hopeless in themselves. Our only trust is in God’s help.

We can use the means God gives us. Through it all, we are supported by God’s love in Christ and by the love of others, especially in “the communion of saints” – the church. Love and care from others can be expressed in many ways. Prayer becomes even more important as we thank God and petition God, seeking to do God’s will even in difficult times. These are means of God’s grace as we do all we can to be disciples of Jesus Christ and to serve others.

Now, more than ever, we need to be bolstered by what Paul heard when he prayed for relief for his “thorn in flesh” (2 Corinthians 12:7). Like Paul, we too pray for relief from this gigantic “thorn” – this pandemic that besets and brutalizes the whole earth and its people. Paul heard God say, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9). May we hear God say the same to us!

I (your pastor) know that it is difficult to stay positive when you don’t feel safe or you are not feeling well. But I hope that all of you will experience the sustaining, loving presence of God in your personal lives, no matter how bad this crisis becomes or how long it lasts. Remember, our God is not bound by space or time or the things of this world, and he has promised that we are his now and forevermore.

Pastor Yvonne

Some Bible Trivia Answers

1. John
2. James the lesser
3. Andrew
4. Andrew, Peter, James and John
5. John
6. Peter

Sermon Series

Several months ago I began thinking about the mighty acts of God in the Bible. There are many examples of how God, in spite of “impossible odds” proved his sovereignty over nature and human will to accomplish his purposes of creation, redemption, salvation and election in the world. During this time of rapid change and uncertainty about the future, it seems appropriate to remind ourselves of some of those “mighty acts.”

So, during the next four months I plan to preach on some of “God's Mighty Acts of Creation, Redemption, Salvation, and Election.”

June 07th – Creation – Genesis 1:1-2:3

June 14th – The Flood – Genesis 7-8 (selected verses)

June 21st – The Story of Joseph Begins – Genesis 37

June 28th – Joseph Rises to Power in Egypt – Genesis 39-41 (selected verses)

July 05th – Joseph Saves His Family – Genesis 42-47:12 (selected verses)

July 12th – The Exodus, The Ten Plagues – Exodus 7-11 (selected verses)

July 19th – The Exodus, The Passover – Exodus 12-13 (selected verses)

July 26th – The Exodus, Crossing the Red Sea – Exodus 14

August 02nd – The Wilderness Wanderings – Exodus 16-18 (selected verses)

August 09th – Mount Sinai – Exodus 20:1-21

August 16th – The Tabernacle – Exodus 25-27
 (selected verses)
 August 23rd – The Conquest of Jericho – Joshua
 6
 August 30th – The Story of Gideon – Judges 6-8
 (selected verses)

September 06th – The Fiery Furnace – Daniel
 3:19-30
 September 13th – Daniel and the Lion’s Den –
 Daniel 6
 September 20th – The Story of Esther – Esther 2,
 4 & 8 (selected verses)
 September 27th – Cyrus, the Savior from God –
 Ezra 1:1-4

A New Baby

Congratulations to the Sharon and Michael Thorne on the birth of their daughter, Ali Madison Thorne. Sharon is the granddaughter of Ruth Preston and that makes Ali a great granddaughter.





On behalf of my family, I want to express our deep appreciation for the beautiful peace lily plant, which was delivered to my mother’s home, and all the prayers, cards, text messages, and monetary donations which have been send in response to the recent death of my father, Harvey Eugene Thurmond. He is missed but not forever, as we will one day be reunited with him in the presence of almighty God.

Pastor Yvonne

**Doings at Quaker Meadows
 Presbyterian Church**

For the time being, we will only gather for worship on Sunday mornings, with the children staying in the sanctuary during the worship service.

Ministry with the Children

June 07th – Pastor Yvonne (sermon)
 June 14th – Ruth Pershing (sermon)
 June 21st – Heather Kramer (sermon)
 June 28th – Anita Woods (sermon)

Birthdays

Ruth Preston – June 10th
 Bennett Ross – June 26th

Cover image: <https://lovesvg.com/2018/05/happy-fathers-day-6598/>

Thank You Image: <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/402227810467168825/>