



CORNER STONE



Special dates

- National Day of Prayer, May 2, 2024
- Ascension Day, May 9, 2024
- Mother's Day, May 12, 2024
- Armed Forces Day, May 18, 2024
- Pentecost, May 19, 2024
- Victoria Day (Canada), May 20, 2024
- Trinity Sunday, May 26, 2024
- Memorial Day, May 27, 2024

May 2024						
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	

Aflame with faith

In the Old Testament, fire often symbolizes the presence of God's Spirit. For example, God called to Moses from a burning bush (Exodus 3:2-6) and defeated the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:30-39). In the New Testament, tongues of fire rested atop the believers gathered on Pentecost (Acts 2:3).

Some Christians have described a burning or current-like sensation when they encounter God. Methodism founder John Wesley said his heart was "strangely warmed" during worship. After such an encounter, people often feel compelled to share the Good News of Jesus. The flame of faith inside one believer can spark a revival of faith in others. As Charles Spurgeon said, "A burning heart will soon find for itself a flaming tongue."



You are my witnesses

John White (1924-2002) was a medical missionary, psychiatry professor, church planter and prolific author who wrote about faith and outreach. He refuted the notion that being an effective witness for Christ is akin to being a salesperson. Christians are representing and sharing a person, he said, not touting a product.

"A good witness is like a signpost," he added. "It doesn't matter whether it is old, young, pretty, ugly. It has to point the right direction and be able to be understood. We are witnesses to Christ; we point to him."

A house united

When President Lincoln declared in 1858, "A house divided against itself cannot stand," he was echoing Jesus. Scribes thought Jesus was casting out demons by Satan's power, so Jesus responded, "How can Satan cast out Satan? ... If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand" (Mark 3:23-25, NIV). There are countless modern examples: Civil wars. Families torn apart. Business partners going separate ways. Even churches splitting.

Jesus used the "house divided" image to point out the nonsense of the scribes' words. It takes someone *other than* the "strong man" (v. 27), or demon, occupying a space to cast that demon out. Evil can't drive out evil. Sin isn't stronger than sin. Hate doesn't solve hate. Violence doesn't end violence. Two wrongs don't make a right.

Jesus came to "bind" evil with goodness, conquer hate with love and teach us the same. Throughout the gospels, Jesus treats *all* people with love — even those who oppose him — so that, in the end, we all will be a house *united* by God's goodness.

Pickett's Charge



Pastor Allen's thoughts for the congregation

Ordained/Installed/Certified/Transitional

In every institution there are words that are unique to that group of people, and understanding them often requires a lexicon or an advanced degree. But we dare not oversimplify certain terms because they do have significant meanings which merely require explanation.

On May 5th, I will be *ordained* and *installed* as your *Certified Transitional* Pastor. What does all that mean? You might be saying, "We like you the way you are now, will you change?" The short answer is, "No, I will keep doing the things I've been doing but with some added authority."

To begin with, as an **Ordained** pastor I am affirmed by our governing body in our denomination (ECO- Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians) to pastor a local body of believers. I am accountable to them to practice sound theology and to lead our church according to the denominational constitution. I am also able to administer the two sacraments: The Lord's Supper and Baptism, and moderate Session.

To be **Installed**, is to be commissioned for a time to serve a this church. I am your pastor to lead, preach, moderate Session and be God's full-time servant in your midst.

As your **Transitional** pastor it is my role to do all the above but also to help prepare you for your next minister. Any pastor inputs his/her personality on a call, but I am doing this a little more quickly. There's a sense of urgency to deal with the past (good, bad and ugly), work in the present by equipping leaders, faithfully governing according to the Word of God and looking into the future and asking the hard questions.

I am **Certified** by our denomination. Again, I am held accountable to the standards of Scripture as well as best practices in leadership and church governance. I am regularly attending trainings both online and at ECO headquarters in Irving, TX. I also meet virtually with a coach who asks me challenges and encourages me to lead in a godly and biblical manner.

Last September Tracy and I attended our first training session in this area of transitional ministry. After serving churches, nonprofits and teaching overseas, we felt that this is an area that best uses my gifts. My coach, those doing the training and our denomination have all affirmed this, so we will finish out my career over the next ten years by serving churches in this way.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to serve 1st Presbyterian Monte Vista. I cannot imagine a better place to begin this ministry than here.

Highlights from Session Meeting of April 18, 2024

Pastor Allen began a New Member's Class with 3 new potential members. Pastor Allen has also been painting at the manse and new carpet has been installed upstairs. The bathroom upstairs still needs to be done and he will begin painting downstairs. His ordination date will be May 5, 2024 with a potluck to follow. A Congregational meeting needs to be scheduled (May 12th) to elect a nominating committee.

Aubrey has resigned a Sunday school leader, effective the end of May.

Ken continues to work on a Truth Conference with Ancient Promise, it is tentatively scheduled for June 7 & 8, 2024, at the Ski Hi Conference Center.

A discussion was held regarding Elder terms however it was tabled until next meeting.

Cheryl Morgan will be taking over as Clerk of the Session in May.

A training on "Humility" was given by Pastor Allen.

Next Session meeting is May 23, 2024, at 7:00 pm



IMPORTANT NOTICE!



Hypocrisy turns people against God, so God has a no-tolerance policy. Let's take hypocrisy as seriously as God does. Expect no credit for good deeds. Give financial gifts in secret. Don't fake spirituality. When you go to church, don't select a seat just to be seen or sing just to be heard. And if you raise your hands in worship, raise holy ones, not showy ones.

Bottom line: don't make a theater production out of your faith. Slay the desire to be noticed. Stir the desire to serve God. Heed the counsel of Christ: "First wash the inside of the cup and the dish, and then the outside will become clean, too" (Matthew 23:26 NLT). Do good things. Just don't do them to be noticed. You can be too good for your own good, you know.

Taken from Max Lucado *Outlive Your Life*



May 9 David Hinkley
 May 12 Jackie Burch
 May 12 Brittany Quintana
 May 13 Lottie Whitmer
 May 24 Les Huseby
 May 25 Marcie Cahill



May 19 Tracy & Allen Pickett
 May 29 Lottie & Jim Whitmer



THANK YOU APRIL FELLOWSHIP HOSTS

April 7 Cookie Jar
 April 14 Loren & Evelyn Buss
 April 21—Cheryl Morgan & Gary Dickens
 April 28

Covenant Partners Class (AKA New Members Class) - Sunday 9:30 A.M. in the Manse next door. All are invited to join us if : You have questions about your faith, are curious about our denomination, or have hard questions you want to ask Pastor Allen.

Ride into summer with these rock solid evenings of VBS!

May 30: 5:30 - 8:30p.m.
 May 31: 5:30 - 8:30p.m.
 June 2: 11:00 a.m.

Learn more & register ahead of time at:
ybsoro.events/p/outback-istoresmy

HAMBURGER FRY AFTER BIBLE SCHOOL PROGRAM ON SUNDAY JUNE 2!!

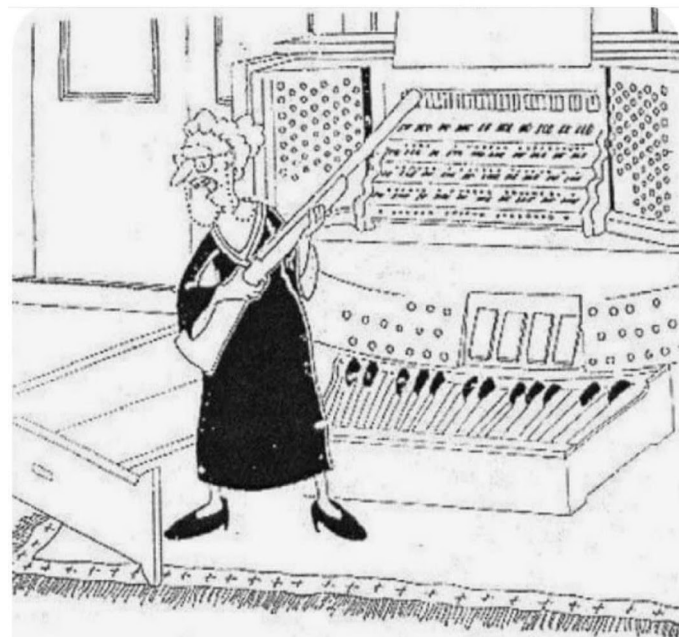


Bible Quiz

What two rivers that we still know today are named in the Creation account in Genesis 2?

- A. Nile
- B. Yangtze
- C. Jordan
- D. Tigris
- E. Ganges
- F. Euphrates

Answer: D & F (See Genesis 2:10-14.)



Evelyn quiets the crowd for her prelude.

In Our Prayers

Prayers for Tracy and Allen as Tracy begins chemo

Prayers and joy for Kyla’s friend being baptized

Prayers for Donna Benson as she moves into assisted living in Eads, Colorado

Joy for the deacons and their dedication to the church and serving of the Easter breakfast

Prayers for Allen’s friend, Kent, that he will one day find his missing son, Jason

Prayers for safe travels and comfort for Rod & Betty Paulson in visiting Rod’s cousin with pancreatic cancer

Prayers for Justin & VeeAnn Suthers and Justin’s mother in Evergreen Nursing facility

Prayers for Rebecca Gonzales & her mother and joy for our church and community pulling together to help her

Joy for Grace Merkey and her new great grandson

Prayers for Rachel Van’s mother and concerns for her health

Prayers for the families of Shauna Varner & Jeff Gonzales in our community in the loss of these young people

Prayers for our nation, soldiers and veteran’s, policemen, teachers, and all who protect our community

Prayers & joy for Lottie & Jim Whitmer moving to their new home in Idaho

Joy for Cheryl Morgan as new clerk of the session replacing Lottie Whitmer

Joy and thank you to Lottie Whitmer for serving as our meticulous clerk of the session for several years

Joy for Caitie Van on the honor roll at Alamosa School

Joy for the Girls Scouts meeting in our church and Rachel Van as leader—planting trees and shrubs along the river

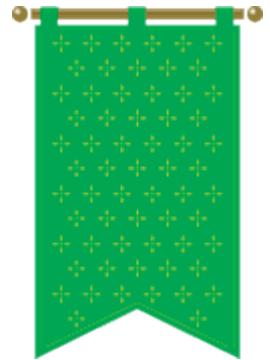
Joy & thanks for Pastor Allen’s ordination and installation service May 5th at 11:00 A.M.

CARRY EACH OTHER’S BURDENS AND IN THIS WAY YOU FULFILL THE LAW OF CHRIST

Galatians 6:2



This month



Christian symbol

Lay Leaders

May 5 **Jake Pargin**

May 12 **Dennis Van**

May 19 **Rod Paulson**

May 26 **Cheryl Morgan**

Ushers

May 5 **Loren & Lorelyn Buss**

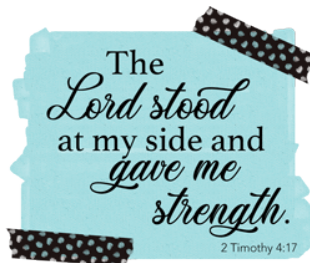
May 12 **Dennis Burch & Ken Dalby**

May 19 **Kyla & Lyza Davis**

May 26 **Tiffani & Darin Barnes**

May Communion

Evelyn Buss



GREEN — Green is the traditional liturgical color for the weeks after Pentecost (as well as the season of Epiphany). The Pentecost season largely overlaps with spring and summer, which is fitting because green symbolizes growth: growth of plant life and crops, and growth of the church in discipleship and faith.

When I don’t know how to pray or what to pray for, Holy Spirit, help me in my weakness; intercede with your deep, wordless sighs (see Romans 8:26).

Open hands

Liturgical scholar Balthasar Fischer (1912-2001) shared an “a-ha” realization about the significance of praying with open, outstretched hands, an ancient practice. The opposite gesture, a closed fist, is used to threaten others or even inflict violence. We also grasp things in closed fists, refusing to let go, to share, to hold gently or loosely.

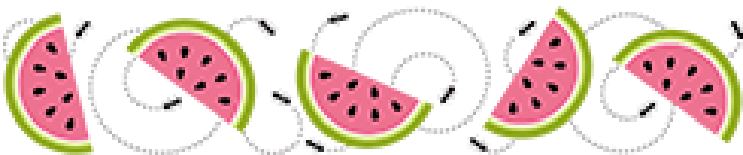
When we pray with open hands, Fischer explained, we’re saying before God that we renounce “all highhandedness, all pride in [our] own sufficiency, all violence.” We hold up our empty hands to God, saying, “I have nothing that I have not received from you, nothing that you have not placed in my empty hands. Therefore I do not keep a frantic hold on anything you have given me; therefore, too, I desire not to strike and hurt but only to give and to spread happiness and joy.”

The language of lament

Unlike nonbelievers, Christians can grieve with hope (see 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). On Memorial Day and at Christian funerals and burials, our lament is real — and it’s a uniquely Christian concept, according to Pastor Mark Vroegop. “It takes faith to pray when you are in pain,” he writes in *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy*. “Belief in God creates challenging questions, and lament provides the opportunity to reorient your hurting heart toward what is true. But in order for that to happen, you have to turn to prayer. The silent treatment must end.”

Vroegop, who had a stillborn daughter, says lament opens a door that leads to trust. Heartfelt lament, he says, can be brief or messy and can feel forced or uncomfortable. But the important thing is to “keep talking to God.”

“Don’t allow your fear, your despair or your track record of silence to cut off the flow of grace,” he urges. “Your pain can be a path toward God if you’ll allow lament to be your new language.”



Mother — and more

Though I’ve primarily known God as Father — along with metaphors such as rock, eagle, shepherd, potter — I also learned of Scripture passages portraying God as mother. For example (all NIV):

- “For a long time I have kept silent. ... But now, like a woman in childbirth, I cry out, I gasp and pant” (Isaiah 42:14).
- “As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you” (Isaiah 66:13).
- “Like a bear robbed of her cubs, I will attack them” (Hosea 13:8).
- In others, God is pictured doing traditional “women’s work”: making clothes (Genesis 3:21), sweeping (Isaiah 14:23), preparing and hosting a meal (Proverbs 9:1-6), baking bread (Luke 13:21).

One of my favorite images of God is tucked in Hosea. While many modern dads nurture their toddlers this way, the tender words surely call to mind a mama’s care: “It was I who taught [Israel] to walk. ... To them I was like one who lifts a little child to the cheek, and I bent down to feed them” (Hosea 11:3-4). Most importantly, God — however known — is loving and good.

—Heidi Hyland Mann

First-team followers

Jesus’ ascension into heaven shortly after his resurrection was “one of God’s most audacious ploys,” according to Pastor Frank Ramirez. “Jesus, resurrected, is Master of space and time, yet he passes on the work of spreading the Good News to his imperfect disciples, who ultimately pass it on to us (who are also imperfect disciples).”

By contrast, most Old Testament patriarchs often stayed on the throne until they died. Many of them could have benefited from a timely “exit strategy,” Ramirez notes.

“As a child, I always felt that the world would have been a better place if the resurrected Lord had just taken over everything,” Ramirez continues. “But though Jesus is active with us (‘For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them’ — Matthew 18:20, NRSV), we’re part of the first team now.”

Consoler, healer, guide

Holy Spirit, Lord divine,
Come from heights of heav'n and shine,
Come with blessed radiance bright!
Come, O Father of the poor,
Come, whose treasured gifts endure,
Come, our heart's unfailing light!

Of consolers, wisest, best,
And our souls' most welcome guest,
Sweet refreshment, sweet repose.
In our labor rest most sweet,
Pleasant coolness in the heat,
Consolation in our woes. ...

Cleanse our soiled hearts of sin,
Arid souls refresh within,
Wounded lives to health restore!
Bend the stubborn heart and will,
Melt the frozen, warm the chill,
Guide the wayward home once more!

—12th-century hymn

When Jesus saw the religious hypocrite, he exposed every self-righteous mole and pimple. “All their works they do to be seen by men” (Matthew 23:5 NKJV). This is the working definition of hypocrisy: “to be seen by men.”

We must do good works. And some works, such as benevolence or teaching, must be seen in order to have an impact. To do a good thing is a good thing. To do a good thing to be seen, however, is a serious offense. Here's why: hypocrisy turns people away from God.

When people enter a church to see God yet can't see God because of the church, don't think for a second that God does not react. “Be especially careful when you are trying to be good so that you don't make a performance out of it. It might be good theater, but the God who made you won't be applauding” (Matthew 6:1 MSG).

From Max Lucado *Outlive Your Life*

A prayer for roots

O God, we thirst for you, as dry tree roots thirst for water in hot, dusty soil. Help us send spiritual roots down deep into the grace and knowledge of the One who is the same yesterday and today and forever, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who gives us stability when the earth shakes and the storms of life swirl about us.

Rooted and grounded in your love, and strengthened and comforted by your grace and your Spirit who gives us hope, may we be steadfast and immovable in the work Christ gives us to do, until he comes again. Amen.

Running slowly

At a track meet, we sat in the stands, cheering for our son. I chuckled as a young sibling of an athlete asked, “Why are they running so slow, Mommy?”

These athletes had been training for years, and many were setting personal best times and even state records. Most spectators would provide little competition for the runners. But the child was comparing how he'd felt while running at the park, sprinting to a soccer game.

Along the track, dozens of teammates and coaches cheered. Each time an athlete passed, she heard strong, pointed encouragement. “You've got this!” “Someone's approaching; time to pick up the pace!” “Great stride — keep going!” The coaches and runners knew what was helpful and understood how hard the athletes were working.

My point: Consider who you allow to speak truth into your life. Do you listen to loved ones who “train” alongside you? Or do you give sideline critics too much space in your thoughts? Heed Proverbs 2:2 (NLT), which advises, “Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding.”

—Janna Firestone

When God said, “Whom shall I send?” Isaiah answered, “Here I am! Send me” (Isaiah 6:8, ESV). Lord, help me be just as eager to take part in your work. Amen.

Our Purpose:

We endeavor to be a Christ-Centered Presbyterian Church with the following primary aims:

- To bring men, women and children to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ
- To nurture one another in the work of God and in the spiritual fellowship of the congregation.
- To serve those who are in need in our community and in the world beyond.

The Corner Stone is published monthly for the purpose of promoting communications within the church family and community.

Church Office (719) 852-2555

Do you have something you would like to share in the newsletter? E-mail to Lyla at: lyla@notes-numbers.com Or leave it in the newsletter tray. All items are appreciated.

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PUZZLE UNFADING BEAUTY

Peter says beauty shouldn't come from outward adornment. How does a godly woman adorn herself on the inside?

Directions: From each list, write the word that doesn't belong. Then insert the circled letters in order below to complete 1 Peter 3:4, NIV.

flower, stem, bee, leaf
pink, red, yellow, blue
mother, sister, brother, aunt
purple, dress, skirt, blouse
necklace, ring, bracelet, braid
diamond, emerald, heart, ruby
orange, cherry, potato, kiwi
my, our, she, your
faith, family, love, hope
sunny, rainy, snowy, temperature
cookie, cake, pie, sandwich
silver, white, gold, bronze

"Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a g _ _ _ _ _ and qu _ _ _ _ _ p _ _ _ _ _ , which is of great worth in God's sight." 1 Peter 3:4, NIV



JESUS LOVES ME

“For God so loved the world, He gave His only Son.” John 3:16

Here is a story of how this Bible verse became a theme for the song, *Jesus Loves Me*.

Anna and Susan Warner lived in a lovely townhouse in New York City and their father was a successful lawyer. But the Panic of 1837 forced them to move and they became very poor. These two little girls needed to help with the family income so they began writing poems and stories for publication. One of their most successful projects was a novel titled “Say and Seal” in which a little boy named Johnny Fox was dying. His Sunday School teacher comforts him by taking him in his arms, rocking him and making up a little song. “Jesus loves me,, this I know; for the Bible tells me so.”

This novel became a best seller, second only to “Uncle Tom’s Cabin”, and when the hymn writer, William Bradbury, wrote a childlike musical score to go with the words, it became the best-known child’s hymn on earth. Despite their success, the Warner sisters never seemed to recover from the staggering financial reverses of 1836. They remained humble. For forty years, Anna and Susan conducted Bible class for cadets at West Point near their home. Both were buried with full military honors and are the only civilians buried in the military cemetery at West Point.