

THE SEBRING CHRISTIAN FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DOC)

APRIL 2020

510 POINSETTIA AVE., SEBRING, FL. 33870

(863) 385-0352

WEB SITE: www.FCCSebring.com

E-Mail: firstchristiandocsebring@gmail.com



Even though I already composed an article for April, it seems that it's been overcome by events. I realize I am not in control.

We will continue to do live streaming. The current platform is Facebook Live. If you need help, please let me know. We are planning and shall attempt to provide live streaming via Facebook Live for Bible Study and Sunday School although some may choose to attend in person.

We've often heard about revelation 21:5 "And he who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And he said "write, for these words are faithful and true." It's very difficult to get used to new things. It's very difficult when our routine changes. We want to rationalize as much as we can why it should not and why we should continue to do what we've always done.

We now face something that few of us have been faced before. Granted, as a pastor, I hear those that believe as a nation and as a world we are overreacting. As a pastor, I equally hear those who say we are under reacting. Agreed, we need the best fact to react correctly and sometimes even I, pretty much levelheaded as I am, here something out of context and react more or less that what I should.

In our lifetime, we have had events that changed our world. September 11, 2001 changed the way we go to the airport gate and pick up visitors instead from baggage claim. Again we seem faced with an event most of hopefully will say "I know, we lived through that time. I would encourage each of you, as we face perhaps a new normal, to join with other disciples in your community and come together as a house church. I would encourage you, to live stream in worship and perhaps other congregational events. It is my hope that maybe three or four come together and form a community of worship. We are reminded that wherever two or three are gathered together, Christ promised that he will be in our midst. We may have this as an opportunity for evangelism because, after all, the church began as house churches. There is much to be said about clusters coming together in a home especially around this time of year. We can evangelize our friends and neighbors, inviting them to worship in our homes.

I'm sure we will be able to come to the sanctuary soon, which would be a great blessing. In the meantime, and perhaps beyond that meantime, let's look at gathering as house churches – as groups of individuals inviting others that may not darken the door of a sanctuary, to come and join us and be members of the body of Christ scattered though we may but doing more work and making a bigger impression if He wills. We have the spirit, the Holy Spirit, within us.

The Pastor's office schedule is pending in the current environment, but he is generally always available. Please call 503-931-2698 (not Kathy's number as published in the directory) for counselling, conferencing, and pastoral care.



BIRTHDAYS

April 2 Ross Fadely
8 Pauline Kincaid
11 Amelia Swank
11 Judi Stutzman
30 Roger Sands

April 10 Mark & Heidi McClary
13 Keith & Sherry Kunsak
23 Todd & Robin Martin

#####

Remembering Dietrich Bonhoeffer

The Christian church commemorates Dietrich Bonhoeffer – pastor, theologian, anti-Nazi spy – on April 9, the anniversary of his 1945 martyrdom. Among his much-loved writings are nuggets of wisdom such as these:

“Judging others makes us blind, whereas love is illuminating. By judging others we blind ourselves to our own evil and to the grace which others are just as entitled to as we are.” (*The Cost of Discipleship*)

“In normal life we hardly realize how much more we receive than we give, and life cannot be rich without such gratitude. It is so easy to overestimate the importance of our own achievements compared with what we owe to the help of others.” (*Letters and Papers from Prison*)

“The table fellowship of Christians implies obligation. It is our daily bread that we eat, not my own. We share our bread. Thus we are firmly bound to one another not only in the Spirit but in our whole physical being. The one bread that is given to our fellowship links us together in a firm covenant.” (*Life Together*)



CHOIR NEWS

I know it seems that things are unsure right now, but just remember to keep a song in your heart at all times. Most of us can remember the first verse to many hymns. Test yourself, and sing those words out.....really meaning them!!! Amazing Grace, The Old Rugged Cross, In The Garden, and Count Your Blessings are among many favorites.

God is with us during this trying time. Keep the faith and we'll all be back in church and singing praises together before you know it!!!

Keep in Tune,

A JOYFUL NOISE

Although we are missing our practices right now, we will be back soon working hard to bring you some beautiful music!! I miss each and every one of you! Keep your fingers and arms limber and we'll be chiming soon! We can still use more ringers. Come give it a try.

For Whom the Bell Tolls,

Jaquae



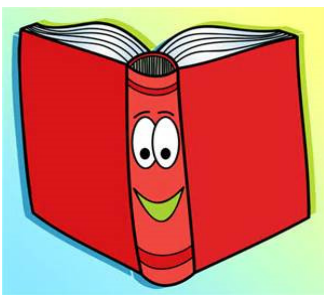
Our next Special Offering is coming up April 5-12. This will be our Easter Offering which goes to Disciples Mission Fund.

This fund helps new churches get started. As they seek ways to care for all that the Lord has made, some work at developing recycling programs, some installing solar panels, and others planting community gardens, to help the community, etc.

Every opportunity we have, we want to lift up and encourage you to participate in the Children's Christmas Shoebox Ministry. Please pick up a box or two, decide whether you want to fill it for a boy or girl, then decide the age range of 2-4, 5-9, or 10-14. As you are out shopping for yourself, it is keep your eyes open for items to add to your box.

Last Christmas our first year to participate, we filled and sent 36 boxes. That is GREAT. Thank you for your donations. This year we are setting our goal of double that amount. So pick up a box or two along with the list of suggestions to include, and be alert for appropriate items being on sale.

Thank you for your interest and support of the OUTREACH PROJECTS.



BOOK CLUB

We are reading "Treasured Grace" by Tracie Peterson. In untamed Oregon country one young woman fights to keep her family safe. Grace Martindale must care for her two younger sisters after their parents died. She marries the Right Reverend T. S. Martindale and they head out on a wagon train, however cholera hits their entire group and her husband dies leaving her alone with her sisters, Hope and Mercy. Dr. Whitman and his wife agree to

let her and her sisters stay at the Whitman Mission in Oregon for the winter until they can hear from her Uncle in Oregon City to find out what to do next. The mission is located between warring Indian tribes of the hostile Cayuse, the Nez Perce and the Walla Wallas which the mission people minister to as well as the people inside the mission. Grace is a healer and tries to help the people. She meets a fur trapper Alex Armistead and together they use her remedies to try and heal the people in spite of Dr. Whitman's disapproval. The death toll from a measles outbreak arises and so do the tensions between the natives and the settlers. Grace finds herself and her loved ones in more danger than she could ever imagine. The Whitman Mission is part of our history and this story is based on true events.

Please read as follows:

Apr. 7: Read pg. 209 to 314 to finish the book.

Our next book after this one will be "Tearoom For Two". It's part of the Tearoom Mystery series from Guideposts and you'll be hearing more about that soon.

Please join us!! There will be a copy in the library for you to read. We meet at 4:45 p.m. at Sue Colwell's 2220 Pasco Dr. the first and third Tuesdays of the month.

Submitted by Jaquae L. Sands, 382-3428

#####

A reason to laugh

The week after Easter, some churches observe Holy Humor Sunday – a tradition dating back to the fourth century. Early Christian theologians coined the term "*risus paschalis*," or "the Easter laugh," saying God played the supreme joke on death. Some believers celebrated Bright Monday, gathering the day after Easter to mock Satan's defeat.

On the first day of April, remember that "we are fools for Christ" (1 Corinthians 4:10, NIV). Then later in the month, take time to smile and laugh, knowing that victory is yours, thanks to Jesus.

As we fear the health panic around us, let us remember that Christ overcame all. Let us rejoice and laugh that God is in control and trust in Him. Don't let your faith falter. Sue



WE ARE DISCIPLES

DISCIPLE WOMEN Do to the Virus, the Disciple Women will not meet in April. Hopefully we will have a representative from one of the organizations that we are supporting to come and speak to us in May. Continue to pray for these groups: Alpha & Omega Crisis Center, Boys & Girls Club, Children Back to School help, Disciples Mission Foundation, FCC Discretionary Fund, New Testament mission, Parkway Food Pantry, Samaritan Purse, Samaritan Touch Care Center. Even though we are not meeting, please take time to stop and pray for others.

DISCIPLE MEN The annual rummage sale on Mar. 14 outranked our March breakfast meeting. Instead, we elected to provide lunch for the workers. Many thanks to Frank Reilly who cooked up a batch of chicken soup and chicken salad for the day.

Due to circumstances beyond our control, we had to cancel the Spaghetti supper on Mar. 20. Those who purchased tickets can hold onto them until our next dinner in the fall or see Rich for a refund.

It appears that all gatherings are discouraged until the current virus is under control so Disciple Men will not meet again until fall.

Everyone have a good summer and STAY SAFE.

#####

See(k) first

On Facebook, I can “follow” as many people as I want, viewing their messages, photos and activities. But I can choose only 30 to “see first” — that is, to prioritize in my news feed. As of this writing (Facebook changes often), if my “see first” list is full and I want to add someone new, I must “unprioritize” someone else.

That leads me to ponder bigger matters: I often claim to follow Jesus, but what might I need to “unprioritize” to make him not just a priority but *the* priority in my life? To what do I devote time and attention but ought to let go to follow Christ more closely? What activities, behaviors and values do I need to not just bump from my “see first” list but “unfollow” or “block” entirely? Perhaps they are antithetical to discipleship or simply take too much time away from prayer, Scripture and service.

This dilemma isn’t unique to the digital age. Facebook parlance is about what we “see first,” but in Matthew 6:33 Jesus says, “*Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness*” (ESV, italics added).

—Heidi Mann

FOOD PANTRY

Even though we are not meeting together, the food pantry is still a way to help others. Please drop items off at the church to replenish our stock that we may continue to show Christian love to those in need.