

**THE SEBRING CHRISTIAN  
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DOC)  
JANUARY 2021**

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It's interesting how we see time. Once the zodiac calendar was viewed as reference to time. The Chinese calendar has various types of animals for each year. We sometimes referred to time as the year of the big storm or the year we won the state football championship or the year of the big fire or the year we graduated. It seems like this year has been the year of COVID. I would imagine many families and individuals will be able to easily refer to this year of COVID because of the impact it had. Some lost family or friends or pets or a combination. All of us will remember the restriction on "shelter in place" or "stay-at-home" or "mask-mandate" orders. Perhaps it was a year

for parent/grandparents who will remember home-schooling or working from home.

What is this year going to bring? What do we think we will call 2021 when the year is over? Will it be the season to celebrate a vaccine? Will we experience a vibrant economy? Will we finally see celebrations with graduation, friends, and family reunions? Will we see a return to the office? Perhaps there will be more travel and a return to Disney World and all the resorts.

Christmas gives us a lot of hope and it seems like no matter what has happened during the year, our hope is renewed during this Christmas season. Will 2021 be the year of the Lord? Is 2021 the year of Jubilee? Can 2021 bring us many blessings and every rich and good things? I suppose we must wait and see. But we also can anticipate.

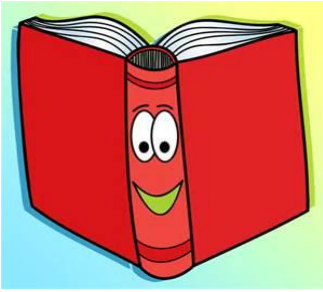
I read recently there is a difference between happiness and joy. Happiness is what we find on the outside. Gifts. A loving family. Productive work. Good company. Joy comes from within. No matter what happens on the outside, there is joy inside that is a spiritual maturity and holy confidence. It is who we are as much as what we are. We can be joyful in all circumstances because of that confidence in our Lord and God!

So many things in life happen because of our expectations. If we plan and hope and expect to be safe, taking precautions to do the safe things, then we will most likely be safe. Sometimes it's like a football game. The little things like a fumble where you make a mistake can change the game. So it has been letting our guard down and not wearing masks and doing other things that put us at risk. Like a fumble, sometimes it doesn't hurt you very much. Other times it changes the entire game.

As we look forward to 2021, let us expect the Lord will come and God will be in our midst in so many ways. He has brought us safe thus far. He will safely lead us on.

January Pastor anticipated days in office: 5, 6, 23, 13, 20, 26, 27.

## BOOK CLUB



We start the New Year with a book called "The Hope Jar" by Wanda E. Brunstetter. It's the first book in The Prayer Jar series.

We begin with Michelle Taylor, a homeless and hopeless young woman needing to escape from a bad situation. She heads for the bus station to get a ticket to anywhere but is found by an Amish couple looking for their long lost grand-daughter. They believe she's who they are looking for, and she sees a way out of her horrible situation so takes on the identity of Sara Murray. She didn't intend to deceive them, but was desperate to escape her life and

what better way to do that than live with the Amish?

While there, she finds an old blue jar filled with slips of paper with thoughts, quotes and prayers written on them. This encourages Michelle's budding new faith but now doesn't know how she can tell the truth without hurting the people she's come to love. She never intended to deceive them. But what can she do about a simple lie that becomes more complex day by day? And what happened to Sara Murray, the real grand-daughter?

Please join us!! We meet at 4:00 p.m. in the church library the first and third Tuesdays of the month.

Please read:

Jan. 5, 2021: Prologue p. 7 to Chap. 11, p. 105

an. 19 2021: Chap. 12, p. 106 to Chap. 27, p. 210

Feb. 2, 2021: Chap. 28, p. 211 to Chap. 42, p. 309

## CHOIR NEWS

(January 2021)



A new year is upon us with brand new blessings. With the vaccines coming hopefully things will get back to a new normal. I am excited to get back to chancel choir but I realize we still have to be patient and wait. Still wear your mask. Still be careful and socially distance yourself. But still keep up your faith because God is there with us, waiting too and holding us up!!!

Keep in Tune,

## A JOYFUL NOISE

If you were thinking about joining the chime choir, now is a good time to give me a call. We can talk about it and give the chimes a try without anyone else around to watch. No hard feelings if you feel it's not for you, but really, seriously think about trying them out. You never know what you can do until you try. Call me!!!!

For Whom The Bell Tolls, Jaquae

## WORSHIP COMMITTEE

"Mary Had a Baby" Oh, yes! Hallelujah! And we at DOC were led to this celebration by many "behind the scene" workers who should be recognized. First of all, a big thank you to **Pastor Alan**, who spent many hours in preparation of bringing this special service to our homes. A grateful thank you to all who participated: Readers **Janet Johns, Priscilla and Larry Andrews, Helen Kelly, and Rich Campton. Ron Colwell** led us in communion, which most of us had on hand. Lighting of the candles on the wreath and the subsequent lighting of our own individual candles as we listened to the departing hymn was especially touching. Big kudos to Pastor for his attempt at taming "Zoom" which was not altogether successful, but gave us a feeling of togetherness which could not have been experienced had we not been linked by the magic of technology.

Music, which to me is synonymous with worship, was supplied by our own **Jaquae Sands**, in addition to "Trinity" chiming the carol "**Silent Night**" and "**What Child is This?**" a solo by **Joanne LaGasse**. As the Christmas carols have become silent, and the decorations are waiting to be stored until next year, we must listen to that small still voice, "**The Savior Has Arrived.**"

We are facing a **New Year** with continued challenges; however, let us find positive responses to the inconveniences of social distancing, masks, and lack of family/friend gatherings. As we put our homes back in order, let us take the time to connect with those about us; perhaps, we could write notes in response to Christmas cards, call on our neighbors, check on the many who live alone. The Worship Committee will be planning for the next big event in the Christian Year - the Lenten Season. In the meantime, let us keep the faith as children of God and spread the good news to everyone. Blessings to all, Ann

## LIBRARY NEWS

New books have been added to the church library. Look them over and check them out. It's a good way to pass time in this time of quarantine. HOW TO WIN FRIENDS by Dale Carnegie. DAVID by Charles Swindell. ALL THE WOMEN OF THE BIBLE BY Edith Deen. IDEALS- GOD'S BEAUTIFUL WORLD. EVERYDAY LIFE IN BIBLE TIMES by National Geographic. THE PUZZLES OF AMISH LIFE. JOSHUA IN THE HOLY LAND by Joseph Girzone

An entire sea of water can't sink you unless it gets inside the ship. Similarly the negativity of the world can't put you down unless you allow it to get inside you. Make it your New Year's resolution to control what's inside of you.



## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

**JAN. 4** Bob Rhodes  
**5** Annandra Ramkissoon  
**9** Mark McClary  
**16** Heidi McClary

**JAN. 21** Prilli Andrews  
**23** Marly Colon  
**26** Ron Davis  
**30** Liz Malady

Sufficient for the day John Newton (1725-1807), author of “Amazing Grace,” wrote: “We may easily manage if we will only take, each day, the burden appointed for it. But the load will ... be too heavy for us, if we carry yesterday’s burden over again today, and then add tomorrow’s.” This maxim might be easy to dismiss unless we knew about Newton’s troubled life. Having been pressed into naval service and then slavery, Newton was finally rescued but became a slave-ship captain. He faced abuse, contemplated murder-suicide, suffered a stroke and was caught in a storm. When he cried out to God, the waves subsided, prompting a spiritual conversion for Newton, who became a priest and abolitionist. We never know how God will transform our sinful past into future good, but we can trust he will. That adds power to Newton’s advice, which echoes Jesus’ words: “Sufficient for the day is its own trouble” (Matthew 6:34, ESV)

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## **CHURCH CALENDAR**

- Jan. 3** 9:30 Sunday School (in church & zoom)
- 10:30 Church Services (in church, zoom & Facebook)
- Jan. 5** 1:00 By Laws meeting
- Jan. 5** 4:00 Book Club in Library
- Jan. 10** Church Services. Come together to worship & learn
- Jan. 12** 2:00 Board Meeting
- Jan. 17,24, 31** Church “Let us gather together

Live in the light. Often we want to be able to see into the future. We say, “How will next year be for me? Where will I be five or 10 years from now?” There are no answers to these questions. Mostly we have just enough light to see the next step — what we have to do in the coming hour or the following day. The art of living is to enjoy what we can see and not complain about what remains in the dark. When we are able to take the next step with the trust that we will have enough light for the step that follows, we can walk through life with joy and be surprised at how far we go. Let’s rejoice in the little light we carry and not ask for the great beam that would take all our shadows away. —Henri Nouwen, *Bread for the Journey*

## **DISCIPLE WOMEN**

We have given \$70.00 to each of the following organizations: Alpha Omega/Potter’s House, New Testament Mission, Parkway Food Ministry, Disciples Mission Fund, and to the Boys and Girls Club who also received the proceeds of \$68.35 from the Christmas Stockings.