

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

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Isaiah 41:31 says "they that wait upon the lord will renew their strength . They will soar on wings like Eagles: they will run and not be weary, they will walk and not be faint". It is difficult to believe we have been in the midst of this pandemic for one year. It seems like a year of waiting, does it not. Everybody is anxious to get out and once again establish relationships, do the things that they should, go back to school, go back to work, all of the things we did before the pandemic.



However, this has been a year of waiting but that does not mean we have not done quite a bit. We have experimented and partially succeeded in taking the church, even worship, beyond the walls of the sanctuary. We have found ways to fellowship and meet for which I am personally always amazed at the camaraderie and closeness we have continued to establish. In fact, I think we have grown even closer. In our waiting , we have re-envisioned the organization of our congregation and are forging ahead to redefine ourselves as we rewrite the bylaws. We have demonstrated, in this time of waiting, that we are not less of a church Congregation but more of one. As Gordon Walkington recently expressed in his letter to you, our commitment is strong because our faithfulness is strong. This is not only with our tithes and offerings but with our talents and time and focus.

Even in Florida and in our district, both within and without Disciples fellowships, congregations have struggled throughout the pandemic and continue to struggle because of the pandemic. They may have lost or cut staff positions, cut back on maintenance, curtailed services, both worship services and human outreach, and cut other ministries that define them as a congregation. We have been most blessed as even though we have minimized some events or postponed some events, still all of our mission and ministry is intact as we continue to dedicate our lives to be God's people in so many ways. Worship attendance has remained strong and very close to the participation of last year. We continue to so dearly miss our snowbirds and they miss us. Their hearts were very heavy as I called them during the writing of this article, and they mourned teen temperatures and very mature bodies with ankle to knee-high snow.

In our waiting we have plenty of time to meditate and contemplate. That does not mean we do nothing. Worship, contemplation, and meditation are all work, but they are also waiting, waiting for the Lord. Do you feel you have waited? Do you feel you are renewed? Perhaps some of you more than others but I see so many signs that we are ready to go. Now that we have renewed our strength, we can as Isaiah says soar as Eagles, run tirelessly, and walk constantly with the Lord our God. The Disciple Men's Group is in the midst of planning a supper. Outreach is looking ahead and organizing projects. Worship is orchestrating Holy Week and beyond services. Property has continued during remote services to improved parts of the building. And I know others of you are thinking of ideas for your congregation. a

blessing for me, as your Pastor, to be a witness to your service and excitement as we walk with excitement and run with joy.

Projected Pastor's March Days 2, 3, 9, 13, 16, 19, 23, 24, 30, 31



BIRTHDAYS

1 st	Pastor Alan Brown	16 th	Richard Asmussen
3 rd	Barbara Tiemens	19 th	Kathy Whitlock
4 th	Jaquae Sands	30 th	Marion (Red) Johnson
10 th	Paul Wiseman		

Dates to Remember:

March 3 – By-laws Committee meeting @ 10:00 am

March 7 – Congregational Meeting @ 11:30 am in person and by Zoom

March 6 – Men's Breakfast @ 8:00 am

March 19 – Men's Lasagna Dinner – 4:30 pm to 7:00 pm TAKE OUT ONLY

CHOIR NEWS



Even though the choir can't meet right now, I am thankful for the volunteers who are willing to sing solos and duets. For now, it's the only safe way to sing in church. So bear with us as we provide you with different musical selections each week. Variety is the spice of life!!!

Keep in Tune, Jaquae

A JOYFUL NOISE

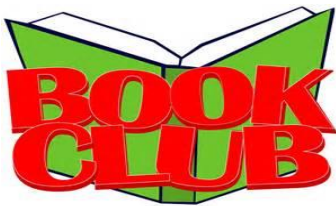


Heavenly Sounds will be playing this month with their rendition of "Were You There". We practice with masks on and do our best to stay safe. We hope you are doing the same!

For Whom The Bell Tolls, Jaquae

SPRING AWARENESS

Spring awakens when the chill has left the air
Leaving old man winter behind without a care.
As warmth breaks through the springtime breeze,
Tiny pink buds begin blossoming on the trees.
Daffodils turn their lazy heads toward the sky,
While baby birds spread their wings attempting to fly.
Nature's resurgence is seen in everything around
Touching each heart through sight and sound.
When spring awakens, hope seems born anew
Causing our faith and trust to come shining through,
Granting assurance for facing each new day
That God is in charge all the way.



BOOK CLUB

We continue in March with "River Of Life" by Kathleen Y'Barbo. This is the 2nd book in the Secrets Of Wayfarers Inn series by Guideposts.

We are back in Marietta, Ohio with three close friends, Tess, Janice and LuAnn who bought an Inn and are fixing it up. They get into another mystery when an old quilt is found in a trunk in one of the secret rooms that used to house runaway slaves. The River Of Life quilt has just been stolen from the National Archives.....so could this be the missing quilt? Nobody is beyond suspicion including the 3 friends themselves!!! Can they prove they weren't behind the quilts theft? Each person they talk to in town seems to have some kind of connection with the Inn and possibly with the quilt. What connection does the quilt have with the Underground Railroad? If you enjoy a good mystery, you'll enjoy this book!

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

Please read:

Mar. 2, 2021: Read Chapters 9 to 18, pg. 99 - 200

Mar. 16, 2021 Read Chapters 19 to 24, pg. 201 – 270 to finish the book.

Submitted by Jaquae L. Sands, 382-3428



DOC MEN

We're Back! The DOC men's group met for their second breakfast meeting of the year on Saturday, February 13th. Seven members and two guests were present, and enjoyed a meal of corn beef hash, scrambled eggs, biscuits and cinnamon rolls. Discussions centered on the need to look into the possibility of enlisting additional technical support for our virtual Sunday services on Zoom and Facebook. Also discussed the need to revisit the plans to erect a new sign on the North side of the church which had been tabled because of the pandemic. Our next meeting will be Saturday, March 13th at 8:00 AM in the church kitchen. Hope to see you there.
Rich

DOC MEN WILL SPONSOR A CARRY OUT LASAGNA DINNER ON March 19th. We are happy to announce that our resident chef, Richard Neff has agreed to come out of his semi, pandemic induced, retirement and prepare a Carry Out Lasagna dinner for the public on Friday, March 19th serving from 4:30-7:00. Tickets will be on Sale after the 28th and those purchased for the supper planned for February 2020 which had to be cancelled at the last minute due to Covid 19 shut downs will be honored.

The Worship Committee did not meet this month, but I have been busy. Ideas are being exchanged regarding the Holy Week Services; I am busy searching the best place(s) for procuring flowers for Easter Sunday; I was also struck yesterday during the service about how many people and how much effort, thought, and yes - money - go into making our brief time in the sanctuary (be it Zoom or Face Book) so meaningful.

When people arrive on Sunday morning, the doors are open, thermostats are set, smiling faces greet us - be it at the Library for Sunday School or the Sanctuary. The prayers, scripture, preparation, music did not happen by accident. In the sanctuary, communion is awaiting ("wine" and bread), bulletins (who chose the hymns, the scriptures, practiced the music, prepared the message, put it altogether in a readable form typed it up, ran it off, folded it, stacked it) and we prepare ourselves via technology.

Admittedly, technology is a challenge, which is why one of the unsung heroes in this behind-the-scenes scenario is footing the bill for the professionals to come in and bring up into the 21st century. COVID and its devastating effects may not be with us always, but technology will and we must accept it - though we may do so amid screaming and kicking. "Old dogs" can learn new tricks.

Back to our worship experience; the facility is clean, the carpet has been rejuvenated, the hymnals are in the pews, hymn numbers are displayed, clocks have had their dead batteries replaced and the list goes on. This short time together in this holy atmosphere is enough to sustain throughout the week. Let us give thanks to God and his dedicated servants. Blessings to all, Ann Holly

Join Us for Sunday School

"....Women should remain silent in the churches.....Paul in I Corinthians 14:34. We managed to survive that passage in our Sunday School discussion despite varied opinions of its meaning.

This is not the Sunday School of years past when you sat in straight rows and filled in the blanks in your S.S. quarterlies. We are reading our way through some of the books of the New Testament and stopping for questions and comments as we share our understanding of what Christianity means. There are no prerequisites for the class and I was forced to declare that there would be no exams or term papers required. You are welcome to join us in the library at 9:30 on Sunday. Ron

The New Testament Mission still has need of certain items: Dawn Dish Soap, Bleach, Canned Tuna, Mayonnaise, Spaghetti sauce, Napkins, Sandwich Size Ziplock bags. If you can help, please take these items to the mission or bring them to the church and we will make sure they get to the mission.

Lent is a time for restoring balance to our lives. The Eskimos practice balance as they venture out into freezing Arctic waters in little boats. If you've ever paddled a kayak, you know how easy they are to tip. Thankfully kayaks are just as easy to turn back upright.

That isn't a bad image for Lent - or for life as a whole. Whatever spiritual disciplines we adopt, if we succumb to temptation, it's no biggie. One of the lessons of Lent is that, as long as we're traveling light, it takes only a quick twist of the paddle to right us. That paddle twist might take the form of a quick but heartfelt prayer: "Jesus, set me straight again!" Or it might mean some extra time set aside for quiet meditation with God. Don't get worried if your spiritual discipline fails now and then. Just let Jesus help you get upright once more and keep paddling!

--adapted from Carlos Wilton, in *Homiletics*

Special dates

- World Day of Prayer, *March 5, 2021*
- Daylight-Saving Time begins, *March 14, 2021*
- First day of spring, *March 20, 2021*
- Holy Week, *March 28 – April 4, 2021*
- Palm/Passion Sunday, *March 28, 2021*
- True freedom

- Our body has not only been created by God and will one day be resurrected by him, but it has been bought by Christ's blood and is indwelt by his Spirit. Thus it belongs to God three times over, by creation, redemption and indwelling. How then, since it does not belong to us, can we misuse it?
- Instead, we are to honor God with it, by obedience and self-control. Bought by Christ, we have no business to become the slaves of anybody or anything else. Once we were slaves of sin; now we are the slaves of Christ, and his service is the true freedom.

• —John Stott, *The Cross of Christ*

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- Feline-informed faith
- I am the epitome of a “cat lady”: Each of my five felines has taught me a bit about faith. As I settle into bed, Piccolo presses his body tightly against mine. As I type, Tina sits on my lap, often reaching to rest a paw on my hand (the one on the mouse, of course!). Pumpkin cries persistently, even raising his front legs like toddler arms when he wants to be picked up. Yet, as any cat lover knows, these animals can be stubbornly aloof — at least until mealtime.
- My cats' actions make me think about how intentional daily Bible reading is like pressing myself against God. When I see God's presence in nature or someone's kindness, pausing to give thanks is like reaching out to touch God's hand. When I feel needy, I can stretch my spirit toward God's embrace with an honest prayer. And when I make myself aloof — as, alas, I sometimes do — I can rejoice that God's love always calls me back, to nourish me again. Heidi Mann