

**THE SEBRING CHRISTIAN
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DOC)
MAY 2020**

510 POINSETTIA AVE., SEBRING, FL. 33870
(863) 385-0352

WEB SITE: www.FCCSebringFl.com E-Mail: fccdoc@outlook.com or
firstchristiandocsebring@gmail.com



In John 20:29, Jesus was addressing Thomas and he said, "because you have seen me you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

We say, "seeing is believing". That may not be so! We can't see things like faith, hope, love, patience, and compassion. We do see them at work and know what they look like. We can see the effect even though we don't really SEE them, just as we see the effects of the wind but don't see it. And many times, perhaps like the wind we are able to feel those things, feel those

things on the outside as well as the inside.

It's much the same today. We are connected by audio and video, all in electronic signals we can't see, yet we see the effects of those signals. We are a "connective congregation" and we unite in song, worship, word, and prayer. We are connected as a congregation, we know we are a congregation, we come together in very interesting and creative ways, pressed to do so because of a pandemic. We are a group of believers gathered around faith we have much as the early Christians.

I am very impressed that you have been able to adapt to this new way of worship. It is something I did not even imagine or realize would be our primary way of worshiping. Oh, yes, I had wanted to share our ministry and services from the sanctuary but not I never envisioned it would be from homes. Easter Sunday we had many people participate. It is shocking how many we reached. We could have never done that if we had not been pressed to expand the gospel. Our online service have become quite a ministry. Many of the challenges we have had for Facebook as well as Zoom are because I was behind the power curve.

We needed some electronic devices but by the time I realized what we needed, the items were sold out. Everyone else bought them up. Yet we prevailed. Now we can provide a worship service that seems appropriate and meaningful to not only many within the congregation but those that visit our services.

This ministry will likely continue as we seek to adapt it to the sanctuary. We have such a great following! Who would've thought? Certainly not me. I had no idea we would be able to successfully come together with this media. We are a congregation of disciples, disciples from First Christian Church in Sebring, and even though we may be scattered, it makes little difference. Let us continue our worship and our service because God is not done with us yet.

Pastor Alan

Special dates

- National Day of Prayer, May 7, 2020
- Mother's Day, May 10, 2020
- Armed Forces Day, May 16, 2020
- Victoria Day (Canada), May 18, 2020
- Ascension Day, May 21, 2020
- Memorial Day, May 25, 2020
- Pentecost, May 31, 2020



BIRTHDAYS

May 5 Liz (Klingerman) Collins
7 Howard Woodward
14 Frank Reilly
22 Larry Andrews
28 Ron Colwell
28 Carol Breckenridge

May 26 Trevor & Lynne Warman

analogy that I love!

You are holding a cup of coffee when someone comes along and bumps into you or shakes your arm, making you spill your coffee everywhere.

Why did you spill the coffee?

"Because someone bumped into me!!"

Wrong answer.

YOU spilled the coffee because there was coffee in your cup.

Had there been tea in the cup, you would have spilled tea.

Whatever is inside the cup is what will spill out.

Therefore, when life comes along and shakes you
 (Which WILL happen), whatever is inside you will come out.

It's easy to fake it, until you get rattled.

*So we have to ask ourselves..."What's in my cup?"

When life gets tough, what spills over?

Joy, gratefulness, peace and humility?

Anger, bitterness, harsh words and reactions?

Life provides the cup, YOU choose how to fill it

Today let's work towards filling our cups with gratitude,
 forgiveness, joy, words of affirmation; and
 kindness, gentleness and love for others!

Here's to "My cup runneth over"



Don't Quit

by

John Greenleaf Whittier

When things go wrong as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all up hill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.
Life is strange with its twists and turns
As every one of us sometimes learns
And many a failure comes about
When he might have won had he stuck it out;
Don't give up though the pace seems slow—
You may succeed with another blow.
Success is failure turned inside out—
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell just how close you are,
It may be near when it seems so far;
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit—
It's when things seem worst that you must not quit.



Fed by the Father

God loves his little birds; for all
his tender care he shows;
a single sparrow cannot fall
but its Creator knows. ...

God loves each little bird; but still
more tender is his care
for children who obey his will,
than for the fowls of air.

—Anonymous

Debt-free, by grace

Visiting with her passenger, Uber driver Latonya Young mentioned her determination to finish college — and a \$700 debt that barred her from enrolling in more classes. “Every time I got ready to pay the money, my kids needed something,” she said later. “I said, ‘Okay, I’ll just wait.’”

To Young’s great surprise, a few days after that Uber conversation, she learned that her customer, Kevin Esch, had paid her debt; she could reenroll! In response, Young persevered to finish her degree with strong grades. “When he paid the balance, I had to do this for him,” she said of Esch, who attended her graduation.

Young’s self-sacrifice for her children and Esch’s self-sacrifice for a stranger both pale, of course, in comparison to Jesus’ sacrifice of his very life to save us. Like Young held back by debt, we were captive to sin until “the Son of Man came ... to give his life as a ransom” (Matthew 20:28, ESV). Young did nothing to earn Esch’s gift, and we can do nothing to earn salvation. But as she responded by using the gift to its fullest, we embrace God’s gift by living in thanksgiving and praise, love and service.

Adopted by God

Anecdotes abound of couples who become pregnant soon after finalizing a long-awaited adoption. A *Reader's Digest* contributor recounts how one such mother later handled well-meaning inquiries about which child was “hers” (biologically). She replied: “I’ve forgotten.”

That mindset, perhaps, is why John Piper calls adoption “a picture of the Gospel.” God, through his Son Jesus, makes us his very own eternally beloved children.

Max Lucado writes: “If anybody understands God’s ardor for his children, it’s someone who has rescued an orphan from despair, for that is what God has done for us. God has adopted you. God sought you, found you, signed the papers and took you home.”



WE ARE DISCIPLES

DISCIPLE WOMEN Do to the Virus, the Disciple Women will not meet in May/ Hopefully we will have a representative from one of the organizations that we are supporting to come and speak to us in June. 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 Have a good summer and see you in fall.

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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



CHOIR NEWS

As we patiently wait for our services to begin back in our lovely church we must remember the church is where we are. We can worship anywhere! It's been nice to "see" each other on Facebook worshipping together each week. I have been posting a piano piece now and then so if you want to hear them, just friend me and I'll be happy to friend you back! My Facebook name is just "Jaquae Sands". I am working in advance for the choir and the service music since I've been home and have things ready to go when we can return. I've never been so far ahead before!!! So keep smiling and we will see each other soon.

Keep in Tune, Jaquae

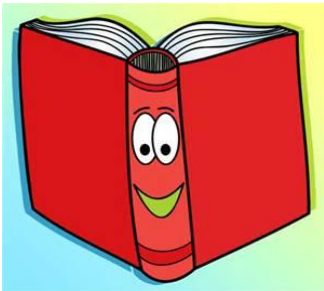
A JOYFUL NOISE

Make A Joyful Noise wherever you are!!! Just keep those arms limber and soon we'll be back in the chime choir. I miss you all!!!

For Whom The Bell Tolls,

Jaquae

BOOK CLUB



We are reading "Treasured Grace" by Tracie Petererson. 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. Whitmans 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: Read pg. 209 to 314 to finish the book when we are able to be together again.

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. in the church library the first and third Tuesdays of the month.

