



Dear Harvest Family-

Wasn't Easter great? The choir sounded terrific, and it is always nice to see Devon directing them. Michele did her usual fine job with all the piano music. Beth and Cyndy did a wonderful job with the Resurrection Eggs. And there were 73 people in the worship service. Let's shoot for 100 by Christmas! It is gratifying to see people being drawn to Jesus Christ. Only in Jesus do we find resurrection hope.

From the Pastor For the next two months, I will be preaching on prayer, especially focusing on prayer in Luke-Acts. Prayer is mentioned 156 times in the entire New Testament, and 60 of those mentions come in Luke and Acts. In Luke, we see Jesus praying more, and teaching more about prayer, than in any other gospel. Scholars point out that the book begins with prayer (Zechariah in the Jerusalem temple), and it ends with prayer (the disciples praising God in the Jerusalem temple).

There is much to learn about prayer from Jesus and the early church. And I am still a beginner in the school of prayer. I know far more about prayer than I actually practice. And yet, there is the heart's desire to be more like Jesus, and to pray.

There are several reasons to pray. The first is out of devotion to God. Prayer is highly relational. Jesus teaches the disciples to pray not to some "Holy and Awesome and Majestic Ground of All Being", but to "Our Father". Whatever utilitarian benefits there are to prayer, at its heart, prayer is relational.

Imagine a child coming home from college or the military, and not wanting to sit down and talk with their parents, or to just sit and watch TV with their parents. Instead, they are perpetually asking their parents to give them things. "Can I have the car keys?" "Can I have some food?" "Can I have some money for a movie?" We'd think to ourselves, "I wonder what kind of relationship they really have?" While parents or grand-parents are delighted to give things to their children and grandchildren, it is the relationship that brings the most enjoyment.

And so it is with God! We pester God about all the things on our hearts, or all the things we think we need, and rarely ever just enter into a conversation with God, both speaking and listening. Prayer is relational.

But prayer is also practical, and a powerful asset in the church's mission. It has been said that the church moves forward on her knees. That is, the church's mission will only move forward through prayer. No strategy, no giftedness, no human effort can grow the church long term without prayer. Do we believe that?

Every Monday night at 6:00 p.m. a few people gather in the Youth Room to pray for the church, the community, the world. It goes for about 30 minutes. Would you be willing to come

join Margaret Kuglin and Karen Edwards and me as we pray together? Even if you can't commit to every week, perhaps you could commit to once a month, or every other week?

We are also in the process of scheduling a showing of the recent film, "War Room". The reviews on the film are good, and it is a film that encourages Christians to pray. When we receive the film and the material, we will let you know. We'd love to hear your feedback on a good time to show it. Might we do a Friday night, or a Sunday afternoon? Or both?



Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (Philippians 4:6)

SDG! 

Assorted Things

- 1) I was encouraged that we had 73 people in worship on Easter Sunday, the largest attendance in my almost four years here (except for the 50th celebration). God is on the move!
- 2) Virginia Irons' 90th Birthday Party will be April 2nd at her daughter's home: 1345 Fransen, Modesto.
- 3) I will be at a Presbyterian Board of Pensions Consultation in San Diego from April 6-8.
- 4) Please pray for Devon James as he has his fourth surgery on his foot on April 12th.
- 5) I am delighted that Mike Royer has been playing guitar with the Praise Team. He's really good!
- 6) I'm also delighted that Wilson Kailiponi has served us so well as the liturgist in February and March. He did a great job!
- 7) We have had many new visitors to Harvest in the last few weeks. We each have a responsibility for greeting them, asking their names, and inviting them to stay for coffee and cookies after the service. We don't want to be pushy and aggressive, but we don't want to ignore them, either!
- 8) Boundaries. We all have them. We all struggle with them. I used to golf with a buddy who was a CPA. As we'd golf, I'd pester with CPA questions. He finally said, "While golfing, I am your friend. If you have a business question, call my office." Boundaries. As a pastor (and a dad!), I want to encourage you to observe boundaries with our secretary (my daughter) Rachel. When she is in church on Sundays, she is there as Rachel, not as the secretary. If there is something to talk with her about, please talk with her during office hours, Tuesday-Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

APRIL 2016



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					<p>1 10:00 a.m.— Bible Study at Kuglin's</p> 	<p>2 1:00 p.m.— Virginia Irons Birthday Celebration</p> 
<p>3 10:30 a.m.— Worship</p>	<p>4 6:00 p.m.— Church Prayer Meeting</p>	<p>5 6:30 p.m.— Griefshare</p>	<p>6</p> 	<p>7 9:30 a.m.— Alpha Circle</p> <p>6:30 p.m.— Choir</p> <p>7:30 p.m.— Praise Practice</p>	<p>8 10:00 a.m.— Bible Study at Kuglin's</p> <p>12:00 p.m.— Deacon's Meeting</p>	<p>9</p>
<p>10 10:30 a.m.— Worship</p> 	<p>11 6:00 p.m.— Church Prayer Meeting</p>	<p>12</p>  <p>Libraries Work Because We Do!</p> <p>6:30 p.m.— Griefshare</p>	<p>13 1:30 p.m.— Session, Youth Room</p> <p>7:00 p.m.— Persephone Club Meeting</p>	<p>14 7:30 p.m.— Praise Practice</p>	<p>15 10:00 a.m.— Bible Study at Kuglin's</p> <p>6:00 p.m.— Mariners</p> 	<p>16</p>
<p>17 10:30 a.m.— Worship</p>	<p>18 6:00 p.m.— Church Prayer Meeting</p>	<p>19 6:30 p.m.— Griefshare</p>	<p>20</p> 	<p>21 6:30 p.m.— Choir</p> <p>7:30 p.m.— Praise Practice</p>	<p>22 10:00 a.m.— Bible Study at Kuglin's</p> 	<p>23</p>
<p>24 10:30 a.m.— Worship</p> <p>11:45 a.m.— Potluck</p>	 <p>WORLD PENGUIN DAY APRIL 25TH</p> <p>6:00 p.m.— Church Prayer Meeting</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28 6:30 p.m.— Choir</p> <p>7:30 p.m.— Praise Practice</p>	<p>29 10:00 a.m.— Bible Study at Kuglin's</p> 	<p>30</p>  <p>International Jazz Day</p>

2016 READING CHALLENGE



Here are the books I have read this year in the **#52booksin2016 Challenge**

- 1) The Last Battle – C. S. Lewis (Children)
- 2) In the Garden of Beasts – Erik Larson (History)
- 3) Bandersnatch – Diana Glyer (Literature)
- 4) Dictator – Robert Harris (Historical Fiction)
- 5) I Am a Church Member – Thom Rainer (Church Growth)
- 6) Preaching- Tim Keller (Preaching)
- 7) The Black Echo- Michael Connelly (Crime Novel)
- 8) Creativity, Inc.- Ed Catmull (Leadership)
- 9) And Then There Were None- Agatha Christie (Mystery)
- 10)Huckleberry Finn- Mark Twain (Fiction)
- 11)Murder on the Orient Express – Agatha Christie (Mystery)
- 12)In the Name of Jesus - Henri Nouwen (Spiritual Leadership)
- 13)Church History in Plain Language: Fourth Edition - Bruce Shelley (History)

What are you reading?

Hosting the Stockton Presbytery in May



Harvest will be hosting the Stockton Presbytery's quarterly meeting on May 7th from 9:00 a.m. to about 1:00 p.m. We will need some volunteers to register attendees, to greet, to help with worship, to help set up, to help prepare a simple meal (alas, the In-n-Out Truck was unavailable). Watch for the sign up sheet. The last time we hosted a meeting, everyone commented on how lovely the Worship Center was, and how friendly Harvests' people were.

Virginia Irons 90th Birthday Celebration! Happy Birthday!



On April 2nd, from 1:00-3:00 p.m., Deb Dooley (Virginia's daughter) will be hosting a celebration of Virginia's 90th birthday. You are all invited! This celebration will take place at Deb's home: 1345 Fransen Ln., Modesto, CA 95355. Please RSVP to Deb at debdooley@sbcglobal.net. Thanks!

Harvest Mariner's Meet April 15th

At our meeting on March 18th, at 6:00 p.m., we hosted a traditional corned beef and cabbage dinner. All Harvest members and friends were invited. Our speakers were Steve and Dianne Warn, of Agape Children's Ministry, based in Modesto and working in Kenya, and they spoke beautifully on their work there. Thank you Steve and Diane and all who helped set-up, cook, and clean!



On April 15th, following the 6:00 p.m. dinner, Hank Lawson of Agape Villages Foster Family Agency in San Ramon will be our guest speaker. Mr. Lawson is the Director of Church Relations for Agape Village and also Treasurer of its Board of Directors. (For 35 years Mr. Lawson has also been pastor of the Empire Church of Christ. He lives in Empire but is in the process of moving to Turlock.) Agape Villages has provided care to area children for 57 years. He and Mrs. Lawson will join us for dinner before his presentation. Join us for dinner and a presentation by Mr. Lawson!

5 Ways to Invigorate Your Prayer Life

I don't know about you, but I can be easily distracted when I'm praying. But over the years I've picked up some great ways to focus my prayers.... Here are 5 more ways I've learned to help me sharpen my prayers.

1) Write out your prayers

Often I will begin my prayer time by writing out things I'm thankful for. I write them to the Lord, almost like a letter, beginning with something like this: "Heavenly Father, Lord Jesus, Holy Spirit, Thank you for...." or "Lord Jesus, Thank you for..." and I go on to write things I'm grateful for. Writing my thanks keeps me focused. Sometimes I begin a time of prayer by reading past thanksgivings I've written. I've also found that writing out other prayers has been very helpful as well.... As I pray the prayers I have written, I don't restrict myself to reading them word for word, but use them as reminders.

2) Pray specific Bible verses

In my "family" section of my prayers, I have several Scriptures that are promises for parents about their children, like the following:

And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." Acts 16:31

"And as for me, this is my covenant with them," says the Lord: "My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring," says the Lord, "from this time forth and forevermore." Is 59:21

I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread. He is ever lending generously, and his children become a blessing. Psalm 37:25
-26

Often I will read these Bible verses aloud, then ask the Lord to please do what the verses say he will do. Using Scripture when we pray builds our faith, for we can know we are asking according to God's will. I often quote Ps 32:8 when asking for wisdom. I pray something like this, "Father you have said in your word, 'I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you'; so, I ask that you would please counsel me with your eye upon me. Please show me the way I should go in this situation."

Lately I have been quoting Matthew 7:11 in my prayers:

If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

I'll pray something like this, "Father, you've told me that you give good things to those who ask you. So, I ask that you would please heal (insert name). Healing and health are good things, so I am asking that you give them this, according to your will."

3) Make lists

In addition to writing out specific prayers, I have found lists to be helpful. I have a list of people I am asking Jesus to save. I have a list of "current needs" of family and friends. Lists help me stay on track when I'm praying. I don't pray through every list every day, and I don't always pray through a whole list. But at least I have it written down to remind me from time to time.

4) Pray through the Our Father pattern

Use each phrase to trigger a "theme" for example: "Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be your name." Praise you that you are my Father. I praise you that you are in heaven, sovereign over all. Hallowed be your name—holy is your name. Praise you for your holiness and perfect purity and glory.

"Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Father, please save multitudes in every nation. Please save my children and grandchildren. Please bring your kingdom rule into my neighbors' lives, etc.

"Give us this day our daily bread." Father, please provide for my children. Please provide for us. Father, if it would be your will, please give me.....

5) Pray in response to your Bible reading

Some have found praying in response to their Bible reading to be most effective for them. In your daily bible reading, stop and pray as God's word speaks to you. For example, if you read, James 1:22, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves," pray, "Lord Jesus, please help me to obey your word. Help me to "do" it, to put it into practice." If you read Lamentations 3:21–23 "But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness," pray, "Lord Jesus, thank you for your unceasing steadfast love. Thank you for your mercies that are new this morning. Praise you for your great faithfulness and unceasing love for me. Please give me more and more hope."

How about you? What are some ways you have found that help you focus your prayers?

Mark Altrogge has been senior pastor of Sovereign Grace Church of Indiana, Pennsylvania, since 1982. He has written hundreds of songs for worship, including "I Stand in Awe" and "I'm Forever Grateful." Mark and his wife, Kristi, have four sons and one daughter. Find out more on his blog, [The Blazing Center](#).



1—Virginia Irons
 9—Jacob Holleman
 22—Hannah Holleman;
 Frank Reed



30—Isabel and
 Dick McKay

If your birthday or anniversary has not been listed, please call the office and let us know.

Regular Prayer List

Assisted Living:

Mabel Cronan—*The Stratford Place*
 Donna McRae— *Golden Age Home Care, (memory care)*
 Dorothy Nelson—*Turlock Residential*
 Mildred Vine— *Paramount Court*

Health Issues:

Florence Bloemendaal
 Warren Cawley (pain)
 Margaret Kuglin (eye)
 Roger Morrow (hip)
 Ruth Strange (back)



Stockton Presbytery Prayer List for April 2016



April 3—Synod of the Pacific
 Transitional Executive: Jane Odell
 Synod Support Staff AND: Robert
 Sherwood, HR

April 10—Trinity Presbyterian Church,
 Stockton. Supply Pastor: Byron Nelson
 AND: David Warner, HR

April 17—First Presbyterian Church,
 Tracy. Interim: Jennifer Hauser AND:
 Don Strongman

April 24—Cortez Presbyterian Church,
 Turlock, Transitional Pastor: Clover
 Bailey

Ceres School's Prayer List for April 2016

April 3—Caswell Elementary School
 Principal: Alfonso Navarro

April 10—Blaker-Kinser Jr. High School
 Principal: Kristi Britton

April 17—Argus/Endeavor High School
 Principal: Jan Gordon

April 24—Central Valley High School
 Assistant Principal: Rita Srouji



Mission Statement ~ With God in control, the mission of the Harvest Presbyterian Church is to proclaim and bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and nurture the faith of our church family.

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