

First News

First United Methodist Church

February 2021

A Note From Pastor Toni

Volume 21,
Issue 2

Dear Friends,

of those now and again.

My gift to Scott this Christmas was a 5 foot tall pre-lit Palm Tree with green leaves and 56 white lights. I wish it were a little taller, but it would probably fall over if it was, so this works just fine. Our little palm tree creates a nice glow on these cold winter evenings. I figured since we have no plans to go to a warm place—or anywhere else for that matter—for some time, that I'd bring the tropical to us this year.

Scott loves his tree, and I do, too. I took down our “regular” Christmas tree last weekend, and I still love it—but this one is staying up for as long as we “need” it and it'll go back up again whenever one of us is craving some warmth and sunshine. Even if the sky is grey and there's some snow out on the driveway, our palm tree offers us some smiles and sunshine.

Smiles and sunshine are important. We all need a little dose

In just a few weeks we'll be entering the season of Lent. I know it sounds a little odd to talk about smiles and sunshine as we enter Lent, but I'd like to offer you a possibility of receiving a little bit of both of those in the weeks ahead.



We will livestream our **Ash Wednesday service at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, February 17th**. You'll be able to find the service on Facebook that evening in the same way that you find our worship service on Sunday mornings.

After worship ends that evening, I would like to invite you to join a zoom Bible Study at approximately 7 p.m. We'll give everyone a chance to sign on, talk a few minutes about Ash Wednesday, and then turn to the scripture lesson for the following Sunday, the first Sunday in Lent. We'll plan to conclude by 7:30.

Then, each week until Holy Week, **EXCEPT FOR WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY**

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A Note From Pastor Toni *continued*

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24th, we'll have the opportunity to see one another's smiling faces, fellowship a bit, and then turn to the following Sunday's scripture. You'll want to have a Bible available so you can refer to the text, but you don't have to be concerned about other materials or advanced preparation. I want to hear your thoughts and ideas about the text as I prepare to work on my sermon the following day.

The exception of not meeting on Wednesday the 24th, is because I already have 2 meetings scheduled that evening. I'd like for us to meet that week on **Tuesday the 23rd**, instead. The meetings that follow, will be on **Wednesdays: March 3, 10, 17 and 24 at 6:30 p.m.** I'll write up a separate note in another place in the newsletter for you to have a quick reference for the dates and times, but wanted to explain why the shift on that particular week.

For your convenience, every Monday we'll send you a copy of the zoom invitation, along with the scripture lesson for the following week. That way, everything will be easy for you to find, and you'll be smiling instead of frustrated when you sign on.

I look forward to seeing you in person when we're able to do that. I know that a number of you have already received at least one of your vaccines, but others of us haven't yet. We're playing the safe route for this study and making sure that everyone has the opportunity to participate. Besides, we don't have to deal with snow or icy sidewalks on dark evenings. And maybe, just maybe, I can figure out how to add a tropical scene behind me as we zoom together. Or at least, make it possible for you to see a certain 5 foot tall illuminated palm tree.

Love and blessings,

Toni

Troop 251 Boy Scout News

submitted by Tom Pedavoli

Gabriel Duke was honored by the Scout Council on January 25, 2021 with his Eagle Scout rank. His project was landscaping at his school, Triton Community Schools. This project was selected as Eagle Project of the year by the LaSalle Council.

On December 20, 2020, Jack



McIntire also earned his Eagle rank.

The troop is planning a one week hike on the Appalachian trail in June of 2021.

Words of Encouragement and Hope
by Mary Hirt (submitted by Lynn Gee)

from the *Shepherd of the Hills* newsletter:

I encourage each of you to:

Make sure you test positive for faith.

Keep your distance from doubt, and isolate yourself from fear.

Trust in God through it all. (*Kelly's Treehouse*)

February Birthdays

2/3	James Cochern	2/20	Sue Stinson
2/4	Janet Smith	2/20	Steve Westfall
2/5	Jenny Cerrato	2/21	Jeffry Holtzclaw
2/5	Deb Wise	2/23	Tim Smith
2/8	Jennifer Tobias	2/24	Cris Causey
2/9	Amanda Gray	2/26	Paul Cleeter
2/17	Marilee Douglass	2/26	Emma Konefsky
2/18	Dean Byers	2/28	Pam Michel
2/18	Rose Woodke	2/28	Marsha Wilson



Words of Hope & Encouragement

by Anna Marie Polk (submitted by Susan Wautelet)

Anna Marie uses this when she makes her cards for the church. The poem she uses with her morning devotions. Use it when you are feeling low. And, smile at what God thinks of you!

Here are ten things that God says about you.

I am for you.

I love you.

I believe in you.

I will not fail you.

I will be with you.

I will provide for you.

I will bless you.

I will give you rest.

I will strengthen you.

I will answer you.

“Moving Forward” Information to the Congregation

Last September the Church Council appointed the Moving Forward Committee to begin the initial stages of addressing the building issues. The committee was organized and had its first meeting November 4, 2020. During that meeting, the members developed and agreed upon a mission/vision statement. They also had a tour of the sanctuary to begin to understand the issues before the church membership. After the tour of the building the committee brainstormed nine options to consider in Rebuilding First Church. This included such ideas as but not limited to: rebuilding the dome to its previous glory and bring the building up to code plus make additional renovations to update the Church; tear down the sanctuary and rebuild to current needs and standards; and build another church elsewhere. It is important to note that the nine options were the result of “brainstorming”—simply trying to list all of the possibilities that might be considered. Ultimately, the “Moving Forward” team will not be making the decision about our church facility. These decisions involve a process outlined in our church Discipline involving our Trustees, Church Council, and District Building Committee. Ultimately, a

This committee strongly believes God is at the helm and is guiding us to build His church building so the congregation can continue to learn, celebrate and carry God’s word into the world for the next 50-100 years.

Church Conference will be planned where all members will be invited to participate. Moving Forward will not happen without our congregation being well informed and having time to prayerfully consider what’s ahead.

Since that first meeting the members have toured a church built to replace an aging facility that no longer met their needs, and we observed and had discussions with other churches in the area who have issues like First Church to see how they handled their facility issue. The committee has also started working on a docu-

ment outlined by the Book of Discipline that will help us discern our resources and needs for the future. It involves an analysis of the church and community, a projection of potential membership with average attendance, the church’s program of ministry and the development of an accessibility plan. Upon completion, this work will be offered to our Trustees and Church Council in preparation for our next chapter of planning and decision-making.

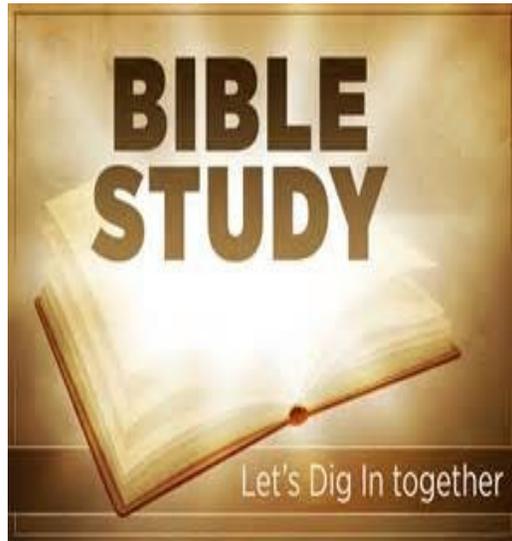
Most recently the committee met with S-B Construction Company/ Building God’s Way (you can google

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Zoom Lenten Bible Study

February 17 and 23, March 3, 10, 17 and 24

You are invited to join a weekly Zoom Lenten Bible Study to discuss the scripture lesson that will be preached on the following Sunday. The first study will follow our Ash Wednesday Service on February 17 and the second study will be **TUESDAY**, February 23 at 6:30 p.m. Each of studies thereafter will be on



Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. The zoom link and scripture will be sent to you on Monday so that it will be readily available.

This study is informal and does not require materials beyond your Bible, and perhaps a pen and paper. It's a chance to see one another's faces, and to spend time together in the Word of God. I look forward to seeing you!!

“Moving Forward” Information to the Congregation *continued*

(Continued from page 4)

them). The company has toured the sanctuary and we hope to receive pertinent information from them in the next few months.

The committee continues to meet and will provide updates to the church membership and report to the Board of Trustees and Church Council.

This committee strongly believes God is at the helm and is guiding us to build His church building so the congregation can continue to learn, celebrate and carry God's word into the

world for the next 50-100 years. God provided a wonderful facility for the membership 100+ years ago. And under the current conditions it is time for us to look forward and develop a church for the current generations and those to follow. We ask for your prayers as we continue our work.

Members of the Moving Forward Committee are: Brent Kaufman, chair; Toni Carmer, Pastor; Carol Beiter, Lay Leader; Jim Causey; Ed Langfeldt; Ed Pullen; James Easterday; Sarah Smith; Brian Leichty, chair of Trustees; Amanda Witt; Judy Stump; Barbie Picket.

MISSION MINDED

Upcoming Mission Events:

MAY 16 - 22, 2021: WORK TRIP TO MIDWEST MISSION DISTRIBUTION CENTER

Now's the time to get signed up!!!!



At Chatham, Illinois we prepare "kits" that are then available when disasters occur or requests are made. Things like cleaning buckets that are ready to be shipped out when floods happen. Sometimes we fill school bags with supplies for students, assemble personal dignity or new baby kits, or make other types of preparations. There may be sewing or carpentry jobs for person skilled in these areas.

- Carol Beiter is the contact person for this trip. Contact Carol with questions or to get signed up to go.

MAY 8, 2021: FISH FRY FUNDRAISER

Drive-thru Service in the Parking Lot (Ralph Smith cooking)



SEPTEMBER 11, 2021: FISH FRY FUNDRAISER

Drive-thru Service in the Parking Lot (Ralph Smith cooking)

OCTOBER, 2021 HENDERSON SETTLEMENT

Our annual work trip to Kentucky will take place in the fall. It's not too early to think about joining our crew.

- Mike Woolfington is the contact person for this trip.

Additional fundraisers may be scheduled depending on community restrictions.

Work trips are financed through fundraisers and money given directly to Missions Commission.

Work trips are not financed through the church budget.

Expenses for work trips include a material fee of \$1500 or \$2000 (depending on the destination) and ½ of each participant's expenses for room, board, and gasoline. (Each participant pays the remaining ½ of their expenses.)



As part of Lent, the Worship Committee, Outreach Committee

and Christian Education Committee, with inspiration from Pastor Toni, will be offering **Lent in a Bag**. Each bag will contain six devotions and a corresponding item, family activities for those with children, as well as several surprises!

Lent in a Bag will be available for pick up on the following dates: **Friday, February 12 from 2:00 to 5:00 PM and Saturday, February 13 from 9:00 to Noon.**

There will be someone at the door of the south entrance that will hand you your bag. If you are unable to pick up your Lenten bag, let Kathy know in the office and the committees will arrange personal delivery.

HAPPY FEBRUARY

FROM THE OUTREACH COMMITTEE

In spite of the growing number of Covid cases in our community, we are blessed to recognize that many in our church family are being vaccinated....

As Demond Tutu reminds us: "Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness." An inspirational way of saying that God is providing light at the end of the tunnel.

Beginning February 1, we are now able to meet in the educational church building for groups of less than 10. However, everyone must be masked and distancing will be mandatory.

Two book groups will begin to meet at church, according to their schedules in Fellowship Hall. It seems that reading has expanded as a means to escape, to take off on an adventure, and to provide a treasure, a source of comfort for many during these past months. The following book discussion participants want to extend an invitation to those who like to read and are anxious to share their thoughts. Contact Susan for further information. (swautelet@aol.com)

BAD GIRLS: In March this group will begin a new study and will only be meeting ONCE a month, at 11 am, on the second Tuesday of the month. The new book is entitled Flunking Sainthood by Jana Riess. However, we will finish up the study of "Fierce" on February 9.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2021 Mary Mag-

dala

TUESDAY, MARCH 9, 2021: FLUNKING SAINTHOOD

BLESSED BOOKIES: Once again, books offer a means to escape, dream, sympathize, laugh, and come together.



MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22: 5:30 Rain-water

MONDAY, MARCH 22: 5:30 To Kill a Mockingbird

Again, we want to extend heartfelt thanks to Pastor Toni, Kathy, Jeff, Tom, Cindy, Bri-

an, Kay, Sarah, Ralph, Katie, Donna, our trio of singers and all those who make it possible for us to worship on Sunday mornings. Our online presence continues to grow, so we are reaching many who would be unable or unwilling to attend in person service. We are reminded that the technology that we used to complain about now enables us to maintain contact with those we hold dear.

Once again, thank you for spreading love, and remember....

God is good....all the time!

God bless you all.

The Outreach and Support Committee

Susan Wautelet, Carol Beiter, Norma Booker, Betty Kay Eley, Cindy Flagg, Ed Kelso, Bert Rans, Irma Slack, Sarah Smith, Genie Tobias, Beth Pinkerton, and Anthony Witt

Social Concerns submitted by Mary Kaufman

Your Social Concerns Committee is so grateful for the generosity you have shown for our Clothesline Project and your giving to-

ward agencies who help the needy of Plymouth in the past year. We hope you will continue to remember those who are



Marshall County
Neighborhood Center



not as fortunate as we are, who have what is called "food insecurity", which is a euphemism for not hav-

ing enough to eat, and those who don't have enough income to pay rent and utilities. These are areas that Link to Hope, The Neighborhood Center, and Bread of Life assist with and whom we support with your contributions each month. Even as we look forward to the COVID-19 lessening, its effects on our community are still devastating to many people who are our neighbors. Please continue to give what you can to Social Concerns. By your giving to others, we show our church's mission extends beyond our walls to serve God by serving others. Thank you!



ASK News

Well Hello Friends,

As we have jumped into 2021, I am encouraged by what I am seeing. We are truly blessed at Adams Street Ministries. Since June of 2017 I have been the director and through 2020, I have witnessed amazing growth in our students who have been moved to attend virtually for ASK on a weekly basis. I have made the decision to move back to in person for two reasons: I miss seeing the students on a weekly basis in person and the kids' spiritual health is very important to me as well. The students also voted unanimously to return to in-person youth group. Please know I am taking the health and safety of every student very seriously. That is why we have put strict safety protocols in place. 2020 was a difficult year for our ministry with not being able to have the Blueberry Festival

Stomp, which is our main fundraiser of the year. Adams Street Ministries is struggling right now, but I believe with my heart that we will come out on the other side of this difficult season stronger than ever. I want to take a moment to thank your church for your generous support over the past few months. Our ministry truly appreciates it. We continue to pray for each and every church that is part of the Adams Street Network of Churches each Sunday. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

May Christ Continue to richly bless you,
Pastor Aaron Woodcox

Director of Student Ministries

(574) 780-6049

pastoraaronwalnutcob@gmail.com

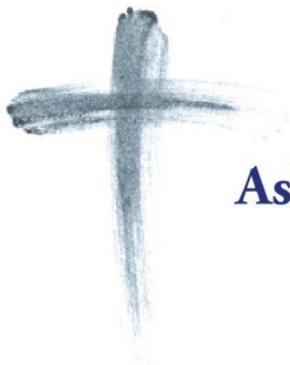
Update on the Sanctuary Building submitted by Brian Liechty

Although I know you can't "see" the progress, the process to get the insurance company to accept our claim continues. The public adjuster and legal team are constructing the arguments and collecting the proof to justify the validity of our claim to them. We've enlisted several technical resources, even testing the wood beams. The structural engineer has written a consolidating report of our journey and our lawyers are now talking directly with the insurance company lawyers about it. Our team feels that we have a strong position and is optimistic that we'll reach an agreement, though there is still no way to estimate of when that might happen.

In the meantime, Brent Kauffman has

spearheaded a journey of insight and discernment through the Moving Forward discussions. This groundwork will help us when the time comes to actually make decisions and begin taking physically visible steps in the future.

I appreciate your continued patience with this process—it's a learning experience for sure & taking longer than any of us imagined. We're in this together and rest assured that while we're exploring many different ideas, the groundwork we're doing is preparation to present you, the congregation, with the best options. No decisions have been made, and when the time is right to make those decisions, you will be part of them.



Ash Wednesday
— Lent Begins

Mary Probst would like to thank her church family for the many prayers and thoughts and cards the past few months! She wants her church family to know the prayers have worked and continue to do so! She loves and appreciates you all!!

Kathy Smitha would like to thank everyone for the cards, thoughts and prayers from the church family at FUMC following the death of her Dad, Ken Roush. It is truly appreciated!



Eagle Scout Speech submitted by Gabriel Duke Eagle received 10/27/2020

I would like to thank the Council for this honor, plus our troop charter, First United Methodist Church of Plymouth, for all the great support that they provide our troop.

I would like to thank Triton Community Schools, their Superintendent, Mr. Riffle and their past principal, Mr. Ross, for letting me do my project there and for all the help they gave me on the project, along with the scouts from Troop 251 for all their help.

I really need to thank my Mom and Dad for all the help and support they have given me over the years and especially my Mom for putting up with my Dad and myself for all the times we were gone doing scout events.

There are 3 people in our troop that I would really like to give special thanks to—Mr. Pedavoli, our charter rep for all the work he does making sure we as scouts are where we need to be in advancements and all the work he does putting everything in the system and making sure it's correct.

I would like to thank our assistant scout master, my Dad, for all the campouts, teaching and instruction he has given me. Then there is scout master, Mr. Mike Stephan, who we lost earlier this year. When I was going to write this I asked my Dad who were the great people of scouting and he said the people that are with you now, and I said no, I mean like Presidents, astronauts and things and he said those people are well known scouts be-

cause they became famous, but they are not the ones that got you to where you are today. He said the great scouters of my time are all the scout masters, asst. scout masters, charter reps, merit badge counselors, everyone that has led a first aid event, Klondike, Merit Badge clinics and training events because they are the ones that have helped me to where I am today and he is right. So, I would like to say thank you to all of you for the time that you invest in us to get us to Eagle.

Now for my scout master, Mr. Stephan. I got to see Mr. Stephan in a different way than other scouts did. He was my Dad's best friend. They spent a lot of time going over scouting things for our troop. He would call, come over to our house, or we would go to the park to figure things out. I got to see all the time and effort he put in for us and what it took to make the preparations for what we chose to do. He would meet with the troop every January and tell us to plan our year out, figure out when and where things will be and let him know. Once he knew, he made sure we were able to do what we planned.

I personally feel that Mr. Stephan and my Dad made the perfect team in scouting. One event that we did every year was lock-in which was our New Year's Eve party. The scouts would make the menu and activities we wanted to do all night, then Mr. Stephan would add his own twist to it. My Dad would say, "I'll get the pizza"

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Eagle Scout Speech submitted by Gabriel Duke *continued*

(Continued from page 10)

and Mr. Stephan would say, "I'll get the Wasabi." Mr. Stephan would say Monte Python for the movies; my Dad would say Texas Chainsaw Massacre. Mr. Stephan would then say we don't want to give the scouts nightmares and my Dad would say why not—they do us sometimes and then they both would laugh. But with Mr. Stephan it was all about the troop. He had us run our meetings, do our own training and had us make sure that the new scouts were on track for advancement. He made us the teachers. When I would ask my Dad things about scouting, he would say "Talk to Mr.

Stephan—he is the Scout Master" so I would. But I didn't realize until Mr. Stephan was gone why my Dad did that. I was able to learn and grow in a way from talking to Mr. Stephan that I would not have learned from my Dad. I realize how amazing Mr. Stephan was—he was my Scout Master, my teacher, my counselor, my mentor, my guide but most of all my friend and he is the reason that I am able to be an Eagle Scout and receive the Eagle Scout Project of the year. So, I would like to accept this on behalf of Mr. Stephan, the Greatest Scouter of my time.

Thank you,
Gabriel Duke

February 2021



First United Methodist Church

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 10 am Knit 2, Pray 3 7 pm Missions ZOOM	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 11 am Bad Girls	10	11	12 2-5 pm pick up "Lent in a Bag"	13 9-12 am pick up "Lent in a Bag"
14 Transfigura- tion Sunday <i>Happy Valentine's Day</i>	15	16 6 pm Finance	17  ASH WEDNESDAY	18	19	20
21 1st Sunday of Lent	22 5:30 pm Blessed Bookies 7 pm Youth & Ed	23 5:30 pm Trustees 6:30 pm Bible Study (ZOOM)	24 7 pm Moving For- ward meeting in Fellowship Hall	25	26	27
28 2nd Sunday of Lent	ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE			BIBLE STUDY		
	Live Streamed on Facebook		Please join us for worship as we		Following Ash Wednesday service	
	Wednesday, February 17 at 6 p.m.		enter the season of Lent.		2/17 and on Tuesday, 2/23, join us at 6:30 pm on Zoom.	

Love God ~ Love Others ~ Serve Others

Lent In A Bag

Bags are being prepared for each family in our congregation to help focus your thoughts throughout the Lenten Season.

Please pick-up your bag in the south foyer:

Friday, 2/12 between 2 & 5 p.m. or

Sat., 2/13 between 9 & noon

LENT begins on Ash Wednesday, 2/17.

Included in your bag will be instructions and items to be used each week during Lent, and a Lenten Devotional. Families with children will have something for them in their bags. There might be a surprise or two as well!

The bags are being prepared by Out-

reach and Worship Commission.

If you cannot pick-up your bag during one of the times,

please contact the church office.

Worship Commission



Ash Wednesday Service
Live Streamed on Facebook
Wednesday, February 17 at 6 p.m.
Please join us for worship as we
enter the season of Lent.

Preaching Plan for February *continued*

(Continued from page 14)

ters, traveled all over the Roman Empire preaching about Jesus and starting new churches. He faced constant rejection and persecution and danger. But he didn't care if no one was cheering him on. He was playing for God's applause, and no one else.

February 14

Transfiguration Sunday

Scouting Sunday

Text: Mark 9:2-9

Title: Listen to him!

Theme: Jesus takes Peter, James and John to the top of a very high mountain where they see him transformed before them. They're amazed by what they see, and uncertain how to respond. Then they hear a voice from out of a cloud say, "This is my Son, whom I dearly love. Listen to him!" There's so much that we don't understand about God, about faith, and about life. Perhaps our best bet is to simply listen to what Jesus has to tell us. Maybe that will give us what we need to carry on.

February 17

Ash Wednesday

Text: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Title: A Humble Approach

Theme: On this day when it has been our practice to receive ashes on our foreheads as a sign of our mortality, that it is from dust that we come, and to dust that we will return, perhaps—instead of receiving ashes on our foreheads—we can simply and quietly receive the assurance that God sees us, God knows us,

and God receives us, as we are and where we are. In doing this we can enter this season of preparation with a quiet joy knowing where our treasure is ultimately found.

February 21

1st Sunday in Lent

Text: Mark 1:9-15

Title: In You I Find Happiness

Theme: Mark's gospel takes from the baptism of Jesus by John in the river Jordan, into the wilderness for 40 days where the angels take care of him, and then back into Galilee where he announces God's good news, calling people to change their hearts and minds and to believe the good news. The Spirit settles upon Jesus and God expresses pleasure in what Jesus has done—then boots him into the wilderness before sending him out to preach and teach. Have you experienced wilderness moments? Have those moments helped to clarify who you are and what you seek to accomplish? What strengthens you in your journey?

February 28

2nd Sunday in Lent

Text: Mark 8:31-38

Title: Thinking God's Thoughts

Theme: Peter was honest, which led to his being sternly corrected by Jesus. Denying yourself. Losing yourself. Taking up your cross. It seems that being a disciple of Jesus could be dangerous to one's health. His first followers are shocked at what Jesus has to say. We know the rest of the story! How far are we willing to follow Jesus?

First United Methodist
Church

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Love God ~ Love Others ~
Serve Others



Sunday Service on
Facebook, live
streamed at 10:30 am

Preaching Plan for February

February 7

5th Sunday after the Epiphany

Communion Sunday

Mike Dixon preaching

Text: 1 Corinthians 9:1-27

Title: The Great Motivator

Theme: What motivates you to do what you do?

The national economic shutdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic forced most of the world to hit "Pause" on our work and our social activities and our plans for the future. Businesses shut down overnight. Churches closed their doors. Weddings and funerals and graduations were postponed, or significantly altered. Hanging out with family and

friends was off-limits. Many people found themselves with a lot of time on their hands. Everyone, from governments, to corporations, to hospitals, to schools, to churches, to individuals, began questioning why they do what they do.

What is it that motivates you to get out of bed every morning? What is the underlying motivation for your work? Your relationships? Your hobbies? How you choose to spend your time and your money?

Paul, the man who wrote this passage and about 2/3 of the New Testament let-
(Continued on page 13)