



FIRST PROTESTANT CHURCH OF NEW BRAUNFELS CONNECTION

Where everybody is somebody, and Jesus Christ is Lord

Summer 2016

Global Focus

by Rev. Phil Brown

Ever since Good Friday 1845, when the founding members of First Protestant Church gathered with Rev. Ervendberg to worship in the grove of elm trees for the very first time, New Braunfels has been an outpost for the gospel of Jesus Christ in the hill country of Texas. Our heritage is rich with examples of our members engaging in loving, Holy Spirit inspired, Christ-centered gospel ministry both across the street and around the world. Our ancestors lived out the truth of Jesus' promise:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. – Acts 1:8 (NIV)

The world has changed dramatically since 1845 – in both good and bad ways. Advances in media, travel and technology (among other things) have made it both easier and harder for modern Christians to live out Jesus' promise today.

In order to give this generation of our members every available tool, resource and opportunity to be “witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth,” the pastors and staff, in cooperation with the FPC Council and Missions Committee, have recently formalized a consulting partnership with Global Focus, a para-church organization that works with local churches all over the world to accomplish these three goals:

1. Embrace God's heart for the lost (at home and around the world)
2. Unite the congregation in reaching out with good news to those who need Christ
3. Mobilize their members to fulfill Jesus' Great Commission and Acts 1:8

Over the next 12-18 months, Global Focus will be coaching First Protestant Church through a process that will give us the chance to see and understand God's will more clearly, and discover our own place in that plan. As a whole, this process will allow us the opportunity to align each of our ministries and priorities around those three goals, so that we can maximize our effectiveness in bearing fruit for God's kingdom.

The starting point for this process is Saturday, September 10, 2016. On this day, the president and CEO of Global Focus, Rev. Don Turner, will be presenting an all-day seminar in Schumann Hall that will introduce and initiate this process. The pastors and staff have already attended this seminar, and we encourage every member and friend of First Protestant Church to attend this important and potentially life-changing discussion.

It is vitally important that you plan to attend, ask questions and begin to engage this absolutely essential material that we pray will energize and revitalize our congregation to live out Acts 1:8 as our ancestors have. The seminar will begin at 9:00am and wrap up at 4:00pm. Lunch, snacks and all the necessary materials will be provided at no cost.

Please reserve the date and plan to join us! If you have any questions about Global Focus or about our partnership with them, please feel free to visit their website at www.globalfocus.info or speak to any of the pastors – we'd be more than happy to tell you all about it!





FIRST PROTESTANT CHURCH OF NEW BRAUNFELS

172 West Coll Street
New Braunfels, Texas 78130
Church Office (830) 609-7729
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Church Office Hours:
Monday - Thursday 9-12 & 1-4, Friday 9-12 & 1-3
Where Everybody is Somebody, and Jesus Christ is Lord

Please enjoy your newsletter in full color online at firstprotestant.com.

Our Newest Members

June 2016



Gerald "Jerry" & Nell Everett

903 Enclave TRL, NB 78132-- 210-364-0142

Jerry is a retired IBM Computer Consultant, likes to read, write books, edits books like electronics, traveling and model airplanes. "He is a mechanic and gunsmith and worked for the Texas Border Patrol and also does calligraphy as a hobby.. Nell has been married to Jerry for 25 years. They have 6 children and 12 grandchildren (11 boys and 1 girl) Nell volunteers for the Canyon Lake Republican Association, Pilot Club, New Life Organization, Casa and Wings, likes to play bridge and does beaded jewelry.



Robert "Rob" & Sandy Smith

215 Bobolink, NB. 78130 - 830-337-0099

Rob grew up in military family and traveled all over the world, attending many churches. His family is very Pro-American and Patriotic. He is a professional architect and certified building designer. Sandy was born in Houston and grew up in Austin. They have 2 boys and 6 grandchildren. She is a certified Medical Assistant and is studying to become a medical billing coder.



Allen and Robin Herrington

667 Mission Hill Run, NB 78130 806-438-6323

Allen grew up in San Angelo, operated and owned a chain of Dry Cleaning businesses. He worked the last 20 years as a correctional officer for the State of Texas. Today he is enjoying retirement as a Carrier Driver. He also sings and plays handbells. Robin grew up in small town south of Lubbock and taught elementary school for 33 years. She is retired now and babysits their grandchild.



Roy & Sharon Weideman

2453 Ibis Avenue, NB 78130 830-302-0495

Roy is a retired cardiologist, worked for a pharmaceutical corp. and did research. He also started an education text book company. His hobbies are ski patrol, sky diving and rock climbing. He has a deep appreciation for his gifts that God has blessed him with. He and Sharon have 4 children and 11 grandchildren (10 boys and 1 girl) They are from Lake Forest. She has been a professional musician since she was 9 years old, working with recognizable celebrities such as Ray Charles. She and Roy were involved in the Stephens Ministry for 18 years. She has been a business owner, still teaching music, writes poetry and is a great quilter.

El Shaddai: He is God of the Mountains

by Sue Saur



Our phones had already lost connectivity as we rambled over and through the hills, our renovated 2004 Sunnybrook camper bouncing in tow behind us. It was just “us” and “the mountains” for the next three days. We were off to Lost Maples, to see—well, the lost maples--the seemingly only trees in Texas to display the lovely fall foliage we Texas natives long to experience. We made our reservations months ago, carefully calculating the prime days to book our trip; the days with the least people and most orange leaves, that precise piece of time that promises to transport us straight to Autumn in Vermont, if only in spirit. Turns out, all precision aside, this fall we would have to drive to Vermont to see maples change color. Seems nature was not cooperating with our best laid plans and unbeknownst to us, the only tree to offer ANY orange leaves was aptly named “Old Faithful,” a tree available for viewing in the day park, not requiring even one step up the mountainside to enjoy...

Still, fueled by grapes, cheese cubes, and anticipation, we pressed on. We climbed that “mountain” in the comfortable silence of a confident marriage, interrupted occasionally to share a comment or a view. It was a

perfectly lovely day for a hike; the air was crisp, the breeze was refreshing, and the sun shone across a cloudless sky. A creek meandered down the same hill we ascended; the trickling water playfully, fearlessly, splashing and dancing on its way.

Our arrival at the summit revealed the expanse of the valley in all its rugged beauty, albeit, no orange. We stood somber at the edge of the cliff and breathed it in. Overwhelmed by the enormity and wonder of it all; we felt small. But the truth is, we do not go to the mountains to feel grand. We go to the mountains to feel His grandeur; to feel His wonder. To feel close to the God who designed each cliff and rock and perfectly green leaf. We go to be replenished, renewed, and refilled of everything that gets worn away in the hustle of the everyday.

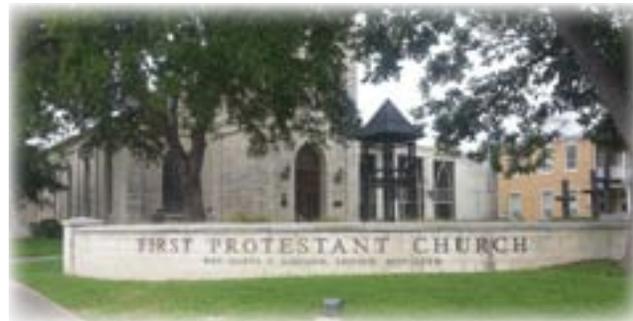
Do you yearn for that mountaintop experience? Do you yearn for a closer walk with the God we worship? Do you need to be refilled and renewed?

The 2016 FPC Women's Retreat is October 21-23 at Mo-Ranch. Plan to join us. Hurry, there are only 24 slots available. Deposits (\$50) are due by August 12. Contact me (Sue) or Paula Molz for details and to reserve your spot.

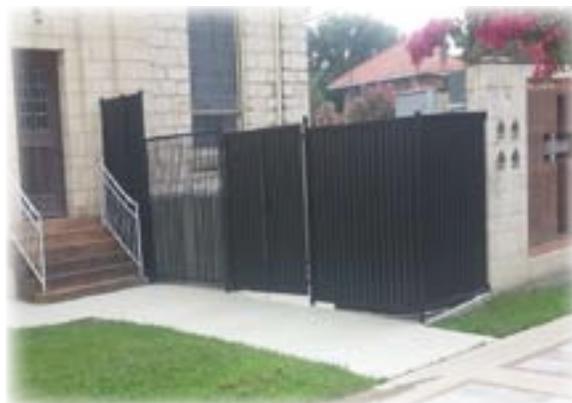
Building Walls but not Barriers

by Jerald Schroeder

We at First Protestant Church have walls that help define our footprint in the downtown area. Our Seguin Street walls serve as a gateway to our campus, ministries and mission. They welcome our visitors and identify who we are in the community.



Last year we recognized Ruth Fischer for her generosity when she paid for a new enclosure to fulfill her vision for the area behind the Sanctuary. This area is referred to as our Heritage Wall and displays the crosses made from the logs of the original church structure and the pavers of our founding families. As the area is seen from the street our driveway and in the exiting of our school and office complex, it was Ruth's desire to have an old wood fence replaced by one with a style that resembled existing railings around our campus and provided a much needed barrier to hide the mechanical equipment located within.



In keeping with her desire to help First Protestant maintain its presence and appearance in the downtown area, she came on board as the benefactor of the new gateway wall on the corner of Coll and Castell streets as part of our parking lot expansion project. This wall, that also displays our name, was built to match the



Seguin Street walls and helps to further define our campus and act as a welcome to members and visitors alike.

We want to thank Ruth for her continued support and her loving and generous response to the needs of our campus improvements. She is truly a blessing to First Protestant inside our walls and a greater blessing to the community outside of them.

When you approach our campus I hope you don't feel our walls are a barrier but rather consider them open arms, welcoming you to the heart of our church family and to a relationship with our Lord, Jesus Christ. Might they also prompt our members to live out the great commission as they travel beyond our gates.



He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.
Mark 16:15



Unintended Lessons

I have a quick question. How important is the Church to you? No, this is not a trick question, but a serious inquiry. Pastor Daryl had the staff read a book about the decline in the Evangelical church, and it got my attention. So after prayer, some study of surveys and other research, and a look at my own upbringing, I came to an answer I did not like. Too many Christians in America do not think the church is important. If your child is in sports, you have them practice every day. You make sure they do their home fitness exercises, they have the equipment they need, and that they never miss a practice. My son is in the marching band, so for the last few weeks he has gone to marching practice every morning. He's also told to practice the instrument each night.

When he said he was too tired to go one morning, his mother and I explained that it was not an option. If he wanted to play, he had to do his part as with schoolwork and a job...

Carl Trueman, Christian theologian, church historian, and Professor of Historical Theology and Church History at Westminster Theological Seminary, was asked about why churches today are losing their young people. Typical answers to this question range from things like the temptations of this world or the irrelevance of the church—your typical answers. But Trueman makes a keen and convicting connection about parenting and the church.

"The church is losing its young people because the parents never taught their children that it was important. I think that applies across the board. It applies to family worship, and it also applies to whether you are in church every Sunday and what priority you demonstrate to your children church has on a Sunday. If the sun shines out and their friends are going to the beach, do you decide to skip church and go to the beach? In which case, you send signals to your children that it is not important."

That quote hit hard. Parents make choices all the time for their families. As they decide on what takes priority in the family, every choice is carefully observed and taken into the heart of their children. Yes, they are watching you, and they are learning from you.

Maybe the reason why so many fall away is due to the fact that we, as parents, do not show any love or passion for Christ, as evidenced by how we prioritize our time both on Sundays and during the week. When television, sports, school, hobbies even family itself, are elevated to be more important than time worshiping God, reading His scriptures, time in prayer, replacing the vital Christian responsibilities, then we tell our children that Christ is secondary to all these things. We unintentionally tell our children that it is not necessary to take up your cross and die to yourself daily in order to follow Christ. We tell them that you only have to live for Christ when it's convenient for you. We tell them it is okay to sacrifice time with an all-satisfying Savior if something "more fun" or "more important" comes along. Remember the definition of idolatry is elevating anything above God.

Don't think this is true? My son's band has a boosters group. So many parents donate their time doing fundraising, concessions, and prep work. My son is not even registered, and I have been asked to volunteer, and to buy a pass for the family for all the games. I want to show my son he is important, so I buy the pass, and am looking at what I can do to help. Most of the parents do the same. Yet, we are in desperate need of nursery workers, kids' church workers, and a teacher for the 2nd and 3rd grade Sunday school.

Let's evaluate where our hearts are by observing our choices. Do you prioritize the local church? Do you prioritize the worship of Christ in your home and on Sundays? Do you prioritize serving Him and worshipping Him in the contexts of school and work? This doesn't mean that you can't ever miss a Sunday, take a vacation, or that you can't have any extracurricular activities. Instead, it is a sobering reminder that we shouldn't put the things of God at the bottom of the priority list, because it tells our children that Christ is at the bottom of our priority list. And the God of this universe does not belong there.

As always thank you for the honor of being your Children's Pastor.
Darin "Mr. Suspenderman" Roberts

Summer Sizzle 2016



Women's Ministries

by Alice Boettger

The Alabaster Box was the theme for this year's "Ladies Retreat and Spring Luncheon".

The Goal this year was to raise enough money to give the proceeds to local Senior Citizens in need. I am happy to announce that because of all of you who supported us and to those who bought tickets to the Spring Retreat, we were able to meet our goal and even exceed it!

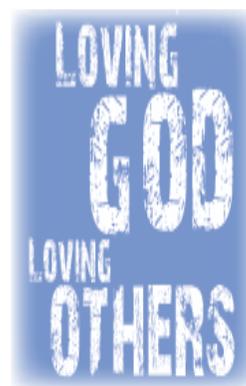
The Women's Ministries were able to buy a few ladies and gentlemen some much needed necessities and give each of them a gift card.



Check out the pictures of some of the folks that we delivered the gifts to. Each person was so happy and appreciative of the gifts.

* If you know a Senior Citizen that has a special need and you think we might be able to help out, please contact any of the WM ladies.

On behalf of all the Women's Ministries, I would like to personally thank you for all your support. We promise, that when you support Women's Ministries, we will always seek God's guidance and use the gifts carefully.





SAVE THE DATE:
Saturday - December 3, 2016
Church Wide Christmas Party
Schumann Hall
4:00 Pm to 6:00 PM
Sponsored by the Women's Ministries.



The Book that Made Your World: How the Bible Created the Soul of Western Civilization

An Introduction. By Rev. Chuck

Vishal Mangalwadi is an Indian Christian who both appreciates and sharply critiques Western Christianity. On the one hand he is profoundly grateful for India's Christian heritage. One might call him a direct intellectual descendant of the British Baptist missionary William Carey. Carey - whose biography Mangalwadi published years ago - has served as the criterion by which the Indian thinker has evaluated the progress of both his nation and the Christian mission as it proceeds throughout his land. Mangalwadi's gratitude, however, does not keep him from sharply critiquing the worldwide Christian movement today.

Mangalwadi is a rare man who has an intimate knowledge of both the Ashram (a place of religious - usually Hindu- retreat) and the Academy (a largely western phenomenon transplanted to India). He is well versed in modern theology, philosophy, and the arts. Yet he is also a minister in a movement that has seen 100,000 Hindus baptized into Christ, along with documented divine healings of Christian and non-Christian alike. He is a theorist as well as a practitioner in the proclamation and the application of the Gospel to the modern world, especially India.

This book is Mangalwadi's latest. He wonders why Western Christians have forgotten the book that "created" our world. That's a fair question indeed! Why have we forgotten the Bible? Why do we not read, cherish, and follow it?

The following articles reflect the reactions of First Protestant members to selected segments of the book. They were not asked to agree, necessarily, but to interact and so they have! May God bless your reading of His Word.

May these articles remind us how crucial His Word is to all that we know and love in the West. Thank you Rev. Mangalwadi for your work!

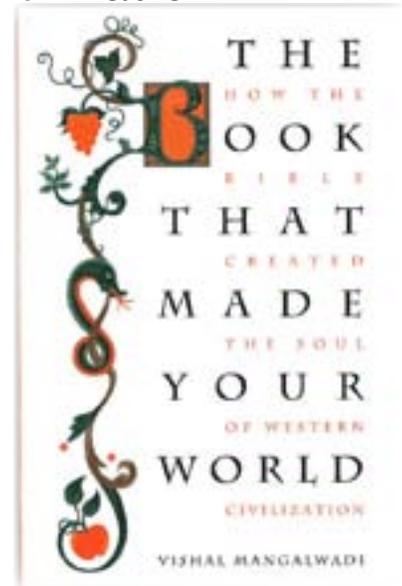
A copy will be available in the First Protestant library should you wish to read it!

Sue Saur summarizes some of the key elements Mangalwadi's argument as someone whose background is Hindu. In the West we see "Americanized" versions of these religions which are often adapted to Western Tastes. In India however, Mangalwadi confront the "genuine article" which is sharply distinguished from Christianity. What one calls "mercy" the other sees as an act consigning others to further torment. Which seems best to you as you read this?

The title is a mouthful; the style of writing as formal as the author's heritage would require. Just the size of the book is a bit daunting; he is nothing if not thorough. That being said, once I got into the rhythm of the book, I found myself unable to lay it down.

Mangalwadi divides the book into seven parts, each addressing a different aspect of our history, and how the ideas basic to Christianity shaped Europe and the Americas. He discusses how the Bible, and its believers shaped technology, literature, university education, and science, to name but a few. He was raised in India, in the Hindu faith. A faith that prizes emptying the mind as the pathway to enlightenment, whereas Christian Protestants, and modern Catholicism encourages our contemplation of God's Word; to think and to reason. Our faith implores us to seek ways to relieve the suffering of this world, while the Hindu and Buddhist faiths explain suffering as due penance for sin in this or a former life. (They explain that relieving suffering in fact extends it for the person, so it is showing mercy to not intervene.) This hope for a better future in this life, he suggests, spurred Christians to create technology in the areas of agriculture and medicine that allowed our civilizations to advance. One such example stood out to me, the water pump. The technology was available to Eastern civilizations before the West, the water wheel-powered by water, could generate the power (eventually electricity) -that could bring this same water to every household in the city. And yet, millions of women in these countries still spend their days, most if not all, carrying water, bucket by bucket back to their homes, on their heads. The result, they don't have enough water to clean themselves, their children, their food, or homes. And they certainly don't have much time for any other task. Disease is prevalent. Their children die young from easily preventable diseases. The Hindu answer is the caste system. Through this, they are fulfilling their dharma. They were born to be water haulers. What else would they do with their days?

Eye glasses, braille, the printing press, wheelbarrows and harvesting equipment, just a few of the examples he discusses. Fruits of Christians, created to reduce suffering; to improve life. A mindset, he says, we developed because our civilization was blanketed in God's word.



I encourage you to explore this book, including his warning in the last chapters on the influence of eastern thinking on the future of our country, and all of western civilization. A thought provoking read.

As a Bible Translator, Dr. Don Burquest reacts to Mangalwadi's call for translation of the Bible in the local language ("vernacular"). For Mangalwadi, this process of Bible translation always produces a similar outcome of appropriate Christian nationalism. As Dr. Burquest notes, that may not always be the case...

As indicated by the title, this book sets forth the thesis that the Bible is the source of Western civilization. Many varied topics are covered in this volume; in this brief review I limit my comments to Part V: The Intellectual Revolution, and particularly the discussion of language (chapter 10).

M argues that it is the recognition and validation of local vernaculars that has produced nationalism throughout the world, and that this validation has come about because of the work of Christian missionaries, and particularly their translation of the Bible into these languages. When the Bible is available for local communities to read and study in their own language, the local population is freed from dependence upon interpretation of the Bible given to them by ecclesiastical and political leaders. The teaching of the Bible, in turn, gives rise to what M refers to as "biblical patriotism": "loving one's people and land [is] a reflection of God's loving heart for his people" (p. 173). M portrays the teaching of the Bible regarding nationalism as this: God promised Abraham to make from him, a great nation, thus establishing the notion of nationhood. God promised Abraham also that all nations of the earth would be blessed through him, thus establishing the idea that nations have international mission and responsibility; throughout the scriptures prophets exhort people to be self-critical, sensitive to the need for repentance as needed, thus endorsing patriotic responsibility.

Of course, translation of the Bible into local languages necessarily requires the development of writing systems for those languages, and literacy. This allows the possibility for additional literature beyond the Bible to be translated into those languages, and thus the availability of extensive information pertaining to matters beyond the local community. This in turn allows the speakers of these local vernaculars to participate in government debates at all levels, and (M says, p. 164) opens the door to free-market economy. In addition, the existence of a functioning orthography allows original literature to be written in the local languages, giving voice to that form of artistic expression. In summary, "The Bible teaches that the Creator gave us the gift of language because he loved us. Love includes communication, and the communication of great ideas requires great language" (p. 170, emphasis included in the text). 'Great language' results when vernaculars are elevated in status in this way.

One can hardly argue with the claim that developing an orthography for a language and translating the Bible into that language endows its speakers with pride and respect. And it cannot be doubted either that having a functioning orthography opens the door to wider knowledge of the world. Literacy in local languages can be a springboard to literacy in a national language and often serves precisely that function. There is at times a tension, however, between the "nationhood" of the local vernacular community, and the "nationhood" of the political nation within which the local vernacular is spoken. For example, European Colonialism in Africa resulted in borders that at times arbitrarily split local communities, so that today along the borders between Nigeria (a former English colony and thus having English heritage) and Cameroon and Niger and Chad and Benin (all former French colonies and thus having French heritage), often speakers of the same local language are found on both sides of the border. Thus, although they speak the same (local) language, they do not have shared political nationality. Speakers on either side of the border may even have different orthographies because of the influence of the English vs. French orthographic tradition. As speakers of these languages acquire the national language of English or French, they may indeed become more incorporated into the larger nation, but their own cultural unity is threatened by this fragmentation. A more graphic example perhaps is that of Hindi and Urdu. These two languages both developed from Hindustani (as M points out), and being mutually intelligible, they meet the foundational criterion linguists propose for being the same language. However, they are spoken in different countries (Hindi in India and Urdu in Pakistan); speakers of the two languages follow different religions (Hindu by Hindi-speakers, Islam by Urdu-speakers); and the languages follow different orthographic traditions (Hindi is written in Devanagari, a descendant of Sanskrit, while Urdu is written using a script based upon Arabic).

Thus, although literacy and translation into a local language may provide the foundation for nationalism, in cases like these that nationalism may carry with it the cost of fragmented cultural identity on the local level. This does not diminish the significance of the impact of having the Bible in one's own language—the contributions that accrue as a result of the recognition and promotion of local languages are every bit as significant as M proposes—but tying this contribution to nationalism as generally understood must be evaluated against the backdrop of potential loss of some local cultural unity. Historically it has been the Bible that is translated into languages around the world, and so it is that it is the message of the Bible and the accompanying work, in developing an orthography and establishing literacy in the various languages, that has had the impact M cites, making not only our own Western world, but enhancing the world of these local languages as well.



Hello First Protestant Church Family,

As most people's schedules become a little less busy, Merge Youth Ministries schedule ramps up for the summer. We have been doing some great things and God has been transforming our hearts and minds to further the kingdom of God.

In our Sunday school ministry, we finished up our series on "How To Deepen Your Relationship With God." We studied ten principles on what it looks like to have a relationship with our Creator. For the summer, we have been studying "Superheroes." Most of the time, an outside source intervenes in that superhero's life and then they get their power. But God intervenes in our lives to give us the super power of the Holy Spirit. We are learning that God has created each of us to do a job within the body of Christ. We also had our quarterly mobile Sunday school, which is a time where we go offsite to a coffee shop for fellowship.

May is our wrap-up month for our youth group before we start our summer ministry. The youth went out to Landa Park and serviced them by moving large retaining bricks and picking moss balls out of the trees. They worked so hard and fast that we went to Sonic for slushies afterwards. Landa Park is one of my favorite places this time of the year, to get off campus, have a cookout, and fellowship. It was a beautiful night to be out at the park. During the year, for every youth group night, we have dinner. I want to thank all the parents that pitched in to prep, make, and serve dinner to our youth. Dinner is a time for our youth to continue to build relationships and catch up on life with both each other and the leaders. At our last youth group night, we honored our adult leaders who have served our youth all year by making them dinner, thanking them, and hanging out with them for the evening. My leaders play an important roll in this ministry. My desire for all my leaders is to have a heart for God, which means loving our youth and being united and equipped to do just that. Each month, my leaders do a short training, giving them a different aspect of how to be better leaders.

Extra, Extra, Read all about it! If you missed us in the paper, a picture of our youth was displayed for the SOS Food Bank. We took a shift on collection day and helped by collecting, weighing, and stacking food during the collection back in May. Our youth did an excellent job serving.

Graduation Sunday is a time we present all graduates from high school to a doctorate degree. We had a good turnout for breakfast and a short ceremony for all our graduates before the 10:30am services. Congrats to their accomplishments as well as blessings to their next phase in life.

The youth mission trip is a huge highlight of the year for many of our youth. This year we traveled to Powderhorn, Colorado to build, strengthen, and mature in our faith. We had a few prep meetings to discuss details and went to Enchanted Rock to prep for our hike in Colorado. We went with the organization Sky Ranch (Ute Trail location) and were very pleased with an atmosphere where we could be united as a group. We had our luncheon right when we got back to share how God worked in our lives and our experiences during the week. Thank you for your prayers and contributions to help make these trips a success year to year.

This summer we modified Wacky Wednesdays to JAM Sessions (Jesus and Me Sessions). JAM Sessions are events during the summer to have a lot of fun and also spend some time with God. Our topic for this summer was called "Grey". We have been talking about the grey areas of life that the Bible doesn't really mention or is not specific on in life. The fun things we have been doing this summer are: movie night, service project at St. Jude's Ranch, swimming and bonfire, and visiting the Empty Cross in Kerrville.

Pastor Darin and I have been working together this summer for a few events. The Merge Youth were a great help in assisting with VBS. We also had family game night a few times this summer. On one of our outings we had a Frisbee Hotdog Handout at Prince Solms Park where we gave out a free Frisbee with our church logo and some info on the inside. On the Frisbee, we gave each person a hotdog, water, and bag of chips. It went well and was a great experience for the students to share the light of Christ.

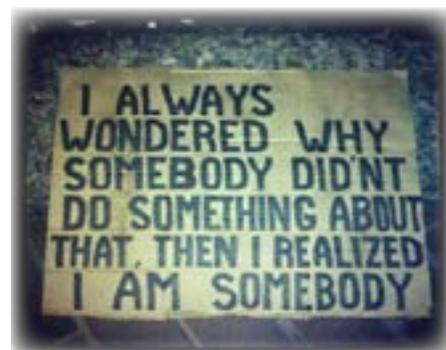
The youth had their annual Coast Trip to Port Aransas back in June. We had a great time making food for each other, swimming, going to town to shop, and playing games. On the second night we were there, we had a really great discussion on theology and many of our youth had great questions. This group of youth really enjoy being with each other.

Our Junior High students went to camp this summer! Aug. 4-9th were at Camp Eagle in Rocksprings. We were excited to have fun and enjoy time studying God's word together.

My wife, Janessa, and I have decided to host the youth at our house for dinner a few times this summer. This time together is unstructured and has been a great time to talk, play some games, and be with each other. Each time has been very successful and we have enjoyed our time together.

The youth have had a very busy summer, but being together has brought us closer together. I am very excited to watch God continue to move in the lives of our youth. Our God is truly providing for Merge Youth Ministries and we also want to thank you for the support that you give to this ministry. May God continue to guide us as we further the kingdom together.

Your Brother in Christ,
Pastor Chris Savage



The Importance of Prayer for Healing **by Rev. Chuck Huckaby**

Note: I found this research on prayer in a book recently. This is being reprinted here to encourage our nightly intercessory prayer. This was seen earlier on the Prayer Chain email list. To join the Email Prayer List simply email Rev. Chuck, chuck@firstprotestant.com. Thank you for your prayers! They are vitally important!



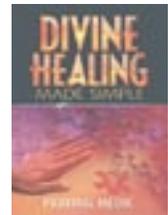
In 1988, Randolph Byrd shocked the world with the results of a study he had conducted five years earlier on the effects of prayer on cardiac patients. Byrd studied 393 patients admitted to a coronary care unit in a San Francisco hospital. The patients were “statistically inseparable,” meaning their conditions and symptoms were all similar. Patients were randomly assigned to one of two groups –those who received intercessory prayer and those who didn’t. Neither the doctor nor the patients knew who was in which group. Byrd gave the first name, diagnosis and condition of patients in the prayer group to different groups of three or four active Christians from several denominations. These groups prayed for their patient daily throughout the patient’s stay, away from the hospital, without meeting the patient. They prayed for a timely, easy recovery and one free from complications. When the study concluded, Byrd found that there was indeed a significant difference in the quality of recovery among patients who received prayer: The prayer group fared better on average than their fellow patients who did not receive prayer. Almost 85 % of the prayer group scored “good” on the rating system used by hospitals to rate a patient’s response to treatment. They were less likely to have a heart attack, need antibiotics or require interventions like ventilation or intubation. By contrast, only 73.1% of members of the control group scored “good.”

Research on prayer has nearly doubled in the past ten years, says David Larson, MD, MSPH, president of the National Institute for Healthcare Research, a private nonprofit agency. Even the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which refused to review a study with the word “prayer” in it four years ago, is now funding one prayer study through its Frontier Medicine Initiative.

A survey conducted in the year 2000 evaluated scores of studies on the power of prayer and other types of distant healing. The researchers found 23 studies that featured high-quality methodologies (the steps used in experiments to measure results and control for external influences) Of these studies, 57% found significant results supporting distant prayer’s positive impact on health.

Larry Dossey, M.D. wrote a book titled "Healing Words" in which he discusses many clinical trials that have been done on healing, concluding that supernatural healing is indeed a clinically observable phenomenon.

Excerpted from "Divine Healing Made Simple" by "Praying Medic" at Amazon: <http://amzn.to/2aHxrqb>



The SAY/OBEY/SHARE Challenge and the Future of our Church, Community, and Ourselves... By Rev. Chuck



The Friday morning after the Dallas, Texas police shootings our Mayor responded to constituent concerns and called the churches of our city to prayer. We gathered on the Plaza the following Monday with over 1000 residents to pray! Now what? It’s crucial not to let things return to “business as usual” and then allow more tragedies to happen, perhaps even closer to home!

One of the things our Mayor said was most necessary to recover in New Braunfels, was a vibrant faith that allowed our city to chart its own spiritual course instead of being co-opted and crushed by our surrounding post-Christian culture. So as not to get the Mayor in trouble, I’m using my own language, not his. I do believe that I’ve gotten the thrust of his concerns right. Will we be a community that leads others down a path of sanity and virtue, or will we be follow the destructive path others chart for us?

About that time, a friend challenged me to participate in the “Say/Obey/Share Challenge”. It struck me not only as a devotional practice I needed to return to myself, but as just the solution to our Mayor’s request!

The challenge is simple. I’ve mentioned it in some sermons recently. As you read the Bible (I suggest starting with the Gospel readings printed in our bulletin weekly) simply pause and reflect on a verse or two that stands out.

Ask yourself, what does God SAY to people TODAY?

Though some passages in the Bible are notoriously hard to interpret, most of the time we’ll be running across ones that are very easy to understand. If you run across a hard one though, your pastors are always happy to help you unravel it (if possible)!

The usual problem we run into comes with the next question:

Then ask, in light of what God says, how should I OBEY God's Word TODAY?

Usually it's the parts of the Bible that are SO EASY to understand that trouble us, isn't it? We know we are called to obey them! It can be hard to love, forgive, make disciples, and to bless instead of curse!

When you're overwhelmed, don't turn away from God's Word, instead take a "baby step". Ask "how can I obey this right now?" Then do it. Taking a baby step at a time in response to God's Word will over time, create a life of following Jesus and - as a result - become a life strengthened and blessed by Jesus that is able to withstand the spiritual battle we find ourselves in (see Luke 6:47-48 for Jesus' promise about this).

Usually when we're challenged with how to do something Jesus wants us to do, we end up praying too don't we? Though "pray" is not included in the picture above, we'll find ourselves praying more Biblical prayers as well. One thing you can say about Bible-based prayers is that these are prayers that ALWAYS GET ANSWERED YES!

The last step is to ask "Who can I SHARE this with TODAY?"

The Mayor reminded me that we need to not only have a strong and faithful community ourselves but bear witness to what we believe to other communities. They need it too.

But bearing witness is difficult isn't it? We're never quite sure what to say or how to say it.

Do you want to know a secret?

Usually it gets easier to talk to people about God or to ask to pray with people
IF WE PRACTICE.

So practice telling people what God has to SAY and how YOU plan to OBEY.

They'll be surprised for several reasons:

One, few people feel God has anything to say to them and they'll want to know how you have this "hotline" to God!

Two, nobody minds hearing about how we need to improve OURSELVES. They just get antsy when we start out talking about how THEY need to change first!

Still, if you haven't talked about your faith much before, it can still feel intimidating.

If that's the case for you, start sharing what you learn with someone safe... like a friend or loved one.

If that's too intimidating, please feel free to call or email me and share what you're finding. It will be a "safe place" to share what God is teaching you. Call 830-609-7729 ext 18 or email chuck@firstprotestant.com

If we care about our community, it ultimately means we care about people living the life Jesus died for them to live.

The best way to start serving them (or upgrade what we already do) is to engage in the SAY/OBEY/SHARE Challenge.

By joining in, we make sure we are following closely after Jesus Christ ourselves and reaching out to others from the perspective that we ourselves live as people who daily need to the love and strength of Jesus. As we share, we let them know HIS help is available freely to them as well!

Join the SAY/OBEY/SHARE Challenge! People need to know that they too can hear from God and be changed by His power!

COMING SOON!

**Don't forget, the early Traditional Service normally at 8:00 am, will be moving to 9:00 am beginning September 11th.*



*Global Focus Conference
Saturday, 9:00-4:00
Schumann Hall*

*Sunday
September 11, 2016
Combined Services:
in the Sanctuary
9:00 am & 10:30 am*



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