



The Compass

September-October
2020

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH—Portland, Indiana

Pastoral Perspectives... On Excellence... From the Start through the End...

In a quote attributed to William Arthur Ward, pastor Bill Teng once shared a thoughtful note of gratitude on the notion that tears “prepare our eyes for a clearer vision of God”. I understand and appropriate this to mean that, upon our countenance becoming awash with tears, our eyes are hence provided for a renewed clarity of insight concerning our perceptions and perspective of God. In the aftermath, we gain a keener sense of who God is, what God has in mind and is about doing, and what God has in store for us. Tears “prepare our eyes for a clearer vision of God.”

As I read this, again, the passage of Saul on the road toward Damascus when scales fell from his eyes in the process of changing to Paul comes to mind. I am reminded of a personal sense of cleansing that occurs when tears are shed through one’s eyes, flowing upon the face, moistening cheeks touched by the very healing power, gracious presence and tender mercies of God.

Toward the end of these summer months following major election year conventions amidst the current confluence of continuing crises, I am presently stilled in silent sober reflection. Soon after you might be reading this writing, up to six million cases and nearly two hundred thousand deaths may be attributed to COVID-19 in the U.S. One cannot help but collapse under weight of unseemly undue pressure and cry, out of suddenly subdued depths of sentiment in severe heightened empathy, for mercy over the plight of humanity.

As we approach the nineteenth anniversary of 9/11, I imagine sharing in, along with others in our nation and world, a subsequent salutary stream of solvent tears accumulating since through intervening years. While we may find ourselves from time to time encountering such humbling circumstances in and through situations of uncertainty in life, particularly over the past two decades into the third millennium, the Lord of heaven and earth continually carries and brings us to and through transforming moments by which we experience the very heart of grace whose tears fell down upon the garden’s ground at Gethsemane.

We are, dear ones, treasured and beloved children of God in Whose eyes we are forever eternally precious and by Whose hands, arms and shoulders we are always beheld and ever being carried forward with tender care. It is within this context and present, ongoing reality of God’s love for us that we are enabled and empowered to exhibit excellence by the grace and for the glory of God.

As the apostle Paul writes to the saints in Philippi, “whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” (Philippians 4:8) While many may experience the onslaught of terribly tragic tribulations, ever are we also presented opportunity to rise above situations in the circumstances of humanity to exercise valor and in humility display a depth of determination to persevere together in prayer.

Throughout the highs and lows of life in lives lived by faith, we are called and resolved to relieve one another in Christ toward the redemptive, reconciling purposes of the Lord. Under the sovereign grace of almighty God Whose banner over us is love that shields us, protects us, and covers a multitude of sins, we are set free in the way, the truth, and the life to glorify and enjoy God forever.

Therefore, as ones holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and above all put on love which binds all together in perfect unity. Let your light shine before others that they may truly witness and experience the glory and grace of God at work in and through you for the blessing of many in the Lord. From the very start, on to and through the end, may you exude excellence in the Lord alone Who gives you strength for the journey ahead.

Let tears “prepare our eyes for a clearer vision of God.” The One Who began a good work in us is faithful to complete it.

In Christ Jesus our Lord,

Pastor Rex

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SEASON OF PEACE BEGINS



Distractions are everywhere, threatening to pull us to the margins of living an authentic peace-filled Christian life. Important issues, breaking news, and our ragged pursuit of a more meaningful spiritual life all distract us. We are reminded of this every time we power up our computers, turn on the television, or struggle to handle conflicts in our families and communities in a way that will not alienate them or us. And we certainly experience it as we negotiate our own inner worlds of chaos and longing.

The journey of peace is a pilgrimage of our whole selves: spirit and body; heart, feet, and mind. The pursuit of God's peace is both an inner and outer journey where the well-being of one is held in the well-being of all. In order for us to walk farther along this road of peace-full living, we can and should engage both inner and outer aspects of faithful spiritual living. Doing so allows us to become more authentic and effective bearers of peace in our world.

Because of these reasons, we invite you into A Season of Peace that will engage your imagination and offer opportunities for you to live more fully into your calling as a peacemaker. It is for the curious and the jaded, the beginner and the experienced peace seeker. Spend an intentional "season" with Jesus, the peacemaker, and see if this might become your way of being authentically Christian in the world.

Spanning from Sept. 6 through Oct. 4, the season is a time for congregations to focus on what it means to be a peacemaking congregation and what it means to be people of peace, said Carl Horton, coordinator of the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program.

"I hope the Season of Peace is a chance for congregations, whether gathered or dispersed, to reflect on their identity and consider anew what they can do to promote peace in their communities and in our nation and in the world," he said.

A free daily devotional resource is new this year as part of the Season of Peace. The reflections focus on practicing peace within (Sept. 6-12); peace in relationships (Sept. 13-19); peace in community (Sept. 20-26) and wholistic peace (Sept. 27-Oct. 4). To subscribe to the daily devotional resource click the link or go to <https://pcusa.activehosted.com/f/178> and the daily reflections will be delivered directly to your inbox September 6 - October 4.

September

- 02 Alice King
- 03 Madeline Benirschke
- 06 Tonya Hyatt
- 08 Vecil Heniser
- 09 Jordan Rodden
- Daniel Scott
- 10 Chris Ford
- 12 Maria Hiatt
- 14 Harry Scott
- 21 Claire Smith
- 27 Sue Dunn
- 29 Stan Gockel

October

- 01 Adam Nixon
- Sydney Nixon
- 02 Janice Calhoun
- 04 Carrie Byrum
- 05 Tom Dunn
- 06 Linda Frantz
- Pam Rogers
- 14 Ivy Trinidad
- 17 Janet Barrett
- 18 Lola Joy
- 29 Lisa Vogler
- 31 Lorna Snyder

SUNDAY SERVICES ON FACEBOOK

While Sunday Worship remains postponed due to Covid-19, Pastor Rex officiates Sunday morning worship via video on Facebook.

You can access his posts and worship videos at <https://www.facebook.com/FirstPCPortland/>.

LABOR DAY



Church Office will be closed
Monday, September 7

IN MEMORIAM

Condolences to the family and friends of Glen Priest. Glen passed away June 29. He was a 67 year member of First Presbyterian Church.



FPCP WELCOMES NEW ORGANIST

FPCP welcomes LeRoy Imler as our new church organist. LeRoy comes to us with a wealth of church music experience.

He began his music training on piano at age seven. When he was in the ninth grade he began taking organ lessons. He obtained a Bachelor's Degree in music education from Marion College (now Indiana Wesleyan University). With a major in organ, a minor in piano and voice, as well as a minor in English studies.

He earned a Master's Degree from Ball State University majoring in music education and keyboard studies. While at Ball State he also learned to play harpsicord with a guest instructor from England. He also earned a Master's Degree in Library Science, again from Ball State.

LeRoy began teaching in the Marion Community Schools system and taught vocal and general music for 13 years at McColloch Junior High School before moving to Marion High School where he taught choral music performance for two years. He was also the director of the In-School Suspension program and led the Audio-Visual Department at the high school. He also became the K-12 Library Coordinator. He retired from Marion Community Schools in 2003.

He then became the Technology Director on the Marion campus of Ivy Tech Community College eventually becoming the Audio Visual and Online Instruction Coordinator for the entire East Central Region. He retired from Ivy Tech in 2013.

For 19 years he also co-owned and operated Burke Place Bed and Breakfast in Marion and operated an on-and-off site catering business. He also owned and operated a concession trailer.

He has served as pianist, organist, chancel choir director, youth choir director, hand bell director, and Director of Music for various churches throughout Grant County and East Central Indiana. He has served in almost all denominations.

Now during retirement he enjoys the opportunity to travel. He is also spending time getting to know our church organ and planning for the Sunday when we can again worship together.



New FPCP organist, LeRoy Imler, with his 13 year-old West Highland Terrier, Baxter. Photo Submitted.



**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

402 North Ship Street
Portland IN 47371

Phone: 260.726.8462

<mailto:office@firstpcportland.org>

<http://www.firstpcportland.org>

Our Vision Statement

“To provide a ministry which will lead people to strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ and reach out with God’s love.”



PHOTO FLASHBACK: In July 2003, ladies from our church Presbyterian Women's group attended the 2003 Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women held in Louisville, KY. Over 4,000 women from around the world attended this conference. Representing our church was (L-R): Rosie Puterbaugh, Pat Beard, Julia Schwomeyer, and Bev Priest. *Photo submitted.*

Church Office hours:
Monday-Thursday 8:00am-2:00pm
Closed on Friday.