The Rev. Dr. David Holyan, Pastor

Appreciating Clay Jars

In his second letter to the church in Corinth, Paul writes, “But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.” (4:7) He’s talking about how each of us have ‘...the light of the gospel of the glory of Jesus Christ...’ within us. In all we do and say, we have the opportunity to share the treasure of God’s love with everyone we meet. And while this is beautiful to consider or contemplate, the reality is that I have become distracted a bit by the ‘clay-ness’ of my jar. While I trust and hope that the light of God’s love shines forth through at least some of what I do, I’ve spent the past couple of weeks thinking and praying about my body, the clay jar that holds the sacred treasure of God’s love.

In mid-April I learned that I will be having yet another spinal surgery. This time a discectomy and fusion of my neck (C3-C7). Dr. Michael Boland at St. Luke’s will be the surgeon again for this third surgery in three years. As of now, the procedure is scheduled for June 19th, with a one night hospital stay and six weeks of recovery in a brace.

In anticipation of being out on medical leave for 6 weeks, we will be having a Festival of Preaching in my absence. You will hear from some familiar voices and some new ones. Rev. Dr. Karen Blanchard, Rev. Dr. Tom Glenn (Parish Associate), Rev. Dr. Julie Berger (regular attendee and chaplain at BJC), Rev. Dr. Craig Howard (our presbytery executive), Rev. Vanessa Hawkings (our presbytery associate executive), and Rev. Dr. Laurie Kraus (Coordinator of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance) will be preaching from June 24th through July 29th. I’m grateful to each of them for their willingness to help out.

This journey of the past three years with surgeries, recoveries, and accommodating a body that no longer works or feels like it once did continues to humble me. At times it is very discouraging to think about going through this ‘one more time’. And yet I continue to feel the presence of the Spirit, the ‘treasure’ Paul talks about, slosh around inside the ever changing clay jar that is part of who I am. I ask for your prayers and thank you (again) for your kindness, care, and support as this journey continues.

Peace,

David

The Rev. Dr. Karen Blanchard, Associate Pastor

I am sure I’m not alone in feeling both joy and relief at seeing the sun, and its warmth and watching nature begin to blossom. I can see new shoots coming forth from perennials in the garden and the nurseries are (hopefully) getting the more delicate annuals in after the last frost.

And so it seems here at First Pres. Lots of new shoots and new ideas coming forth. I recently met with women interested in forming a new daytime study and fellowship circle. Plans are to meet next month for another gathering of lunch, fellowship, and to plan. If you are interested in joining the next gathering, please contact Carlin Scanlin at cscanlan@swbell.net.

Last month at the invitation of the Stephen Ministry group, we had a great speaker on finding God in the garden and the gifts that come with working the soil. Several people expressed an interest in gathering to be present in nature in local gardens, others are interested in additional meetings to learn more about planning gardens and sharing ideas. If you are interested in either of those groups, please contact me for information.

Twelve people who are interested in following up on the Education class, Faith and For the Sake of All, gathered to learn more about organizations and hands on ways to become involved in helping children get a good start in education and with other needs. Jeanne Earley is the contact person for this group as they select possible projects and form small groups to carry out volunteer service work. Please contact her at jearley@swbell.net.

In addition, there are those interested in bringing back a craft group. This group would meet for fellowship while sharing ideas and doing their favorite crafts or working on mission projects such as prayer shawls or Dresses for Africa. If you are interested in this kind of group, please contact Susan Lewis at susanlewis928@icloud.com for more information.

In addition, some families with very young children are working on gatherings for fellowship potluck dinners in the near future. If you are interested, more information will be forthcoming.

New Life indeed!

Easter Joy to you,
Karen
A MONTH OF SUNDAYS

May 6, 2018
Sermon: The Living Tie That Binds - The Rev. Karen Blanchard
The passage from John's gospel continues the focus from John 14 about the power of love to transform and to change. It becomes a force for unity and healing, and ties with the words of promise of Jesus that even if he was no longer with them on earth they would not be left alone. In the reading from Acts in the post resurrection days those with Peter are startled to realize that the work of the Spirit moves on and touches and transforms the lives of the gentiles as well. We hear whispers of Pentecost in this passage, a call to become one in the Spirit and one in the Lord.

May 13, 2018
Sermon: “Planted in Life-Giving Water” - The Rev. Dr. David Holyan
Scriptures: John 17:6-19 and Psalm 1
In the Gospel reading we read Jesus’ prayer for the disciples as he sends them out into the world to care on his ministry. In a sense, it is the prayer of a parent relinquishing their children to the world, trusting that the up-bringing they had is sufficient to carry them forward in goodness and truth. Psalm 1 sets the stage for the entire psalter—here is what it is like to be a person of faith—we are like trees planted by streams of water. We are grounded in that which nurtures and sustains us. On this Mother’s Day, we’ll consider what it means to live a life grounded in God’s love offered to us and all people.

May 20, 2018
10:00AM
Sermon: “The Helping Spirit” - The Rev. Dr. David Holyan
Scriptures: John 15:26-27 and Romans 8:22-27
By focusing on the reading in Romans on this Pentecost Sunday, we will attend to the work of the Spirit within the lives of believers. Pentecost is so often associated with fire and speaking in different languages and the ‘birth’ of the church. But this Sunday we will acknowledge the presence of the Spirit within each of us: praying, encouraging, comforting. We all have the Spirit of God within. The only question is: do we believe and trust this to be true?

May 27, 2018
10:00AM
Sermon: A Spirit of Freedom - The Rev. Dr. David Holyan
Scriptures: John 3:1-17 and Romans 8:12-17
On this Trinity Sunday we will explore how the Exodus is the template for the ministry of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. God’s desire is for us to live in freedom and love. Our temptation is to live in fear, restraining the flow of God’s love through us. Our invitation is to open ourselves, our hearts, our souls, our minds, our lives to the reality of God’s freeing Presence living within. When we trust in God’s goodness living within, we are faithful in sharing that life-giving goodness with others.

From the Director of Music Ministries
We have some wonderful special music planned for May, and I hope you can take part and enjoy it.

May 4:  Annual Organ Dedication Anniversary Recital performed by Jeremy David Tarrant, organist. Arrive at 6:45 and enjoy a free treat from the ice cream truck in our parking lot! The recital begins at 7:30. Mr. Tarrant recently recorded a CD of French music on our magnificent instrument. These will be for sale that evening for $10.

May 22: The University of Dubuque Concert Choir will present a free concert at 7:00pm as part of their Spring tour. We still need hosts to house students. Let me know if you are interested.

May 27: The St. Louis Chamber Chorus will perform their final concert of the season in our sanctuary at 3:00pm. For tickets, visit www.chamberchorus.org

The Chancel Choir and Praise Team are rapidly approaching the end of their musical seasons as well. We offer heartfelt thanks to those in both groups who lead us in worship and song each Sunday, and pray them a relaxing and rest-filled summer.

Bill
Thank You Volunteers!
As our program year nears closing again I wanted to use this space to thank our volunteers in our Children, Youth and Family Ministries. Some people give as little as an hour, some provide supplies along the way and others give up a week or two for Work Camp each summer. Each plays an integral role of helping to mold our young people and raise them up to be faithful people.

Our children and youth watch what we do whether they are in the classroom or in worship. They are learning how to be church. They are learning how to live their faith in a way that will carry them through life. What I mean to say is that ALL of you are helping to shape our young people, and for that we are thankful!

Birthday Bags for Youth in Action
We have partnered with Youth in Action and Operation Food Search to provide Birthday Bags for middle school students that would not be able to celebrate otherwise! We are hoping to gather together 60 bags in 2018! Please bring bags back, filled with all of the items below, on or before Sunday, May 6th.

These bags will be distributed to students that typically receive regular food assistance through Operation Food Search on a weekly basis. Our efforts are aimed to bring something special to families that would not be able to do this.

Work Camp is Coming!
The Work Camp Auction was another fun night that raised a great source of funds for our trip to Red Wing, Minnesota, in July. We are beyond excited to be partnering with both Habitat for Humanity and God is on the Move to help the people in and around Red Wing.

We are working on planning for our spiritual time and our weekend trip, but there is a lot happening still!

Want to Help HOST?
There are SO many opportunities to help during the upcoming General Assembly in June. Our church has volunteered to host a group from the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia for the week as they do mission work around Saint Louis! We will have about 30 PEVA people staying at the church and we will be taking care of meals. If you would like to help in this way, please contact Rob!
One of four special offerings promoted by the PC(USA), the Pentecost Offering, helps the church encourage, develop, and support its young people, and also addresses the needs of at-risk children. 40% of the Pentecost offering can be retained by individual congregations wanting to make an impact in the lives of young people within their own community. The remaining 60% is used to support ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Special envelopes will be in the pews during worship on Sunday, May 20. Please give as generously as you are able. Thank you in advance.

Celebration of 50-Year Members
This year’s recognition of our Golden Members will be held at the 10:00 a.m. service on Sunday, June 10th. The church software is able to identify those who have been part of this congregation continuously since 1968, but it does not recognize those who have left and returned that may have a combined membership of fifty-years. If you think that situation may apply to you, please contact Paula in the church office at paulab@kirkwoodpres.org or (314) 965-0326, so we can check earlier records and get a complete list. Thanks!

FAITH IN TODAY’S WORLD 10:00a.m. in room 029
The class, Faith in Today’s World, meets in room 029 on Sundays at 10:00a.m. through May 6. The topic for discussion in the coming weeks will focus on Adam Hamilton’s work on Forgiveness: Finding Peace Through Letting Go. The class is open to everyone and the material’s focus is from a family perspective. If you have any questions, please contact Sam Butler at swbutler@gmail.com or Karen Blanchard at kblanchard@kirkwoodpres.org.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION CLASS - 2ND SUNDAY OF EVERY MONTH
9:30a.m. in Room 028
The Spiritual Formation series will focus on deepening the stillness of the heart through prayer, meditation, study and reflection. Tom Edelstein is the convener of the group which will meet the second Sunday of the month at 9:30 in room 028. The next meeting will be May 13. If you have any questions please contact Tom at tedelstein@att.net or call Karen Blanchard at kblanchard@kirkwoodpres.org.

WEDNESDAY BOOK GROUP 1:30P.M. ROOM 029
The book will be Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine by Gail Honeyman and the new date is Wednesday, May 2nd at 1:30 in room 029.

THE VISITOR/NEW MEMBER COMMITTEE
GOT NAMETAG ??? – If you need a new one our can't find yours, please leave a note on the Ritual of Friendship Register located in each aisle of your worship space

First Pres is a big church and it can be difficult to put a name and a face together. Please take some extra time for fellowship on Sundays and extend your best First Pres welcome. The door greeters sign up sheet is in the gallery space by the Welcome Center.

Your Homework: If you know of someone who is interested in joining, please share our next Visitor/New Member informational meetings being held May 6th, with those who wish to join being received on May 20th at the 10:00a.m. service.

Again, - thank you to each of you for your continued smile and warm welcome to our visitors! You are helping to grow our church one person at a time!

New Member and Welcome Committee: Brad Gift, Al Murray, Leah Engelhardt, Stuart Jaeger, Kristy Mitchell, George Durnell, Karen Blanchard
The congregation extends its deepest sympathy to:
- Pat Wilson on the death of her husband, Dick, on March 24, 2018.
- Tyson Strickler on the death of his father, Steve, on March 25, 2018.
- Arnold Evans on the death of his wife, Polly, on March 25, 2018.
- Gwyneth Williams on the death of her husband, Brad Loudenback, on April 3, 2018.
- Bob Wells on the death of his father, C. Robert, on April 18, 2018.

Congratulations to Rick & Sharon Brandenburger on their new grandson, Lucas William Mays, born February 21, 2018.

All men are welcome for a time of casual conversation and Bible study on Saturday mornings starting at 10:45 a.m. in Room 028 (lower level). For more info, contact Robert Trottmann at srt@sbcglobal.net or

The Prime Timers will visit Purina Farms in Gray Summit on Friday, May 11th. Meet at the Church at 9:15 a.m. to share a ride. The Dog Show begins at 10:30 a.m. followed by lunch at the Hawthorne Inn in Labadie. Sign up sheet and directions are at the Church. For more information call the Hershfelts at 314-821-7090.

The Breakfast Club
The Breakfast Club will meet for its last gathering of the season on Thursday, May 3rd at 8:00 a.m. in the Fireplace Room. Rev. Dr. Karen Blanchard will be an guest speaker. Come enjoy a $2.00 breakfast and hear Karen’s thoughts and stories of the past year. The Breakfast Club will resume on October 4th.

The Dementia Discussion Group will NOT meet in May. If you have any questions, contact Alice Bowen: asquare812@hotmail.com or Angela Gracey: anggracey@msn.com.

The Grief Support Group will meet on Tuesday, May 22, 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. in the lounge. For more information contact Ellen Hitschler at ln4cats@yahoo.com or Mary Ann Shaw at mashaw5@sbcglobal.net.

Dear Friends,
I am grateful and humbled by your expressions of sympathy following my father's recent illness and death. Your kind words, cards, and hugs have meant so much over the past few months, and have sustained my family and me during a difficult time.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to Travis Evans, Tom Lowery, and Lori Wehrman who took on a lot of extra work in my absence, often at the last minute. We are blessed by your dedication and devotion to this congregation.

God bless you all,
Bill Stein

Presbytery Mission Trip to Nicaragua
July 21–29, 2018
Is God is calling you to travel to Nicaragua to learn more about the world? Plans are in the works for this year’s annual trip (those under 18 years of age must be accompanied by a parent). NO SKILLS REQUIRED other than the ability to open your heart to God’s presence. You might be asked to help lead Vacation Bible School, learn some Spanish/Teach some English, visit coffee fields or schools and meet our scholarship students, make new friends or learn something new about yourself and your faith. The first meeting for those considering the trip will be held on Sunday, April 29 at 3:00 pm at Webster Groves Presbyterian Church. Contact Harriet Hall at 314-707-4750 or pg2nicaragua@gmail.com. Check out the presbytery’s website www.glpby.org or Facebook @nicaraguacommunitypartnership. There are also bright yellow sheets on the mission/fellowship information tables near the Welcome Center.

Be sure you stop by the Bridge Bread table before the worship service on Sunday mornings. By purchasing these baked goods, you are supporting a mission outreach programs that helps those who are homeless earn income and find a home.

Also, the Bridge Bread table is often in need of volunteers, so if you are able to or want more information, contact Linda Jarrett at 636-394-4642 or write4you@sbcglobal.net.

Meal-A-Month Items
Tree or Spam, Flavored Noodles
Canned Peas, Canned Fruit, Soap
Optional: Cereal, Toothbrushes
MEMBER CARE

If you or someone you know is ill, in the hospital or in rehab, please let the church office know so that we may lift up our members in prayer and schedule visits if needed. If we don’t know there is a need, we miss the opportunity to provide care to our members. Thank you! *(NOTE: If you are in the hospital under a different name than your pastor and church friends know you as, please share that information. Hospitals and care facilities are bound to privacy agreements and do not give this information out.)*

In addition, we have a list of members who receive updates about those in need of prayers each Friday with requests that come in between. This is a powerful way to be connected to others at First Pres and provide them with encouragement in times of need and support. If you would like to be a part of our prayer chain, contact Karen at kblanchard@kirkwoodpres.org. While we do most of our contacts by email, if you do not have email and wish to participate, contact Karen through the church office.

PRAYER SHAWLS

Members of our congregation have made prayer shawls that are available for anyone to take or mail to someone in their time of illness or need of support. The shawls are soft and provide both physical and emotional warmth for those who are going through illness or a difficult time. They come with a note that explains that it was made by those who offer them as a gift of comfort. If you would like to pick one up, contact the church office for a time to come by to select from available shawls stored in our office.

General Assembly is Coming to St Louis!

*“But strive first for the kingdom of God and His righteousness.”* -Matthew 6:33

SAVE THESE DATES: June 16-23, 2018! Visit the General Assembly website at https://ga-pcusa.org to learn more. Volunteers are needed. Consider volunteering with a friend or family member. There is a spot for everyone to participate both before, after, and especially during the week of GA! Children and youth are welcome to participate—worship ushering and communion serving specifically invite children to serve along with a parent. No matter your age, ability, or experience level, there is a job for you. Our COLA (Committee on Local Arrangements) website has the link for volunteer sign up. Go to https://www.stlouisga.com/ to learn more. For more information, look for First Pres members wearing an "Ask Me" me button and stay tuned to the weekly bulletin insert for updates.

The church facilities will be closed on Monday, May 28 in observance of Memorial Day.

LIVE STREAMING CHURCH SERVICE

Are you going out of town, not feeling well or just not able to be in church on a given Sunday? Don’t worry. Our 11:00a.m. worship service is live streamed just for you! All you have to do is go to www.kirkwoodpres.org and click on Church Service Video Streaming at 11:00a.m. and you are good to go. Also, just below that button is a printable version of the bulletin so you can follow along. Don’t miss out. Give it a try!
### MAY 2018

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Composting is an easy process that takes remains of plants and kitchen waste and converts it into rich nutrient food for your plants that helps them grow. It reduces the amount of garbage that goes to the landfills which pollutes the air. This way it proves safe for the environment.
CHURCH STAFF

David A. Holyan, Pastor
Karen Blanchard, Associate Pastor
Tom Glenn, Parish Associate
Bill Stein, Director of Music Ministries
Travis Evans, Music Associate
Rob Monroe, Director of Children, Youth & Family Ministries
Paige Misselhorn, Children’s Ministry Assistant
Sherry Peters, Director, First Presbyterian Children’s Center
Paula Bujewski, Office Administrator
Jane Meppiel, Financial Coordinator
Donnell “Dee” Robinson, Head Custodian
Brian Clay, Custodian