



“The Steeple”

A Weekly Newsletter from First United Presbyterian Church
Volume III • Issue 33

Friday, October 20, 2023

Who has influenced your faith? Who do you model Christianity to? Paul talks about these things in Philippians, John Wurster writes.

BY JOHN WURSTER



For the first several years of our marriage, my spouse and I lived in a couple of small apartments. Eventually, we finished our various degree programs, found jobs, made a move, and bought a house. It was great and wonderful to have a house, though we didn't know much about what to do with it or how to care for it. Thankfully, we lived next door to Allen, and it became clear very quickly that

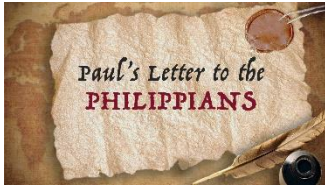
Allen knew everything about how to maintain a house. Accordingly, we developed a home-owning strategy that involved watching Allen and doing what he did. If he was washing the storm windows and putting up screens, that's what we did. If he was sealing his driveway, that's what we did. If he was cleaning the gutters, that's what we did. If he was fertilizing the yard, that's what we did. We would actually get up on Saturdays, look out the window, wait for Allen to appear and start on some kind of task, then we followed suit. And it worked out very well. Our 80-year-old house stayed in good shape. We learned some things along the way and developed some skills. When we moved on after six years in that house, we even admitted to Allen what we had been doing. He smiled a disbelieving smile, befitting of someone who had been a homeowner for 40 years and to whom it all seemed second nature.

I learned to swim the breaststroke by watching Stephen. The instructor had tried to tell me about how to do it. He had diagrams and directions. He would move my arms and my legs in the right way, but I really struggled with the timing of the stroke. Finally, the instructor told me to watch Stephen, who was swimming in the adjacent pool used by the high school swim team. I stood on the deck and I watched him. Then I jumped it and tried it. Then I got out and watched some more. I learned the breaststroke from Stephen, just like I learned to care for a house from Allen. We can gain much by learning from those who have experience and knowledge and skills. Watch what they do; practice what they do.

I've learned about faith from any number of teachers over the years. I suspect you have, too. Few of us can just pick up faith on our own. We need to be around others who know something about it and have some experience, some knowledge. I enjoy being in a group and asking people to share the name of someone from whom they learned about faith. Sometimes, it's a parent or a grandparent or a Sunday school teacher or a youth group sponsor. Sometimes it's someone you watched because of the joyful way she sang or the patient way he cared for his children or because of the warm way they always greeted you.



We learn by watching — and by doing what we have seen. That’s one of the reasons we might assign mentors to our young people going through confirmation. You can only learn so much about faith from a book or a diagram. The learning is completed by seeing real live examples. It’s like standing on the deck and watching someone swim the breaststroke — and then jumping in and trying it for yourself.



Paul is getting at this simple, yet important, truth in this passage from Philippians. He writes, “Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me” (Philippians 4:9). He knows faith is learned by watching and practicing. He holds himself up as a role model. Few of us would be comfortable going that far, but it’s worth remembering that even as we are learning from others, others are learning from us. It’s not just children. We all continue to learn from one another.

Keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen. Keep on doing these things, again and again and again. There is a lot of repetition to our worship for a reason. We keep on doing these things, saying these things, singing these things so that they might sink in, find a place in us, shape us, form us, comfort us. Keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen so that you know these things by heart.

Paul offers himself as a model for faith, and we have seen the contours of that faith in the lectionary readings from Philippians over the past few weeks. We have received from Paul words of encouragement and support (1:21-30), a soaring hymn of praise flowing from faith in the self-giving love of Jesus Christ (2:1-13), and a charge to persevere while continuing to trust in Christ’s commitment to us (3:4-14). The Letter to the Philippians is a compelling record of Paul’s understanding and practice of faith.



In this passage (Philippians 4:1-9), we see Paul, showing care and concern for those serving with him, particularly noting the valuable contributions of the women, Euodia and Syntyche. He urges joy, gentleness, and prayer. He promises the intangible blessings of a peace that passes understanding. He directs our attention to the things that are true, honorable, just, pure, pleasing, commendable, excellent and praiseworthy. Think about these things, Paul says. Do these things. Keep on doing them.

After all, somebody might be learning from you.

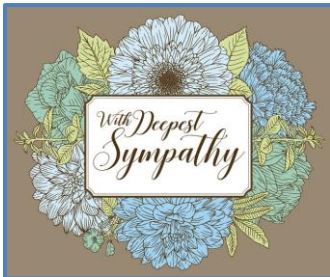
John Wurster is pastor at St. Philip Presbyterian Church in Houston, Texas.

"Reprinted with permission from the Presbyterian Outlook. Read more at pres-outlook.org"

We pray for...
Nolan Collins
Sally Leeper
Tish McKee
Prayers for Israel
Those known only to God



"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." Philippians 4:6



Our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Hal Jackson who passed away on October 14th. Services are being held October 20th at First United Presbyterian Church. Burial will be at Winterset Cemetery.



Stir Your Coffee
At the Steeple
Wednesdays
at 10am

Join with the pastor every Wednesday morning for an informal time of fellowship and coffee. There is no agenda except to enjoy each other's company. Bring a snack to share if you like, but it is not required!

Pastor Dave would like to meet with you! There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board by Fellowship Hall or you can call the church office to make an appointment. Pick a Wednesday afternoon when you'd like to get together, either at your home or in my office. Let's get to know each other!



Join with Pastor Dave on Wednesday evenings at 5:30 pm in Fellowship Hall for a Bible study that looks at Christian Art History. This study will run through October 25 and will look at Art History from the Early Christian era through the Reformation. There will be lots of pictures, discussion and a fun time! Bring a sack dinner and enjoy this time of fellowship and learning!



MARK YOUR CALENDARS! Saturday, November 18, from 8:30 – 2:30 we will once again be having our annual Holiday Hop. Be thinking of what you can make to sell at the event. Baked goods, handmade items, and gently-used Christmas items will be available. Also needed is your help! Contact Rae De Regnier or Gaylene Blankers if you can help!

I know it is barely fall, but we are already gearing up for Christmas4Kids here at the CRISP office. Check out how you can help on our website then fill out the form found [here](#). CRISP and MATURA are partnering again this year to provide food boxes for our families who are receiving gifts. If you are interested in helping provide a food box please contact Theresa at MATURA. Her number is 515-462-4704. They will take donations of cash/check, gift cards or food to help complete the food boxes. – *Kathleen Rush*, CRISP Program Director



Sunday, October 22 - *Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost*
Christmas Shoe Boxes available for pickup

9:00 am - Adult Sunday School

10:15 am - Worship, Kevin de Regnier, worship leader

11:15 am - Fellowship

Tuesday, October 24 - 6:30 pm - Session

Wednesday, October 25 - 10-11 am - Coffee with Pastor Dave

5:30 pm - Bible Study

Sunday, October 29 - *Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost*

9:00 am - Adult Sunday School

10:15 am - Worship, Rev. Dave Endriss, worship leader

11:15 am - Fellowship

It's that time again and we are doing the Samaritan's Purse Christmas Child Shoeboxes. Boxes will be available for pickup beginning **October 22nd**. Pick up one or two, then enjoy the fun of packing the boxes with great gifts for a child! (Please include a donation of \$10 (exact change please) per box to cover shipping and other processing costs.)

This year marks 30 years since Samaritan's Purse began collecting shoeboxes filled with gifts for hurting children around the world. Operation Christmas Child has always been dedicated to sharing the Gospel, and the Lord has blessed us with an abundance of gift boxes - 209 million over 30 years. Now is the time to bless the life of a child by packing a shoebox! As the Lord provides, we are planning to ship 11 million shoebox gifts this year. Praise God, we've come a long way from 11 thousand that first year. On behalf of children around the world, thank you for your prayers and generosity! Learn more about the program and how to fill a shoebox by clicking here: <http://samaritanspurse.org/occ>



Community Hymn Sing - All are invited!

Friday, November 3

11:30 am

Winterset Public Library

Hosted by Winterset First United Methodist Church

Hymn Books Provided!

Ecumenical choir rehearsals to prepare for the Lessons, Carols & Reflections service will be Wednesday, November 29, and Wednesday, December 6, from 7:00 - 7:30. Interested singers please reach out to me at wfumc309@gmail.com or 515-249-1204 so I know how many to expect. Thank you! *Megan Barrett*