



Happenings on the Hill April 2020



*Even Though We Cannot Have Public Gatherings on the Hill this Month,
Join Us Online for Worship Each Sunday via Our Broadcast on FPC Facebook,*

... and

Stay Connected & Grow Spiritually Through FPC's New & Increasing Opportunities for Online FPC-Group Bible Studies & Fellowship. Grow in God's Word as Well by Listening to the FPC Sermon Podcasts via Our Website.

[Update on Our Preparation for Broadcasts: We are shifting this month to a recorded rather than a live Sunday morning broadcast - as we seek more consistency in internet connection for our streaming broadcast, and as we also hope to begin using - in addition to using Facebook, using a second online platform as well for the posting & better availability of our recorded worship services for all members and other viewers.]



Dear Church Family and friends,

I love being with you *in person*. Most importantly, I love worshipping with the faithful in the Lord's Household on the Lord's Day. We glorify God when we begin each week putting Him first, celebrating the gospel of Christ's Resurrection. I also love being with you in Sunday and weekday Bible Studies, fellowship, and other ministry work. In fact, being together with the Lord's faithful in His Household is especially sweet each year during Holy Week and then all through the Sundays of the Easter Season. Yet because of the unprecedented challenges we face with the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting need for no substantial public gathering, we cannot worship and study as all together on the Hill this month. **Nevertheless, we CAN and WILL be together in new ways:**



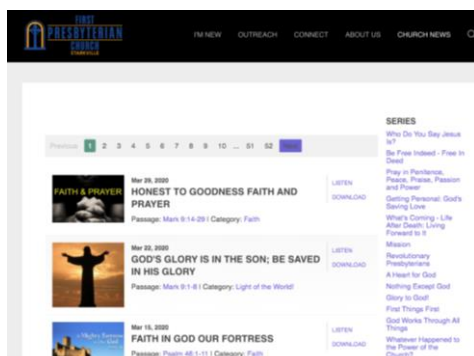
- We will **continue to join as God's people for Sunday worship (via FPC Facebook broadcast);** and
- We are offering an increasing array of **Children's, Youth, Men's, Women's, and church-wide Bible Studies and fellowship opportunities online and via mailed & emailed studies and devotionals** for at-home participation.

So join us in the Living Communion of the Holy Spirit each Sunday morning, as well as during the week.

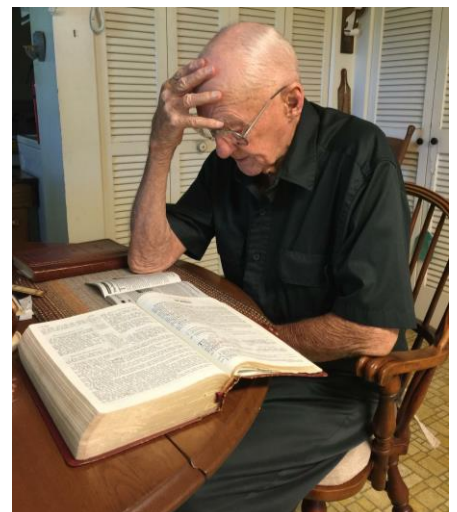
Thank God for Boswell Kennard, who taught us the last few years about faithfully "sheltering in place." The past few years – *long before official "Shelter in Place" orders and guidelines* – our eldest and most longstanding FPC member, Boswell Kennard, taught us how to redeem the time while mainly at home because of his increasing physical limitations, as he approached and then surpassed the Century Mark. How did Boswell do it? Though Boswell was mainly sheltering at home at 98, 99, 100 and then 101 years old, he remained faithful to God and his church, and grew spiritually, through:

- (1) Every morning – yes, *every morning* – spending serious and renewing time in reading devotionals, reading the Bible, and praying.
- (2) *When he could no longer attend worship in-person at FPC* – listening each Sunday to the previous week's FPC sermon.
- (3) Regularly and faithfully mailing God's Tithe to his church, *including even in the past few*

[Pastor's Letter continued on Page 2]



I visited Boswell several mornings when he was still reading his *Daily Bread* and Bible for focused time with the Lord each day. I took the *photo at right* of Boswell at his kitchen table on May 4, 2017, two days prior to his 99th Birthday. When he could no longer attend worship, Boswell instead listened each Sunday to our sermon from the previous week. You may access our Sermon Podcast via the FPC website *[photo at left]*. On the other hand, if you do not have Internet or cellular access to the podcasts, or if you would otherwise prefer to receive a CD copy of the sermons (*as Boswell did*), then please let us know by a phone message to the church office number.



[Pastor's Letter continued from Page 1]

months, when Boswell was under hospice care. (4) Staying actively in touch with other FPC members, keeping up with our Prayer Lists, and staying in touch with me and with other officers of our congregation. That all being said, though, two of some my own striking memories of Boswell are of his visiting us on the Hill – both times during 2016, well before Boswell was totally sheltering in place. For his 98th birthday, his sister Noona drove Boswell to FPC, so that I could have a celebration time with them at FPC. Then, a few months later, Boswell joined us on Sunday, August 21. His son Arthur brought Boswell, who said that he – as our oldest member – wanted be with us to vote in accord with our upholding the Authority of God's Word, above and beyond any provisional denominational or other, lesser matters.

Then, on March 30, the Lord gave Boswell the call for which Boswell had actually been praying for several months, and Boswell joined the Church Triumphant. Now *sheltering in place* in this fallen world is over for Boswell, as it will soon be for each of us. The Scripture assures us that all who are born again by the Spirit will enter the Kingdom, and that to be away from the body is to be at home with the Lord. I believe that the words from Jesus' parable apply to Boswell: **"The Master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'"** [Matthew 25:23]

Thank God for Boswell Kennard, who taught us about faithful sheltering in place! In our unusual circumstances this spring, and given Boswell's rich life and the timing of his call to the Church Triumphant, I am dedicating a good bit of this newsletter to Boswell's example for our encouragement. We do need encouragement, given all of our grave concerns, as well as our grief over the deaths of other brothers and sisters, including Pastor Tim Russell of Second Presbyterian Church, Memphis, who died from the COVID-19 virus March 30. Therefore, in thanks to God, and for our encouragement, I include below with the reflection I wrote the morning Boswell died, together with various photos – celebrating God's gift to us of our brother who was for a number of years FPC's eldest and most longstanding active, faithful member.

Your pastor and friend in Jesus,
Martin

My email to our church family & friends about an hour after Boswell's death, Monday, March 30:

After a Century+ here, Boswell's Home!

*God gave Boswell Kennard to us and blessed us through him for more than a century.
Just over an hour ago, God called Boswell to his real Home.*

Boswell was certainly ready! I spoke and prayed with Boswell many times over the past couple of years in particular about his being ready to go, as we discussed his questions about waiting and timing. These conversations were great times to invite Boswell to reflect on his long life and loves, and to confess his faith, his readiness to stand before Jesus, and the assurance of eternal life which Jesus gives to all who are born again in the Holy Spirit.

I will always cherish my visits with Boswell at the old family farmhouse. *The 1st photo above I took of Boswell at his kitchen table, on May 4, 2017, two days before his 99th Birthday.*

I am struck today by the fact that **Boswell was born not only during WW1 but also during the outbreak of the most severe global pandemic in modern history: "The 1918 Pandemic" a/k/a "The H1N1 Virus Pandemic" a/k (non-PC)/a "The Spanish Flu."** Now, **Boswell has died and departed the same world, which is this year in the throes of the Covid-19 Virus Pandemic.** But, thanks be to God, He has led Boswell through a faithful and remarkably full life here, and now Boswell is Home -- **where there are no viruses, pain, tears, or death!**

Blessed as Boswell's pastor and friend,
Martin Lifer
Monday morning, March 30, 2020



Thomas Boswell Kennard (May 6, 1918 – March 30, 2020)

And I heard a voice from Heaven saying, **“Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, and their deeds follow them!”** [Revelation 14:13]



Photo above left: Duffy Neubauer and FPC's Jeff Foster celebrate with Boswell after firing a cannon outside the Oktoc Community Center to commence the celebration of Boswell's 100th Birthday Celebration in 2018. *Photo above right:* I was blessed to join Boswell, family and friends for Boswell's 100th.

Photo at left: MSU Women's Basketball Coach Vic Schaefer joined Boswell's family with me for graveside Interment Service at Odd Fellows Cemetery in Starkville on the beautiful Wednesday afternoon that began this month, April 1. Vic brought roses and delivered a special commendation of Boswell, remembering in particular Boswell's sharing of faith, wisdom, and great life stories with the team and with Vic in recent years.

FPC Starkville (EPC) Women's Ministry

Janice Kinard, Moderator

The Women's Ministry Coordinating Team will not meet in April, and Circles will *not* meet – in accord with current national, state, local and church Session guidelines.

The FPC Women's Ministry is currently accepting academic scholarship applications for members of FPC (EPC). Due date is April 15.

Apply by calling or email the church office. Each applicant will receive the application by email or USPS. For further information contact Janice Kinard.

Contact or leave a message for Pastor Martin Lifer, or speak with Kathy Wright in the Church Office Number (662) 323-1994, or via email to info@fpcstarkville.org. In addition, you may reach the following ministry staff via their direct email addresses listed below:

Rev. Dr. Martin Lifer, Pastor mwlifer3@gmail.com

Kathy Wright, Pastoral Administrative Assistant info@fpcstarkville.org

Cheryl Ewing, Church Financial Secretary (part-time in office) cheryl@fpcstarkville.org

Dr. Craig Aarhus, Music Director aarhus@bellsouth.net

Ashleigh Murdock, Children's Ministry Coordinator aabmurdock@gmail.com

Kirk Kinard, Co-Director of Youth Ministry kirkkinard@gmail.com

Reid Roberson, Pastoral Ministry Intern, and Co-Director of Youth Ministry reidrob97@gmail.com

Jennifer Blackbourn, Organist jenniferblackbourn@hotmail.com

Kathy McGill, Children's Choir Director katherinemcgill@hotmail.com

Noa Hardin, Communications & Social Media Facilitator noakhardin@gmail.com

FPC Outreach Mission News & Needs Continue:



Thank God for our mission partnership with the Starkville Area Habitat for Humanity and for the great building progress achieved in early March on the 2020 Apostles' House. The framing and other work completed by the Rockford University group that FPC helped host. I extend special thanks to the Crusader Class, the Jones family, and others! I took the photo – at left - of the Rockford U. group at the Apostles' House when I was with them and shared a biblical Devotion with them on Thursday, March 12.

This month, please prayerfully consider a Holy Week or Easter Sunday additional special mission offering for Mission India.

We will not be able to have the Easter Lily Mission Fundraiser this spring to help a bit toward our support of Mission India and, more importantly, to focus us all on the great opportunity to help Mission India's training and equipping of Church Planting pastors. The pastors we support reach and help the Lord call many to Christian faith. At the same time – *with the COVID-19 outbreak and a governmentally imposed lockdown in super populous India being especially hard on the Christian minority and on new churches* – we pray that some of our members and friends are led by the Spirit to consider a special mission gift through FPC for Mission India.

