



The STEEPLE

Leicester Evangelical Presbyterian Church

November 2022

Pastor David Missel
382-3311 - Office

LEPC website:
www.seekinggodtogether.com

It is our desire to assist anyone who is seeking help, if possible, whether it be spiritual or otherwise. Please contact Pastor David or any Session Elder if you would like us to be of help."

LEPC NEWS

Prayer Ministry

For the upcoming week I intend to pray for _____.

Highlights - Session Meeting 10/13

Spiritual Focus and Prayers: An article was read from the "Decisions Magazine", written by Andrew Brunson, about perseverance under pressure, a matter of the will, and the strength of the Lord. The Session prayed for members and friends of LEPC and requests prayers for the "Youth For Christ" groups in our area.

Treasurer's Report: Investments are down noticeably reflecting the state of the stock market.

Clerk's Report: Average Worship Attendance: Sept. (12); Average Berean Attendance: Sept. (6), Shut-in Communion: (1) 10/3 Shirley Siniapkin; Prayer Chain (3) 9/12 Deluca family, 10/3 Susan Johantgen and Toni Yunker's daughter Deanna; Membership Dismissals or Transfers: none

Pastor's Report: Scheduled Study Leave: October 24-30 and Vacation: November 7-13. Shut-in Communion: 10/3 Shirley Siniapkin with Carole Missel assisting. Pastor received an e-mail from Brad Tunningley noting

that he was doing fine, but is searching a written copy of his testimony given at LEPC a few years back.

Worship: Students from Lamplighter Ministries will be planning and leading the worship service on October 30 and Mr. Wayne Marion will fill the pulpit for November 13.

Witness: Session approved a donation of \$25 to Our Daily Bread Ministries. Ordered 25 copies of "Jesus Light of the World" devotionals to be given out prior to Christmas.

Food Pantry: To date the resources are adequate, and the requests are down.

Missions: Session approved the following disbursements:
\$200 to "Faith Comes by Hearing" for Bible Sticks (military Bible audio device)
\$100 Open Door Mission of Rochester, for their Thanksgiving Day Meal Ministry
\$100 to Lamplighter Ministries as an honorarium for students leading worship on October 30.

Stewardship: Financial Update for September:

Operating Income: \$3,129.77
Operating Expense: \$3,288.77
Mission Income: \$110.00
Mission Expenditures: \$291.00

Christian Education: none

Property: Session approved to pay Old Smokey's Trucking & Excavating, LLC, for sealing and lining the LEPC driveway and parking lot for \$2,550.

Heating cables over bathrooms are switched on for the winter.

Furnaces will be checked for the winter, and furnace filters have been changed on schedule.

Mason Larry Cook met with Pastor David, Gene Greg and Leo Richardson on 10/8 concerning the front steps and plan to start work on 10/21.

The work on the steps was begun on time and the steps between the 2 railings out front are safe to use. This was just a partial repair to get us through the winter. The steps to the left of the railings are not accessible at this time. In the early 2023, Session will

make final preparations on whether to replace all missing or damaged blue stone step treads, or just have a center step entree and the steps to the right and left removed. Much of this depends on the estimates we get from the mason on a couple different options.

Snow plowing for 2022/2023 has been contracted.

Nominating: A list of offices to be filled for 2023 was provided to Session, and they will be in the process of finding candidates.

Personnel: Pastor David has agreed to continue on as pastor. Stewardship and Personnel Divisions plan to meet to plan the 2023 budget. Date to be determined.

Old Business: The intention is still to upgrade the church shed, and to convert the lighting in Fellowship Hall to LED. The old Baldwin piano will remain in Fellowship Hall for the time being.

New Business: none

Miscellaneous: Up Coming Events Calendar: Nothing planned at this time.

Next Regular Session Meeting date was scheduled for November 10, 2022.

Monthly Celebrations

November Birthdays

20 Leo Richardson

Anniversaries

1 M/M Leo Richardson

Fall Back Here

Millions of Americans will soon "fall back" as **Daylight Saving Time ends on Nov. 6. The time change is at 2 a.m. that Sunday.**

Daylight Saving Time is always scheduled to end on the first Sunday in November, while it always starts on the second Sunday in March.





From the Pastor's Heart

I'm sure you have noticed there are many people whose lives are broken in so many ways. I hope the following article by Ron Hutchcraft will help you or someone you know whose life needs to be put back together.

Pastor David

Knowing What It Is To Be Broken

You don't have to go into a prison to find people who are "broken." There's so much pain today, and so much of it is from broken things - broken families, broken health, broken hearts, broken trust.

It may be even in spite of a life that's reasonably successful and outwardly looks fine.

The Word of God in Hebrews 4:14 says, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess." Jesus is called the "high priest." High priests were the men in the Old Testament who represented people to God. So Jesus is now our personal representative with God in Heaven.

If you were to walk up to this Savior and ask, "Are you broken?" He might refer you to the next verse. It says, "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens" (Hebrews 4:15-16).

He's walked in your shoes. He's felt what you feel except He never responded by doing something outside of God's will. You can come to Him with confidence because you are going to a Savior who has lived the feelings you are bringing to Him. He knows what it is to be poor, to be turned on by your family, to be betrayed by someone very close, to be lonely, and to be murdered. This Savior knows your pain.

He went way beyond the pain to the core reason for your wounds - human sin. We're all the victims of sin. It is your personal rebellion against your Creator saying, "God, you run the Universe, I'll run me." You might be making choices that increase your pain because you're away from the One who created you.

Other people can empathize, and there are some counselors who can help you understand the pain, but only Jesus can carry your pain and begin to heal a lifetime of scars. He says, "I came to bind up the brokenhearted" (Isaiah 61:1). The great tragedy may be that you're needlessly carrying all your hurt alone because this Savior isn't your Savior. Maybe you have never given yourself to Him.

Jesus is saying to you today, "Why are you carrying that all alone? I died for you. Let me be your Savior and let Me carry your pain. Let Me begin to apply my love to your wounds." If you've never done that, why walk alone one more day? Only someone who's been "broken" can help you. Come to the mangled body on the blood-stained cross and see that the Son of God was "broken" so you don't have to be anymore.



<https://hutchcraft.com>



Honor

The theme for Veterans Day 2022 is "Honor." Veterans are proud of their military service in defending our Nation. Honor reflects the military value and tradition of answering the call to duty. There is distinct honor in serving to protect our way of life and the Constitution of the United States of America.

What Is Veterans Day?

Veterans Day gives Americans the opportunity to celebrate the bravery and sacrifice of all U.S. veterans. However, most Americans confuse this holiday with Memorial Day, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

What's more, some Americans don't know why we commemorate our veterans on Nov. 11. It's imperative that all Americans know the history of Veterans Day so that we can honor our former service members properly.

History of Veterans Day

Veterans Day, formerly known as Armistice Day, was originally set as a U.S. legal holiday to honor the end of World War I, which officially took place on Nov. 11, 1918. In legislation that was passed in 1938, Nov. 11 was "dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be hereafter celebrated and known as 'Armistice Day.'" As such, this new legal holiday honored World War I veterans.

In 1954, after having been through both World War II and the Korean War, the 83rd U.S. Congress -- at the urging of veterans service organizations -- amended the Act of 1938 by striking out the word "Armistice" and inserting the word "Veterans." With the approval of this legislation on June 1, 1954, Nov. 11 became a day to honor American veterans of all wars.

The 28-Day Prayer Journey: Ask

by Chrystal Evans Hurst, author of *The 28-Day Prayer Journey*

received as: <newsletter@e.faithgateway.com>

Date: Thu. Sep. 29, 2022

Today we are bravely praying big and bold prayers to God! Morning Meditation

What would you ask God to do in your life, or in the life of another, if you believed He would do it? What would you ask God for if you weren't afraid to take a chance on the impossible? Often I find that we pray safe prayers because we don't want to be disappointed if God doesn't answer.

If we're single and would like to be married, we may fear asking God for the desires of our hearts because we fear God might not answer.

If we're suffering from an illness or an injury or a disease, we fail to come before God boldly because we reason, "Who am I to be healed when others continue to suffer?"

If we want to see the salvation of a loved one — a child, a sibling, a parent — we may stop asking God to grab hold of our loved one because we can't imagine how God could possibly answer our prayer.

Jesus chided several people for having little faith. Check it out for yourself: Matthew 6:30; Matthew 8:26; Matthew 14:31; Matthew 16:8; Matthew 17:20.

Don't miss out on the purposes and plans that God has for you because you don't exercise faith and ask Him to intervene in your everyday life. But don't fail to experience His intervention because you are too busy praying outside of His will either.

Don't know what to pray? Need guidance on how to direct your prayers? Here are some simple thoughts to get you going:

Read God's Word to know His heart.

Train yourself to do what His Word tells you to do.

Seek to think and act in ways that honor God and bring Him glory.

Pray — talking to God often — and believe that He hears.

Okay, friend. Take a deep breath. Now, what would you dare to ask, for yourself or someone else, if you actually believed God would answer?

Pick the one thing — the thing you don't ask for because you don't think you deserve it, the thing that, in a million years, you don't believe you can have, the thing you're afraid you won't ever receive. And pray for that. You are worth it.

Don't just pray about what's logical and possible. Pray hard about the impossible. God will show you that nothing, nothing, nothing is impossible with Him. Ever. Period. End of story.

Prayer Prompt

Dear God, I ask that You would _____. Help me to believe. Help my unbelief.

Write each of your bold requests in your journal.

Afternoon Reflection

To us, waiting is wasting. To God, waiting is working. ~ Louie Giglio, pastor

I know what many of you were thinking after this morning's prayer prompt. "But I have been asking God to move in a particular way, and He hasn't answered yet! It's been forever!"

My friend, I speak to you as I speak to myself. That thought is real and it can be frustrating, but that's not the most important thing. The important thing is whether you choose, as you wait, to still trust Him, love Him, believe in Him, wait for Him, serve Him, honor Him, and glorify Him every day that you get to live on this earth.

Will you be bold enough to ask and fearless enough to wait and to keep asking, if necessary? At the end of the day, our desires should never eclipse our determination to grow more in love with the Man who gave His life for us. If

you get tired of waiting, remember this: He is always your answer. Any other desire you have should only point you back to Him. So pray boldly and without fear, but enjoy the waiting room, because it simply gives you more time to focus on your relationship with Him.

We are in the second half of the day. The Word says that in this world you will have trouble (John 16:33). I bet at this time of day, someone is finding that to be true! But we also see that David, a man after God's own heart, didn't just have trouble, he took his difficulties to the Lord in prayer.

I took my troubles to the Lord; I cried out to Him, and He answered my prayer.

- Psalm 120:1 NLT

Take a moment to tell God about your day. Do you know someone else who's having a hard time? Talk to God about them too. God has been watching. He's omniscient, remember? But He doesn't want simply to know about your day or the day of someone you care about. He wants to be involved in your day as you share your highs and lows with Him. He wants you to intervene in the life of another because you took the time to care in prayer. So pause right now and have a little chat with Him.

Prayer Prompt

Dear God, can we talk? Today/this week/this month/this year has been really hard for me or my family or friend because _____.

Evening Inspiration

Have you prayed about it as much as you have talked about it?

We talk about what's wrong, what we want, or what we wish we could change. But the question is do we pray about it as much as we talk about it? We will call up a friend in a second, share our two cents' worth on Facebook, or even talk to ourselves under our breath! But do we have the habit of taking everything to God in prayer? Today, and for the remainder of this week, make a concerted effort to talk to God more than you talk to others about what concerns you. Be challenged to spend more time in His Word than you do on social media. Be determined to rehearse externally and

Continued on page 4

internally only what God says about a matter (instead of how you feel about it). And watch Him change how you see your life and how you see the world.

As you near the end of the day, lay down the things you hold so tightly that they hurt you. If you struggle to make requests of God and then leave them there, that's okay. Your ability to release your concerns is a function of the depth of your relationship with Him. Until then, write down your concerns that threaten to morph into worry. Keep writing them down until they no longer tie your head and your heart into knots.

Lay down tonight, knowing that you have done your part to make your request known. Now trust God to do His.

And when you offer your prayers to God in the quiet place, where it's only the two of you, don't be afraid to pray those big bold prayers.

Excerpted with permission from The 28-Day Prayer Journey by Chrystal Evans Hurst, copyright Chrystal Evans Hurst.

Submitted by Carole Missel

**Jehoshaphat, Isaiah, and Job:
Prayers for a Time Such As This**

This inspiration comes from:
"100 Favorite Bible Prayers"

received as:

<newsletter@e.faithgateway.com>

Date: Fri. Oct. 14, 2022

For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.

2 Chronicles 20:12

Jehoshaphat and his people were about to face a great enemy, and they were afraid. Armies were on their way to drive them out of the land God had given them, and Jehoshaphat did the only thing he could think to do: he prayed. In his prayer, Jehoshaphat admitted that the people were powerless to stop what was coming at them, and they simply did not know what to do.

Haven't we all, at some point in our lives, prayed a similar prayer? We've all faced a scary situation, an uncertain outcome, or a devastating

diagnosis. Just like Jehoshaphat, we've experienced times when — on our own — we were powerless against what was coming at us. Hasn't each of us prayerfully uttered the words, "I don't know what to do"?

The beauty of this prayer is that, while the people didn't know what to do, they did know where to look. To focus their gaze on the enemy or themselves would have served only to heighten the people's fear and despair. They knew their only hope was to fix their eyes on God.

There will be times in our lives when we feel powerless, fearful, and uncertain as to what to do. In those moments, however, we can choose to fix our eyes on the One who can calm any storm, defeat any foe, and lead us through any valley.

Father, I fix my eyes on You as You fill me with Your certainty.

*

**It is during seasons of sorrow and suffering
that we sense the nearness of Him the most.**

*O Lord, You are my God; I will exalt You; I will praise Your name,
for You have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure.*

Isaiah 25:1 ESV

God is the One who knows the end from the beginning. He is never caught off guard by our circumstances or bewildered by our behavior. He never feels pressured by the passing of time. God has always been — and will always be — in complete control of His creation.

Isaiah's acceptance of God's eternal nature, sovereignty, and faithfulness was evident in the way he prayed. He knew that God had a plan — a faithful and sure one formed long ago. Isaiah knew what Jeremiah knew: God's plans for us have been prepared in advance (Jeremiah 1:5), and they are plans to prosper us (Jeremiah 29:11).

When we understand that God has a plan and that nothing about our existence is haphazard or out of control, it changes the way we pray. And when we understand that we were made on purpose and with a purpose, it changes the way we live. Each of us is intentionally and uniquely handmade by a holy God who has a plan for us.

God has proven time and again that He is able "to rescue the godly from trials" (2 Peter 2:9 ESV). He led His followers out of lions' dens, fiery furnaces, and prisons because He still had plans for those individuals. If there's still breath in your body, He isn't finished with you. Trust Him to be as He has always been: faithful and sure.

Only You, God, are worthy of my trust. You know the plans You have made for me, and I can rest assured in Your promise.

*

I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You.

Job 42:5

When have you felt the closest to God? For many of us, it is during seasons of sorrow and suffering that we sense the nearness of Him the most. God has promised us that He will never leave us. We can always be assured of His presence, but it is often in those moments of agony that He chooses to reveal Himself in a whole new way.

Job was a man of great faith. He was described as a man who was "blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil" (Job 1:1 ESV). He made it his practice to rise early and offer prayers and sacrifices for his entire family. By all accounts, Job was a good and godly man. Yet, in his prayer, Job acknowledged that his suffering allowed him to see with his own eyes what he had always heard to be true of God.

We can all think of times when we've seen God at work with our own eyes. Maybe it was in the form of physical protection from an accident or illness that should have had a worse outcome. Or perhaps it looked like provision from an unexpected source in a time of great need. Or it may have been a person who

came along at just the right moment to comfort, guide, or assist us.

We have heard of You, Lord, but now our eyes see You.

Submitted by Carole Missel

They Walked with God: Jairus

This inspiration comes from:

“They Walked with God”

by Max Lucado

received as:

<newsletter@e.faithgateway.com>

Date: Mon. Oct. 17, 2022

Before You Begin

Read Mark 5:21–24, 35–43 NIV

When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around Him while He was by the lake. Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when He saw Jesus, He fell at His feet. He pleaded earnestly with Him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed around Him.

While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?”

Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”

He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.” But they laughed at Him.

After He put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with Him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha koum!” (which means “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”). Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were complete-

ly astonished. He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

When my daughters were young, we tried an experiment.

I asked Jenna, then eight years old, to go to one side of the den. I had Andrea, six, stand on the other. Three-year-old Sara and I sat on the couch in the middle and watched. Jenna’s job was to close her eyes and walk. Andrea’s job was to be Jenna’s eyes and talk her safely across the room.

With phrases like, “Take two baby steps to the left” and, “Take four giant steps straight ahead,” Andrea successfully navigated her sister through a treacherous maze of chairs, a vacuum cleaner, and a laundry basket.

Then Jenna took her turn. She guided Andrea past her mom’s favorite lamp and shouted just in time to keep her from colliding into the wall when she thought her right foot was her left foot.

After several treks through the darkness, they stopped and we processed.

“I didn’t like it,” Jenna complained. “It’s scary going where you can’t see.” “I was afraid I was going to fall,” Andrea agreed. “I kept taking little steps to be safe.” I can relate, can’t you? We grown-ups don’t like the dark either. But we walk in it.

We, like Jenna, often complain about how scary it is to walk where we can’t see. And we, like Andrea, often take timid steps so we won’t fall.

We’ve reason to be cautious: We are blind. Blind to the future.

It’s one limitation we all share. The wealthy are just as blind as the poor. The educated are just as sightless as the unschooled. And the famous know as little about the future as the unknown.

Don’t be afraid; just believe.

— Mark 5:36 NIV

None of us knows how our children will turn out. None of us knows the day we will die. No one knows whom he or she will marry or even if marriage lies before him or her. We are universally, absolutely, unalterably blind.

We are all Jenna with her eyes shut, groping through a dark room, listening for a familiar voice — but with one difference. Her surroundings are familiar and friendly. Ours can be hostile and fatal. Her worst fear is a stubbed toe. Our worst fear is more threatening: cancer, divorce, loneliness, death.

And try as we might to walk as straight as we can, chances are a toe is going to get stubbed and we are going to get hurt.

Just ask Jairus. He is a man who has tried to walk as straight as he can. But Jairus is a man whose path has taken a sudden turn into a cave — a dark cave. And he doesn’t want to enter it alone.

Jairus is the leader of the synagogue. That may not mean much to you and me, but in the days of Christ the leader of the synagogue was the most important man in the community. The synagogue was the center of religion, education, leadership, and social activity. The leader of the synagogue was the senior religious leader, the highest-ranking professor, the mayor, and the best-known citizen all in one.

Jairus has it all. Job security. A guaranteed welcome at the coffee shop. A pension plan. Golf every Thursday and an annual all-expenses-paid trip to the national convention.

Who could ask for more? Yet Jairus does. In fact, he would trade the whole package of perks and privileges for just one assurance — that his daughter will live.

The Jairus we see in this story is not the clear-sighted, black-frosted, nicely groomed civic leader. He is instead a blind man begging for a gift. He fell at Jesus’ feet, “saying again and again, ‘My daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so she will be healed and will live’” (Mark 5:23 NIV).

He doesn’t barter with Jesus. He just pleads.

There are times in life when everything you have to offer is nothing compared to what you are asking to receive. Jairus is at such a point. What could a man offer in exchange for his child’s life? So, there are no games. No hag-

They Walked with God: Jairus *continued*
 gling. No masquerades. The situation is starkly simple: Jairus is blind to the future and Jesus knows the future. So Jairus asks for His help.

And Jesus, who loves the honest heart, goes to give it.

And God, who knows what it is like to lose a child, empowers His Son.

But before Jesus and Jairus get very far, they are interrupted by emissaries from Jairus's house.

"Your daughter is dead. There is no need to bother the teacher anymore" (v. 35 NIV).

Get ready. Hang on to your hat. Here's where the story gets moving. Jesus goes from being led to leading, from being convinced by Jairus to convincing Jairus. From being admired to being laughed at, from helping out the people to casting out the people.

Here is where Jesus takes control.

But Jesus paid no attention to what they said... — v. 36 NRSV

I love that line! It describes the critical principle for seeing the unseen: Ignore what people say. Block them out. Turn them off. Close your ears. And, if you must, walk away. Ignore the ones who say it's too late to start over.

Disregard those who say you'll never amount to anything.

Turn a deaf ear toward those who say that you aren't smart enough, fast enough, tall enough, or big enough — ignore them.

Faith sometimes begins by stuffing your ears with cotton.

Jesus turns immediately to Jairus and pleads:

Don't be afraid; just believe. — Mark 5:36 NIV

Jesus compels Jairus to see the unseen. When Jesus says, "Just believe," He is imploring, "Don't limit your possibilities to the visible. Don't listen only for the audible. Don't be controlled by the logical. Believe there is more to life than meets the eye!"

"Trust me," Jesus is pleading. "Don't be afraid; just trust."

Excerpted with permission from "They Walked with God" by Max Lucado, copyright Max Lucado.

The Charcoal Corral Open Family Fun Event

October 5, 2022



The contestants gather for a group photo. Regrettably the contest organizer, Cathy Mlyniec, was missing due to Covid.



Players surveyed the course and planned their strategy.



Vivienne showed a quiet, but determined confidence.



Friendly smiles of the competitors



Pastor had his mysterious game face on which paid off as he came in Number 1 in the tournament...

...but Carole got the last laugh by winning a free round of golf in 2023 where she intends to even the score.

Pastor beware...





The State of Theology

Survey Produced by
Ligonier Ministries
and LifeWay Research
<https://thestateoftheology.com/>

What do Americans believe about God, salvation, ethics, and the Bible?

Ligonier Ministries and LifeWay Research partnered to find out. Every two years, we take the theological temperature of the United States to help Christians better understand today's culture and to equip the church with better insights for discipleship.

Read some of our key findings from 2022 below and explore the data for yourself.

Statement No. 4

Does God Change?

As we look at ourselves and at the world, it is clear that human beings, along with the rest of creation, undergo frequent changes. But does this principle of change apply to God as well?

The Bible affirms the truth that the triune God is both omniscient, meaning that He knows all things, and immutable, meaning that He cannot and does not change (Isa. 46:10; Mal. 3:6; James 1:17; 1 John 3:20). Despite this truth, the majority of adults in the United States believe that God both learns and adapts to different circumstances.

Despite the clear teaching of Scripture, this year's survey reveals that approximately half of evangelicals believe that God learns and adapts to various situations, meaning that they believe that God does change.

These results show that American evangelicals and the general U.S. population are essentially equivalent in their agreement with this statement. Nearly half of both groups believe that God changes by learning and adapting. This may indicate the influence of open theism (which denies God's complete knowledge of future events) and process theology (which denies God's omnipotence and asserts that He does undergo changes) within the evangelical church. This finding may

also indicate a lack of clear, biblical teaching on the character of God in evangelical churches.

Statement No. 15

Are We Born Innocent?

When God created the world, everything He made was good (Gen. 1:10, 21, 25, 31). Yet through Adam and Eve's rebellion in the garden of Eden, humankind became corrupted. The Bible teaches the concept of original sin, which means that since the fall, every human being inherits a sin nature from the time of their conception (Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12). In other words, we are not sinners because we sin; rather, we sin because we are sinners.

It is unsurprising that most U.S. adults believe that humans are born innocent, given the influence of humanistic philosophies and worldviews that teach self-determinism and a view of humankind as basically good.

The fact that almost two-thirds of evangelicals believe that humans are born in a state of innocence reveals that the biblical teaching of original sin is not embraced by most evangelicals. God's Word, however, makes clear that all humans are "by nature children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3). This truth is foundational for an accurate understanding of the gospel and of our absolute need for the grace of God in salvation.

U.S. Adults: Trends

The State of Theology survey has been conducted every two years since our first U.S. survey in 2014. Survey results over the past eight years reveal that Americans increasingly reject the Bible's divine origin and more readily embrace sexual behavior that is condemned in Scripture.

The Bible

U.S. adults increasingly reject the divine authorship of the Bible, relegating it to the same category as other religious writings and purportedly sacred texts. This view makes it easy for individuals to accept biblical teaching that they resonate with while simultaneously rejecting any biblical teaching that is out of step with their own personal views or broader cul-

tural values.

The Bible, however, is a unified message from the one true God. As such, it is to be embraced in all its fullness as God's perfect revelation to humankind (Prov. 30:5; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19–21). We must conform our lives to Scripture rather than twist Scripture to suit our lives.

This is the clearest and most consistent trend revealed by the State of Theology survey since it began in 2014.

Conclusion

The 2022 State of Theology survey reveals that Americans increasingly reject the divine origin and complete accuracy of the Bible. With no enduring plumb line of absolute truth to conform to, U.S. adults are also increasingly holding to unbiblical worldviews related to human sexuality. In the evangelical sphere, doctrines including the deity and exclusivity of Jesus Christ, as well as the inspiration and authority of the Bible, are increasingly being rejected. While positive trends are present, including evangelicals' views on abortion and sex outside of marriage, an inconsistent biblical ethic is also evident, with more evangelicals embracing a secular worldview in the areas of homosexuality and gender identity.

These results convey the ongoing need for the church to be engaged in apologetics, helping unbelievers by providing a well-reasoned defense of the Christian faith, and helping believers by strengthening their clarity and conviction regarding why they believe what they do. Additionally, the people of God must continue to obey the Great Commission by communicating the whole counsel of God in biblical evangelism and discipleship. The need is great, but the power and promises of God can equip the church to bring truth and light to a deceived and dark world.

Note: This is just a sample of the complete survey. One can go to the website <https://thestateoftheology.com/> and there find a link to the complete survey.



Wednesday's Word

A WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL FROM PAUL TRIPP

wednesday@paultripp.com
October 19, 2022

The Middle World

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...”

In the ebb and flow of this middle world between the already of rescuing grace and the not yet of final victory grace, where things are not yet what they should and will be, yet so much better than they would be without the gloriously transformative interruption of the cross, where the process of rescue, reconciliation, restoration, recreation began, there is reason to mourn.

There are times in this middle world where sadness is profound, darkness seems deep, victory is a distant shore, and the journey seems too hard. In the dark night of mourning, human suffering seems too great, the messiness of the church seems too prevalent, the power of remaining sin seems too strong, the failure of heroes too frequent, too many false messiahs, too many lost ones, God's army consumed by too much infighting to have strength left to fight the one true enemy.

The world around us groans and we, too, groan for the final redemption, that distant victorious shore, promised, but not yet realized.

But in the dark valley there is a presence, one like us but completely unlike us. He is with us in the night, a shining light of holiness and hope, wisdom and power, justice and mercy. He is resolute yet tender, on the march but patient, convicting and comforting, ruling and rescuing, commanding and empowering, promising and providing.

He beckons us to walk through the darkness, eyes on him, trust in our

hearts, with confidence and courage, humility and hope, meditating, not on the darkness, but on the light of his presence, his rule on our behalf and the grace he brings with him. He gifts us with reasons to celebrate, we are not alone, so much provided, that we could never provide for ourselves.

The fruit of his rescuing and transforming grace are flashes of light in the darkness. They punctuate the night, causing the night not to be so dark.

In the darkest of nights, his presence and his grace give us reason to celebrate. We are not alone; his presence with us means we will reach that distant shore. We will see the final victory, we will eat at the banquet table of the redeemed.

He is our guarantee, our destiny is secure. So we don't just mourn, we celebrate. The days are often dark and sad, but we have divine assistance for the journey, a divine guarantee of victory. Tears mixed with joy is the way of the middle world, because in darkness we begin to hear the distant sound of songs of victory.

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” (Psalm 23:4-6)

God bless,
Paul David Tripp



Reflection Questions

1. It's easy to reflect on the brokenness of the world after a major tragedy or a personal crisis, but how often do you reflect on its brokenness in your day-to-day life? How might an increased awareness of sin be helpful in your walk with God?

2. How does God's presence change how you live in this broken world? Be specific about some of the ways you find practical help from God (prayer, worship, fellowship with other believers, etc.).
3. What are some ways you can be a "sad celebrant" today, mourning the brokenness of the world while celebrating the rescue of grace?
4. Read Psalm 23. How can this psalm help you during times of trouble?
5. Pray that God would give you eyes to see your sin clearly today and ask for His grace to reign in your heart.



Our Mission

The EPC exists to carry out the Great Commission of Jesus as a denomination of Presbyterian, Reformed, Evangelical, and Missional congregations.

Our Vision

To the glory of God, the EPC family aspires to embody and proclaim Jesus' love as a global movement of congregations engaged together in God's mission through transformation, multiplication, and effective biblical leadership.

Our Motto

*In Essentials: Unity.
In Non-Essentials: Liberty.
In All Things: Charity.*

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The Steeple Newsletter

is published monthly by the Leicester Evangelical Presbyterian Church, for the purpose of proclaiming that Jesus is Lord and that He is moving among his people here. Our intent is to keep the readers informed of local events, provide information to stimulate and edify it's readers, mixed with a touch of humor to lighten the day.

Submission Deadline:

The 3rd Sunday of the month.

Contact:

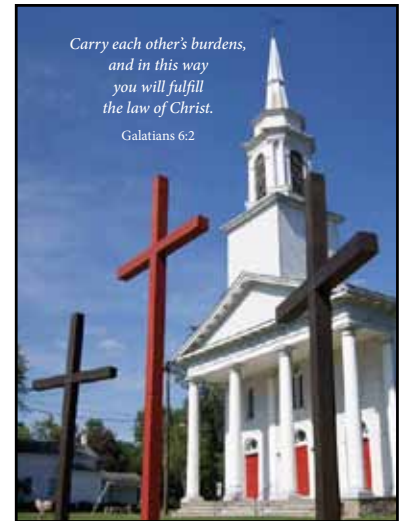
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Technical Advisor, Sharon Richardson

“5 and Alive Expression”

***Praise the
LORD,
my soul!***

Paraphrasing Exodus 18:21

If you have a good “5 and Alive Expression” for next month’s issue, please forward them to Leo Richardson.



Leicester EPC

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**If you're happy and you know it,
clap your hands.**

If not, count your blessings.

For Emergencies or Personal Matters

Pastor David Missel 382-3311 Church
658-1197 Residence

Pastor David is presently scheduling Fridays as his day off so matters of less urgency could be left on the church office answering device, or call one of the Ruling Elders:

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*“I have come that they may have life
and have it abundantly.”*

John 10:10

**LEPC Supports Our
EduNations Child**

Margret Conteh

Margret lives in Sierra Leone, Africa, where the Presbytery of the Alleghenies reaches out with the Gospel in several villages. Margret attends the Mayatta Hope Academy in Makump.

She is now 15 years old, and her hobby is weaving.

Please remember her in your prayers and in your giving to the Missions Fund.

