

Witness January 2019
Volume 28, Issue 1

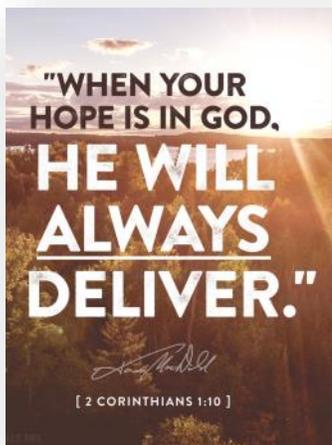


Sunday Service:

9:30 Worship Service
& Children's Church

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Beginning Again

Words from Pastor Jonathan Evans

The late Michel Quoist, a French Catholic priest, wrote the book, *Prayers*. (The French edition is *Prayers for Life*.) A friend of mine, Jon Swedberg, who really became my mentor when I began Youth Ministry, and I didn't know what the heck I was doing, gave a copy of this to me. Over the years, since I was a young pastor, it has become a kind of safe place to go, often reflecting my own heart before God.



One of his prayers expresses the reason I don't make New Year's resolutions. It's about sin and some of what Quoist prays reflects how I've often felt:

I have fallen Lord,
Once more.
I can't go on, I'll never succeed.
I am ashamed, I don't dare look at you.
And yet I struggled, Lord, for I knew you were right near me, bending over me,
watching.
But temptation blew like a hurricane,
And instead of looking at you I turned my head away.
I stepped aside
While you stood, silent and sorrowful,
Like the spurned fiancé who sees his loved one carried away by the enemy.
When the wind died down as suddenly as it had arisen,
When the lightning ceased after proudly streaking the darkness,
All of a sudden, I found myself alone, ashamed, disgusted, with my sin in my hands....
Lord, don't look at me like that,
For I am naked,
I am dirty,
I am down,
Shattered,

With no strength left.

I dare make no more promises,
I can only lie bowed before you.

At the end of Quoist's prayers, he always adds the response he gets from God (always arresting and biblical). In his response to this prayer, God says:

Come, son, look up.
Isn't it mainly your vanity that is wounded?...
Do you think that there's a limit to God's love?
Do you think that for a moment I stopped loving you?
But you still rely on yourself, son.
You must rely only on me.
Ask my pardon
And get up quickly.
You see, it's not falling that is the worst,
But staying on the ground.

"I dare make no more promises." I get that. The truth is that most of my life I've made promises and broken them. On New Year's Eve, when everybody is making resolutions and turning over a new leaf, I look at my old shriveled leaf and attempt to resolve not to do it again, not to turn it over one more time. So I don't make New Year's resolutions (well, most of the time!). When I change and get better (sometimes I do and sometimes not so much), it is surprising faithfulness.

The surprise is a gift and the guilt is a curse. So, I've given it up.
I have a friend who, when he was young, promised God he would go on the mission field. Because of circumstances beyond his control and

his own choices, it never happened, and he lived in guilt the rest of his life. When bad things happened to my friend, he was sure it was because of the unfulfilled promise made years before. My friend knew about forgiveness and grace; but, nevertheless, that promise far too often haunted him.

So, for the most part, I really don't make New Year's resolutions.

Well, that's not entirely true. I've prayed about it and this year I've decided to violate my only New Year's resolution to never make New Year's resolutions. I finally have a New Year's resolution:

I Resolve to Begin Again!

That doesn't mean, of course, that when I begin again, I'll do any better than I did the first time...but I'm going to begin again.

The truth is that most of my life I've made promises and broken them. Someone has said that the difference between a successful person and one who fails is that the successful one got up the last time he or she was knocked down. That has the false premise attached to it that if one keeps getting up after being knocked down, one will eventually be successful. The truth is that some people keep getting knocked down and keep getting up until they die...and never become a success.

I could be one of those, but I don't care. I resolve to get up and begin again. No matter what, I'll begin again and again and again. Ministry can be tough. And, as Abraham Lincoln once stated, you can't please all the people all the time, so as I reflect back on my ministry, I suspect there were people who have prayed for me, and I'm still in ministry because of those faithful people!

I'm still here...

I've experienced times when I've felt beaten, afraid, and sometimes lonely, amazed and confused. I'm sometimes right and sometimes wrong. I'm badly in need of grace, embarrassed a lot, often think it's insane that I do what I do, and frankly, I even want to run away on occasion. But I'm still here. In other words, I've always begun again. And not only that, I'm going to keep beginning again until I drool or die.

So, Pastor Jonathan, you say, where are you going with this? Are you just irritated and decided to rant?

Actually, no.

In fact, I was reading Paul's comments (one of my favorite passages in Scripture), "For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from

such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again" (2 Corinthians 1:8-10).

Paul told his young friend, Timothy, that he was the "chief of sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15) and put legs on that confession in Romans 7. He told his friends in Philippi (Philippians 4:12-13) that he had been rich and poor, hungry and full, and brought low and high, but through it all he got up and began again.

That's doable! I can do that. All it requires is that I not leave, and I won't because (aside from the fact that I don't have any other place to go because nobody will ever love, forgive and accept me the way he does) the only people who begin again are people who know that if they finally give up, God will still love them.

And that's what it means to be a Christian. That's it.

Someone told me about a *New Yorker* cartoon of a father talking to his prodigal son. The caption read: "Well, okay, but this is the fourth time we've killed the fatted calf."

As I look to the coming new year, I think about all the fatted calves sacrificed for me when God wanted to have a party. Then I think about you and the fatted calves that died so you could celebrate.

Go ahead and make some New Year's resolutions. You'll probably be more successful with them than I am.

But should January 2 roll around and you've blown it, it's okay. Ask the Father to kill another calf and enjoy the party. But the next morning get out of bed and begin again...even if beginning again won't be any more successful than it was on January First.

It will be enough.

He asked me to remind you.

Oh yes, there is also the possibility that you'll be surprised by the faithfulness he will give you as his gift. There are parties to celebrate that too.

He wanted me to remind you of that.



Men's Breakfast

The Men's Breakfast that meets on Tuesdays has a new location! Join the men Tuesdays at 8 am at Spur's for great food and fellowship. They hope to see you there!

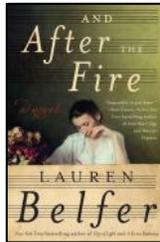
Office Closed

The church office will be closed on Tuesday, January 1 for New Year's Day.

Book Club News

Hello Book Worms! The Book Club has chosen the following book to read and discuss:

Jan 4: *And After the Fire* by Lauren Belfer
Feb 1: *Pachinko* by Min Jin Lee



Un-decking the Halls

Please join the Worship Committee as they pack away the Christmas decorations after another Christmas Season and prepare for a whole new year! The greens come down on Sunday, January 6 after the worship service. See Judy Taylor with any questions.

Annual Congregational Meeting

The Annual Congregational Meeting is set for Sunday, January 13, 2019 after the worship service. The meeting runs about half an hour and covers last year's gatherings and events and looks forward to this year's budget and events. Please come if you are able.

DON'T MISS THE DEADLINE!



The Witness deadline for the February issue will be Thursday, January 24. Please double check your calendar and have all articles into the office by the deadline!

FOOD BANK SUNDAY January 27

Bring your items for the Wickenburg CAP Food Bank to church on the last Sunday of the month or drop your donation off in the fellowship hall anytime. The Deacons will see that it is delivered.



OFFICE HOURS
 Monday-Thursday
 9:00 AM—1:00 PM
 Friday 8:00—10:00 AM

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 Front_office03@hotmail.com
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Dave Ramsey Seminar

The 7th Day Adventist church is hosting a 9-week Dave Ramsey seminar beginning Thursday, January 10 @ 6:30 pm. Each session will focus on how to budget and spend wisely. If you're interested or have questions, please contact Diane Droze of the 7th Day Adventist Church at 602-295-6269 or her email dianedroze@gmail.com. RSVP's are encouraged, but walk-ups are also welcome.



Flowers & Refreshments

How wonderful is it to enjoy fresh flowers and yummy baked goods every Sunday? These luxuries are only possible because of the volunteers that step up every week/month. Would you like to provide flowers in honor of someone, recognize a special occasion, or just bless everyone with the beauty and smell of fresh flowers? A sign-up sheet can be found in the Fellowship Hall next to the exit door. You can order flowers from our local florist and church member, Verne Crissman, or design and provide your own arrangement the morning you've chosen. In 2018 only 6 Sundays were blessed with fresh flowers. Let's add a few more this year!



If food is more your thing, join with a friend to provide refreshments for fellowship time after the church service. The 4th Sunday of every month is left open for volunteers to share their goodies with the congregation! A sign-up sheet for this opportunity can also be found near the exit door in the Fellowship Hall.



Reaching Out—Caring Ministry



Our first year of the Caring Ministry is coming to a close and I would like to thank the following ladies for their loving care to our congregation: Deb Berner, Gail Evans, Harriet Haggett, Gail Graham, Ruby Lane, Jane Lutch, Marsha North, Deb Pinnell, Nancy Rae, Brownie Rhymer Joyce Shaw, Allie Stewart, Judy Varner, Donna Watkins, Arleen Younkman. These wonderful ladies have sent cards, made phone calls, also home and hospital visits. Our church is very fortunate to have these ladies in our congregation.

Lysle Riley Scholarships

Thanks to the generosity of the congregation we have been able to support our college students with awards of between \$500 and \$1000 per semester. We anticipate having three applicants for the winter/spring semester and will decide on the amount of their awards in January. Now is the time if you wish to donate to the scholarship fund. One third of any offerings to the deacons goes into the scholarship fund. You can also make a dedicated offering using the green deacons envelopes and writing "scholarship fund" on your check and on the envelope.

A Covenant Partnership?

Ready to put down roots in this community of faith? Speak to Pastor Jonathan or Gail Graham (gkg1025@yahoo.com) of your interest anytime. Covenant Partner (New Member) booklets are ready and session is waiting to meet with you and welcome you as an active member!



Session Highlights



Session took a break in December for the Christmas Season.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, January 29 @ 4:30 pm.

Computer Help

I know a lot of you have asked about getting help with computers/tablets/etc. Larry Lake recently brought to my attention a resource that may be of interest to you. Here's the article straight from *The Wickenburg Sun*:

The Wickenburg Public Library is hosting a few upcoming events in the month of January.

Computer tech help Tuesdays will be held at 10 a.m. This time is one-on-one help with smartphones, laptops, digital media, and tablets. Bring a device or use one of the library's to receive expert aid in troubleshooting.

The Carpenter

Two brothers living on adjoining farms fell into conflict. It was the first serious rift in 40 years of farming side-by-side, sharing machinery and trading labor and goods as needed without a hitch.

It began with a small misunderstanding and it grew into a major difference and finally, it exploded into an exchange of bitter words followed by weeks of silence.

One morning there was a knock on John's door. He opened it to find a man with a carpenter's toolbox. "I'm looking for a few days' work," he said. "Perhaps you would have a few small jobs here and there I could help with? Could I help you?"

"Yes," said the older brother. "I do have a job for you. Look across the creek at that farm. That's my neighbor. In fact, it's my younger brother! Last week there was a meadow between us. He recently took his bulldozer to the river levee and now there is a creek between us. He may have done this to spite me, but I'll do him one better. See that pile of lumber by the barn? I want you to build me an 8-foot fence—so I won't need to see his place or his face anymore."

The carpenter said, "I think I understand the situation. Show me the nails and the post-hole digger and I'll be able to do a job that pleases you."

The older brother had to go to town, so he helped the carpenter get the materials ready and then he was off for the day. The carpenter worked hard all that day. About sunset when the farmer returned, the carpenter had just finished his job.

The farmer's eyes opened wide, his jaw dropped. There was no fence there at all.

It was a bridge that stretched from one side of the creek to the other! A fine piece of work, handrails and all! And the neighbor, his younger brother, was coming toward them, his hand outstretched.

"You are quite a fellow to build this bridge after all I've said and done."

The two brothers stood at each end of the bridge, and then they met in the middle, taking each other's hand. They turned to see the carpenter hoist the toolbox onto his shoulder.

"No, wait! Stay a few days. I've a lot of other projects for you," said the older brother.

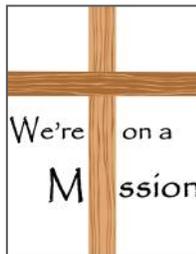
"I'd love to stay on," the carpenter said, "but I have many more bridges to build."



"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least...you did for me.'" Matthew 25:40

Medical Mission Trip 2019

It's coming! Join us March 10-15 as a team travels to Ensenada, Mexico to participate in medical clinics. You do not need a medical background or be able to speak Spanish. You DO need a passport and the desire to share God's love with people who are hurting physically and spiritually. The cost is \$350 and scholarships are available through our Mission Ministry. Please pray about becoming a team member and tell Judy Taylor "Yes, I want to join the medical mission team!" by February 10.



Phoenix Serve Update

Joe & Janet are back at it again. They are looking to take hygiene bags, cases of water, snack bars, chips and wet wipes. Phoenix has moved the homeless from where they usually found them and they had to find them again last month...hunt successful. They are going to limit the clothing and blankets taken last year and concentrate on the hygiene bags and sandwiches as the main focus. They received a check for \$45.00 from us recently that will be used for wet wipes. Another thing they'd like to take on the next venture is home baked treats, cookies or candies, breads etc. If anyone would like to contribute to that please pre-package in sandwich size baggies for distribution. Joseph and Janet want to thank each one of you for your heart for others and your desire to reach out to these children of God who have nothing and appreciate everything that we bless them with. They don't have expectations and demands but humbly accept and appreciate every small gift we give them and appreciate that they are thought of and cared about. Janet encourages anyone who would like to go with the distribution team to step out and join them. It is such a wonderful blessing as we bless others.

GriefShare



This program features biblical, Christ-centered teaching that focuses on grief topics associated with the death of a loved one. The

DVD seminar features nationally respected grief experts and real-life stories of people, followed by a small group discussion about what was viewed. Past participants have related how helpful the information and follow-up discussions were to them.

Many grieving people find they are only beginning the work of healing when friends or family have returned to their daily life routines. Too often people, including Christians, tend to suffer their grief instead of allowing it to do the God-given work for which it is intended. Don't allow fear of what others may think to keep you from what could help you. Confidentiality is very much a part of this program.

Your bereavement experience may be recent or not so recent. You will find encouragement, comfort and help in grieving the death of a spouse, child, parent, sibling, other family member, or friend. No matter what the cause of your loved one's death, this is an opportunity to be around people who understand what you are feeling. You will learn how to recognize the symptoms of being stuck in grief and that you do not need to live in bondage to certain emotions. You will learn valuable information about facing your new normal in life and renewing your hope for the future.

GriefShare will be held Mondays, January 14 through April 8 at 9:30 am to 11:30 am in the Fellowship Hall at First Presbyterian Church.

The only cost are the workbooks for \$15. Scholarships are available for those who are unable to purchase a workbook.

At this time there is no childcare available.

If you have any further questions, please contact Joyce Shaw at 623-910-1329 or Elena Engelsman at 714-334-5812.

To register, please contact the church office at 928-684-2836 or by email at fpc.wickenburg@gmail.com as soon as possible. For those attending church on Sundays, a sign-up sheet is available in the Fellowship Hall.



NEWS FROM PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN



Nifty Needlers & Cool Crafters

meet Tuesdays from 10:00 am to 3:00
p.m. in the Gathering Room. We'll have
you in stitches!!



On December 13, many of the ladies of the church and a few guests met to celebrate the Christmas season (so glad to see Jane Lutch!). Following a delicious tea with mouthwatering goodies, we were entertained with a delightful rendition of the story of Christ's birth. Thank offering boxes were collected, and the proceeds will go to purchase Safeway food bags for the needy in Wickenburg. Lots of cute baby items were donated to the pregnancy center, and everyone went home with cookies from the cookie exchange. What great fun!



**MARK YOUR CALENDAR!
FEBRUARY 13, 2019 @ NOON
WE WILL HOST ST. ALBANS
AND YARNELL PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH FOR LUNCH!!**

Thank You... to everyone who participated in our Christmas Bazaar. Thanks to the men who volunteered to set up the tables for us and to the women who created such great things to sell. And thanks to all who manned the tables and operated the courtyard cafe. The spirit of Christmas was evident as the shoppers shopped and had soup in the courtyard, while listening to the music provided by Carol Arnett and Jim Kimmins. God was all around us. As always, Wilma Doud was the perfect Mrs. Claus. Thank you to Anita's Cocina, Charley's Steakhouse, the Gila Monster Eatery, The Old Livery & Mercantile, Lydia's Mexican Restaurant, and Nicol's West, for their generous donations of gift certificates for the raffle. The Bazaar was a big success thanks to you!! God is good!

		TITHES AND GIFTS		
MONTH OF:	GENERAL FUND	DEACON'S FUND	TOTAL	
December	\$21,239	\$310	\$21,549	
		ATTENDANCE		
MONTH OF:	AVERAGE ATTENDEES			
December	84			



Volunteers

COMMUNION SERVERS

January 6: Rick Watkins, Jane Stevens, Dawn Gatke, Marsha North, Cheryl Longshore

LITURGISTS

Jan 6: Jerry Bishop **Jan 13:** Gail Evans
Jan 20: Arleen Younkman **Jan 27:** Carol Arnett

USHERS

Month of January:
 Ron & Deborah Pinnell



From the Treasurer:

Total income thru 11/30/18 \$160,911.83
 Total expenses thru 11/30/18 \$182,412.09

As the year ends, a reminder to pick up a packet of contribution envelopes in either the narthex or the church office. Unless you are dropping loose cash in the plate, the use of the larger envelopes rather than the smaller visitor envelopes makes the countess' job much easier. Thank you!



Thank you everyone who sent cards with get well wishes for Judy & Ernie Varner. Ernie's road to a complete recovery will take time but his health has improved.
 —Judy Varner

Marcus & Michal Knight express their gratitude to everyone that helped with the wedding and came to support them. We could not have done it without your help and have been so blessed by your love and support.
 —Marcus & Michal Knight

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Bible In A Year



Psalms—3 per week
Proverbs—1 chapter per day
 +
January:
 Genesis, Exodus



Gloria Jepsen (12/26) has gone home to be with our Lord. Please pray over her family during this time.

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 Gordon & Gail Graham, Larry Lake, Cheryl Longshore,
 Joyce Shaw, Judy Taylor, Arleen Younkman,
 Sam Weinschenk

Birthdays

Sharon Reinhardt		Jan 7
Marsha Hill, Glen Longshore		Jan 11
Jonathan Evans		Jan 15
Jane Stevens		Jan 16
Dave Lane		Jan 28
Ruth Callahan		Jan 29
Sharon Lohrenz		Jan 30



If we inadvertently omitted your birthday (or that of a family member) or got the wrong date, please call the Church office, or send an email to the Witness, so that we can add your special day to our list.

January 2019

Witness

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www.facebook.com/firstpresby



Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday, January 13
After Church Service



All FPC Church-goers are encouraged to attend as we discuss the previous year and plan the new one!

