



The Grapevine

Clarksbury United Methodist Church

15924 General Puller Highway, Hardyville, Virginia January 2021

www.clarksburyumc.com

Our Mission:

To receive and share God's love through worship, education, service and outreach.

Pastor Ken's Corner

Psalm 29:1-11 (NRSV)

¹ *Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.*

² *Ascribe to the LORD the glory of his name; worship the LORD in holy splendor.*

³ *The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD, over mighty waters. ⁴ The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.*

⁵ *The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon.*

⁶ *He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox.*

⁷ *The voice of the LORD flashes forth flames of fire.*

⁸ *The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.*

⁹ *The voice of the LORD causes the oaks to whirl, and strips the forest bare; and in his temple all say, "Glory!" ¹⁰ The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever. ¹¹ May the LORD give strength to his people! May the LORD bless his people with peace!*

We Ring in the New Year, 2020 is in the books...finally and we are moving forward into 2021. Hooray! Can I get an Amen? **Happy New Year!!!**

I read the Psalm above and see what I NEED for my focus for this New Year. I need to focus on the **Lord**, attuned to the primary attributes of **Glory** and **Strength** and His **Holy Splendor**.

I need to listen and hear the **Voice of the Lord**, to hear and FEEL...His **power** and **majesty**. I need to look to nature itself to show me how He shapes the world through his impact on every aspect of the world He created. To see His powerful **Voice** roll over the oceans, over forests and trees, throughout the wilderness His **power** is felt.

When the world around us seems to be a **flood** and a **tempest** the Lord still is seated on His Throne, He Reigns forever. **Hallelujah!!!**

The Lord will Give **Strength** to His people and May He **bless** us with **His Peace**.

AMEN!!

The New Year like an open book with **nothing on it's pages** is opening before us. As 2021 unfolds there will be strains of 2020 that follow us into this New Year. Yet, we are hopeful and faithful people. We know the **Lord is with us** throughout **Each and Every new day**.

Throughout the pandemic and social struggles, we are not without HOPE as the vaccine is distributed, more and more people will recover from illness and economic uncertainty. Many of our own families have had COVID and have recovered and are evidence of Hope for healing not the total fear of despair.

**This New Day and this New Year is the Day and the Year that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it! Amen!!! Hallelujah!!!**

The **Cryer Center Mobile Food Pantry** is scheduled to be at Clarksbury on **Saturday, January 2**. Our church has the lead again. The Food Pantry and the Soup Ministry have modified the way these ministries are conducted to be in compliance with the CDC and Virginia COVID-19 requirements. We always need prayers; so even if you can't be here to work the Food Pantry, pray for us and the people we serve.

Let us really pause, take a deep breath, relax and let the VOICE of GOD wash over us and give us **Peace**. Let Him take up residence in our hearts as we feel and hear the Creator of the Universe and His Son our Redeemer and the Holy Spirit in our hearts and souls.

I am so proud of the great generosity and efforts of our **Soup Ministry/Prayer Warriors/Prayer Partners** in providing delicious Christmas meals, cards, letters and calls to many of our members.

Keep the small groups and gatherings in your prayers as weather is changing and we are finding new locations to enjoy some safe, socially distant conversations and wonderful music. Thank you, Randy, Eileen and Jim, and now Sandy, for such great music which adds so much to the joy and the nurturing aspect of these groups for us all as we continue the **social distancing and semi-isolation**. **Thank you, Linda Bartz**, for spearheading this project. Anyone interested in more information about this, please contact Linda or Warren. **It is so good to see each other and be with friends and brothers and sisters "in person" again.**

Our online services, will continue both Facebook and YouTube. THANK YOU to all who are part of this effort. All of you have contributed so much to each service, even you at home when you give us such uplifting feedback. **We are a Church**, in the truest sense of the word...**Together**, through the power of our Lord Jesus, through the grace of God and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

What an AWESOME experience our first **outside In-Person Worship**..... our own to quote Becky... "Worshipping with Carols by Candlelight" & **Communion** service as well was. It was super to serve and receive communion as a family again as we sang those hymns we all have heard so many times by the light of our candles in front of the church wrapped warmly and smiling brightly. Thank You Becky for the awesome effort that your team of people put together and the prayers for no rain came in for us, a day after we planned... **But God is in Charge we need to remain Faithful.**

I am very proud, beyond words, with how **faithful and loyal** you all have been in supporting the church with **prayers, tithes, gifts, talents** and **witness** in spite of our inability to be able to support with our presence.

Help me keep the Prayer Warrior/Partners e-mails updated as information and changes become available. Let us continue in faith and hope to be children of God infused with the Holy Spirit throughout all the travails and trials of life in this world.

Let us resolve to not let COVID-19 define who we are...let us be defined by the words, the example and the glory of our **Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ!** I take great joy in how each of you, as a congregation, has reacted to this ever changing situation.

It is His **Presence IN** you, not the **Presents** you get under the tree, that will really make you feel blessed.

Peace & Grace,

Pastor Ken



A Message from Your Lay Leader

What's this thing that we call Stewardship?

Warren Wright

A well-worn dollar bill and a similarly distressed twenty dollar bill arrive at the Federal Reserve Bank to be retired. As they move along the conveyer belt to be burned, they strike up a conversation. The twenty reminisces about its travels all over the country, "I've had a pretty good life," it proclaims.

"Why, I've been to Las Vegas and Atlantic City, performances on Broadway, the best restaurants in New York, even a cruise to the Caribbean." "Wow!" exclaims the one dollar bill, "You've really had an exciting life!" "So tell me," says the twenty, "where have you been throughout your lifetime?" The one dollar bill replies, "Oh I've been to the Christian Church, the Methodist Church, the Baptist Church..." "Tell me," the twenty dollar bill interrupts, "what's a church?"

So why is money such a touchy topic in churches today anyway? Some people think the church is only out to get their money. "I'm not going to that church, all they ever do is ask for money. Sure they quote scripture and say it's better to give than to receive. Seems to me they are all about receiving." Have you ever heard that before? Just as it is a sensitive issue today, so it was in Jesus' time. That didn't stop Jesus from talking about it though. Did you know that more than half of Jesus' parables relate to stewardship? There are 2,350 passages in the Bible dealing with money and material possessions – more than on any other subject – but it's the least talked about subject in the church.

One out of every six verses in Matthew, Mark, and Luke deals with money. **I get the impression God wants us to deal with this issue regularly.** Throughout the Old Testament stewardship is described as giving the very best of the first of everything in our lives – our thoughts, our hearts, our families, our possessions, our money – nothing is to be held back from God. The New Testament scriptures refer to giving it all to God. Not just the first 10 percent, all of it. "And God can give you more blessings than you need. Then you will always have plenty of everything – enough to give to every good work."

Don't you just love God's straight-forwardness? He sure doesn't pull any punches. God gives so we can give. It's that created in His image thing you know. My favorite author, Max Lucado, put it this way, "You don't give for God's sake. You give for your sake. The purpose of tithing is to teach you to always put God first in your lives." Wouldn't it be nice if we didn't have to worry about meeting our budget? What if I told you that there is a way to avoid the end of the year budget woes by simply increasing your giving by \$1.00-\$2.00-\$3.00-\$4.00-\$5.00 per week. Our Financial Secretary will distribute approximately 45 "Giving Envelopes" for 2021 to members of the church and you will be surprised at how much just an extra dollar a week placed in those envelopes will affect the budget, look at these examples:

\$1.00 per week x 45 x 52=\$2,340.00 per year

\$2.00 per week x 45 x 52=\$4,680.00 per year

\$3.00 per week x 45 x 52=\$7,020.00 per year

\$4.00 per week x 45 x 52=\$9,360.00 per year

\$5.00 per week x 45 x 52=\$11,700.00 per year

Thanks for your faithfulness and may God richly bless you in 2021.

Matthew 6:4 "so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you."



Worship Committee

David Dobson



Happy New Year Clarksbury. I do not have a grand plan or vision of the year together as we still are in “wait and see mode.” Since I do not know anything that will happen in 2021 concerning openings, new rules, sickness, I will pray for it to improve for our congregation, church, and country. What I do know- GOD is in control. However, what should we do in uncertain times? What does God expect of us when things are out of our control?

Most of us know we can't control everything. But we spend a lot of our life trying to control what we can't control. In doing so, we lose what we do have and what we should have stewarded — family relationships, favor with God, our faith, our devotion and relationships with mankind. We lose these things that we are to steward because we're trying to bring the things that are really outside of the sphere of our control into our control. We should look to those Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth for the information we need:

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matt. 6:33).

God gives us a better way to handle those things that are really out of our control. He gives us peace, not necessarily from the storms, but peace in the storm. We are going to begin to trust the One who has all those things in control. Even in times of uncertainty, He says, “I will give you peace *in* the storm, not just from it.”

A lot of times, we doubt whether God's really going to come through. In fact, the word “doubt” means to choose between two things (etymologically speaking). You can't do that. God is saying if we're going to trust Him, we must trust Him ... completely. James writes that in these times of uncertainty, we need wisdom. During uncertain times, we'll see people not trust in God. We need wisdom to know what to do.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways” (James 1:5-8).

In times when we're uncertain and most vulnerable, give thanks and allow the battle to become the Lord's. There are things that will always be out of our control, but they'll never be out of His. Place your trust in Him in those areas and steward what He has given to us. And that's what it means to partner with the Lord.

Warming Tree and Coat Rack Ministry

Kathy Wright; Lucy Blevins, Val Bradley, and Diane Faulkner

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the soup ministry has continued to distribute soup to our recipients, but only the third Monday of each month.

This is because we now deliver groceries from the Cryer Center Mobile food pantry the first Saturday of each month to our recipients.



The soup ministry delivered Thanksgiving meals to residents at Fishing Bay and our other soup recipients as well. During December we delivered Christmas gift bags containing a homemade head pillow rest (donated and made by Jerry Dant) and a pair of warm Bombass socks (donated by Suffolk UMC) to each of our folks.

We also were able to distribute warm coats during our first of the month Cryer Center Mobile Food Pantry distribution. Cold weather nor COVID could stop these ministries! God is good. We DO HAVE some warming articles and coats if needed. You just need to contact Pastor Ken and he will be able to help you.

THANK YOU for supporting these very important ministries of your church. If you would like to help in any way, just contact one of the committee members listed above, or myself, Kathy Wright (757-373-9166) or email kdwright@va.metrocast.net. God Bless.

NURTURE & Outreach

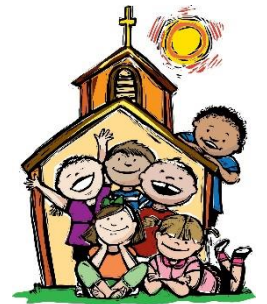
Jerry Dant

Nurture

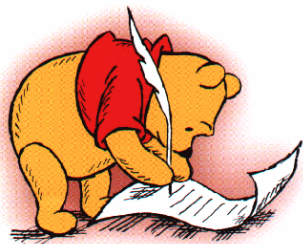
As we leave 2020, and have not seen our friends in church or at home we have been Blessed with notes, telephone visits and drive-by visits. Pastor Ken and Terry have been very faithful with drive-by visits and delivering newsletters and devotional books during the pandemic. It is always great to see their smiling faces as they drive by. As we enter 2021, let's keep up the good work and continue like we did in 2020 until we can personally visit each other and return to church.

Outreach

2020 was a good year for OUTREACH even through the pandemic. We have served the community with the Cryer Center distributing food the 1st Saturday of each month. The Cryer Center has been very supportive of our church with special items for those who had a need. We were very supportive of Dockside throughout the year with gifts for residents on various holidays. Most recently we surprised the residents with a Christmas gift of necks pillows and Bombas socks. We look forward to the time we can return for the Sunday worship service for the residents. Clarksbury has served the community in many ways in 2020 and will continue in 2021.



Mail a letter or card of happiness to our home bound members!



If your last name starts with the letter listed below, please send a card or note to the shut-ins listed.

Why not make a home bound member smile by sending them a card often as well as on their birthday.

If we all participate, our home bound members will get a card frequently from church members, and will have more great memories of Clarksbury.

A-C		
Roegean Speight 09/10 James River Convalescent ctr Aberthaw AVE Room 118 Newport News, VA 23601-4199		Jane Crittenden 8/22 P.O. 30 Hardyville, VA 23070
D-G		
	Reggie Jackson 7/12 672 Gloucester Road Saluda, VA 23149	
H-L		
	Myrtle Clark 10/2 P.O. Box 302 Deltaville, VA 23043	Pastor Jim Salmon 5/24 26306 Mattaponi Trail Milford, VA 22524
M-Z		

Annual Budget for 2020 Operating Funds: \$118,339.00

Total Received for Operating Funds as of December 31: 110,339

Total Income Shortfall by end of December: 8045.00

JANUARY POP

Submitted by Fred Dant

One key reason to pray is because God has commanded us to pray. If we are to be obedient to His will, then prayer must be part of our life in Him.

Christian philosopher and scientist Blaise Pascal (1623-62) wrote, "The heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing ..." This article proposes that prayer has its reasons. Why we pray is important, as is prayer itself. What follows are twelve reasons to pray.

God's Word Calls Us to Pray. One key reason to pray is because God has commanded us to pray. If we are to be obedient to His will, then prayer must be part of our life in Him. Where does the Bible call us to prayer? Several passages are relevant:

"Pray for those who persecute you" -Matthew 5:44 (NIV) [1]

"And when you pray ..." -Matthew 6:5

"This, then, is how you should pray ..." -Matthew 6:9

"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." -Romans 12:12

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests." - Ephesians 6:18

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

"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful." -Colossians 4:2

"Pray continually" -1 Thessalonians 5:17

"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone ..." -1 Timothy 2:1

Prayer is an act of obedience. God calls us to pray and we must respond. Why did Jesus pray? One reason he prayed was as an example so that we could learn from him. The Gospels are full of references to the prayers of Christ, including these examples:

"After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray." -Matthew 14:23

"Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, 'Sit here while I go over there and pray.'" -Matthew 26:36

"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed." -Mark 1:35

"But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed." -Luke 5:16

"One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God." -Luke 6:12

"Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up." -Luke 18:1



Prayer is How We Communicate with God. Prayer allows us to worship and praise the Lord. It also allows us to offer confession of our sins, which should lead to our genuine repentance. Moreover, prayer grants us the opportunity to present our requests to God. All of these aspects of prayer involve communication with our Creator. He is personal, cares for us, and wants to commune with us through prayer.

“... if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” -2 Chronicles 7:14

Isaiah wrote, “He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint” (Isaiah 40:29-31).

Hebrews 4:15-16 reads, “For 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, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

Prayer is not just about asking for God’s blessings – though we are welcome to do so – but it is about communication with the living God. Without communication, relationships fall apart. So, too, our relationship with God suffers when we do not communicate with Him.

Prayer Allows us to Participate in God’s Works. Does God need our help? No. He is all powerful and in control of everything in His creation. Why do we need to pray? Because prayer is the means God has ordained for some things to happen. Prayer, for instance, helps others know the love of Jesus. Prayer can clear human obstacles out of the way in order for God to work. It is not that God can’t work without our prayers, but that He has established prayer as part of His plan for accomplishing His will in this world.

Prayer Gives us Power Over Evil. Can physical strength help us overcome obstacles and challenges in the spiritual realm? No, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12). But in prayer even the physically weak can become strong in the spiritual realm. As such, we can call upon God to grant us power over evil.

“For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.” -1 Timothy 4:8

“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.” – Matthew 26:41

Prayer is Always Available. This point is covered separately in another article. But, in short, another reason to pray is because prayer is always available to us. Nothing can keep us from approaching God in prayer except our own choices (Psalm 139:7; Romans 8:38-39).

Prayer Keeps us Humble Before God. Humility is a virtue God desires in us (Proverbs 11:2; 22:4; Micah 6:8; Ephesians 4:2; James 4:10). Prayer reminds us that we are not in control, but God is, thus keeping us from pride. "Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." (-Matthew 18:).

Prayer Grants us the Privilege of Experiencing God. Through prayer we obtain an experiential basis for our faith. We do not ignore the intellect or reasons for faith, but prayer makes our experience of God real on an emotional level.

Answered Prayer is a Potential Witness. If our prayer is answered, it can serve as a potential witness for those who doubt.

Prayer Strengthens the Bonds Between Believers. Prayer not only strengthens our relationship with God, but when we pray with other believers, prayer also strengthens the bonds between fellow Christians..

Prayer Can Succeed Where Other Means Have Failed. Have all your options been exhausted? Prayer can succeed where other means have failed. Prayer should not be a last resort, but our first response. But there are times when sincere prayer must be offered in order to accomplish something.

Prayer Fulfills Emotional Needs Do we need God through prayer? Yes! We were made to function best, emotionally, in a prayerful relationship with God. As C.S. Lewis put it, "God designed the human machine to run on Himself. He Himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn, or the food our spirits were designed to feed on. There is no other." Prayer, then, has its reasons, and they are many.

C. Lewis, Robert Velarde, NIV, Sturgeon





The Grapevine

January 2021



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			Noon Prayer	Noon Prayer	1 Noon Prayer	2 Mobile Food Pantry Clarksbury Noon Prayer
3 Noon Prayer	4 Noon Prayer	5 Lee White Noon Prayer	6 Noon Prayer	7 Noon Prayer	8 Noon Prayer	9 Cheryl Teagle Noon Prayer
10 Noon Prayer	11 Al Wild Noon Prayer	12 Noon Prayer	13 Noon Prayer	14 Noon Prayer	15 Lucy Blevins Noon Prayer	16 Noon Prayer
17 Noon Prayer	18 Susan Valencia Soup Ministry Noon Prayer	19 Noon Prayer	20 Noon Prayer	21 Noon Prayer	22 Terry Cleveland	23 Noon Prayer
24 Noon Prayer	25 Noon Prayer	26 Noon Prayer	27 Noon Prayer	28 Noon Prayer	29 Abigail Foster Amber Clark	30
31 Noon Prayer						

The deadline for the February 2021 Grapevine will be Monday, January 25

Send items to: pwalian2@gmail.com

January Birthdays (If you know of any additions, deletions or corrections that should be made to the birthday calendar, please let the newsletter editor know.)