



The Shepherd's Voice

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MINUTE WITH MIKE

Revelation 3:1-3 Contemporary English Version (CEV)

This is what you must write to the angel of the church in Sardis... I know what you are doing. Everyone may think you are alive, but you are dead. Wake up! You have only a little strength left, and it is almost gone. So try to become stronger. I have found that you are not completely obeying God. Remember the teaching that you were given and that you heard. Hold firmly to it and turn from your sins. If you don't wake up, I will come when you least expect it, just as a thief does.

Mid-summer greeting to you and yours!

One of summer's simple pleasures for Donna and me is to climb into a hammock together for an afternoon nap; mid-summer days are not called "dog days" for nothing...

Kidding aside, the more I look around in our world today the more I fear good Christian people like you and I have fallen asleep. How else could some of these absurd, immoral and corrupted things be happening? How is it that masses of "good" people find it acceptable to disobey certain laws? How is that we can call good things bad and bad things good? How is it that we can speak about equality and tolerance while forces rage to silence voices they disagree with and demand special privileges for "special" people? Many rail about the violence in our culture but say nothing of those who produce and those who feed upon violent video games and films. For the

most part, we have lost our moral compass in a culture that celebrates “whatever makes you happy.” Saddest part is that we’re not happy. We are lost and asleep.

Even in many parts of the church, good Christian people choose to ignore foundational theological truths that have been held by Christians since the time of Christ Himself. Not only do many in the secular community attack traditional Biblical values, many within the church join them.

Friends, I fear we have fallen asleep. The good news is that it’s not too late. It’s never too late to take a loving Biblical stand in our homes, our families, and our neighborhoods. “Stand up, stand up for Jesus! The strife will not be long; this day the noise of battle, the next the victor’s song. To him who overcometh, a crown of life shall be; He with the King of glory shall reign eternally.”

Pray that God would wake us up! Pray that God would wake up His church and that truth and love and glory might fill the earth!

In His love and service,

Mike



SESSION NEWS

Treasurer's Report (as of 5/31/2018) –

\$ 41,232	Balance on Hand 5/31/2018 (less following committed funds)
- 11,000	Building Fund
- 122	Committed Joyful Noise & Mission Funds to PRC
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\$ 30,110	Uncommitted Funds Available

Notes:

- Uncommitted funds as of 4/30/2018 were \$28,932.

Seminary Intern – Pastor Mike noted that Intern Joshua would not be returning to the intern position in the fall, and he would like to discuss with Seminary having another intern. After considerable discussion, **a motion was made, supported and passed to decline another intern for the school year 2018/2019, and Pastor Mike was asked to inform Seminary accordingly.**

Session Position descriptions – It was discussed and decided to forego formal descriptions and committee responsibilities and deal with all items as a committee-of-the-whole.

Learning – Shauna reported:

- The introductory 9:00 AM Bible study was well attended – 10 people.
- Family Camp – the Vanderbergs have kindly offered their back yard for tenting and cook outs for the family camp August 17, 18 & ½ of 19.
- She is looking into possible candidates to teach children's church from Grace Bible College.

Hospitality – A potluck was discussed and tentatively planned for September.

Worship – We are still looking for a replacement for Corey to do the PowerPoint as well as adding to our sound booth staff. Donna will continue to do the PowerPoint and help with the bulletin.

Brooks Memorial Scholarship Trust – Following the resignation of Peter Johnson as a trustee, the Session appointed Gary Lehmann to replace him by common consent; Gary agreed to serve.

Presbytery Meeting – Next meeting in Grand Rapids, October 5-6. Appointment of a voting commissioner was tabled until a later meeting.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Children's ministry is happy to report the busy bags for the kids have been working out great. For those of you that didn't know, bags were made up for each child in our congregation as well as visitors. The older bags contain a pen, a pencil, a journal, and blank drawing paper. The bags for the younger children contain a biblically-based coloring book, a Journal, a small box of colored pencils, and a regular pencil. We are looking forward to Jared returning in August, but we are still on the hunt for a secondary teacher.

Family camp is back again!!! Friday August 17th - Sunday the 19th. We are so excited as we all have such a great time. Shauna says what she loves most is watching the relationships build (children and adults alike). The first year was watching people get acquainted, the second was acquaintances becoming friends and now friends have become family. This year something new is being tried. Instead of camping in tents at a Campground, Vanderbergs have agreed to host it in their backyard. They have plenty of room, a forest behind them with a trail that leads to a swimming pool, the lake across the street, a trampoline, and a fire pit. The church will provide the main portion of the food. More information to follow as we approach August. Blessing to you all.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

There are always things to do around the house or office; there are always things to do around the church. If the Lord prompts you, consider one of the following projects:

- Every morning for worship there are a number of things that get set up, one of which is the paraments (the colored cloths that adorn the communion table, the baptismal and the pulpit). It takes about 10 minutes to set them up. Would love to find one or two persons who would come a few minutes early to do that!
- We have a welcome table that contains a number of things helpful in providing information for our church. We would love to have a person or two come early each Sunday morning to set up that table. Time commitment: 10 minutes

WALK FOR LIFE

Pastor Mike, Donna, and Elder Henry Gachini walked this year for the Pregnancy Resource Center's Walk for Life. Although a soft rain fell, there were more than 100 walkers. Our church raised more than \$500.00 for the organization! Thanks!!

MISSION MATCH

Did you know that the Mission work of our church (which is a part of our LIVING Team) matches the Joyful Noise Offering? Every two months a smaller local ministry is selected to be recipient of the offering, and, of course, all that is received is given to that ministry. In addition to that, the amount is doubled with our "mission dollars" to make the gift even more substantial. Thanks to the Mission folks for their charity and to Angie Wiley who is the Elder Chair.

IN HIS OWN WORDS

(As written by Joshua)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Good Shepherd Church,

Arrival:

“After almost 24-hour-flying, traveling across three continents and many time zones, my time is completely messed up but eventually I arrived here, the capital of Sierra Leone-Free town. Yay!!! Praise the Lord, I survived the flight.

The weather is indeed VERY hot. So is the culture, very warm and hospitable; people greet each other warmly. On the way going out of the airport, so many people tried to talk me into taking their vehicles, but thanks be to God, I managed to find my way out of the airport and meet with my pastor Bahago.

Pastor retreat:

After spending one day resting up, the second day we had the first pastor retreat, required by Pastor Bahago, I taught my first class on ‘What’s Reformed Theology?’. I briefed introduced the history of reformation, protestantism and the five points of Calvinism (TULIP) is covered. Even though the official language is English, many of the people are illiterate so I have to get a translator to translate my class into their native language Kyrrio, which is a language originated from English. Thanks be to God, this class is well received.

Engaging local people:

Most of the people are very curious about my appearance, a little girl came to lean on my lap and eventually fell asleep. I took her up and let her sleep on me for a while. My heart melt and I imagined how much God loved us as His kids and wanted us to lean on Him. People are kind and there is religious tolerance as in the opposite side of the church across the street stands a mosque.

Currently only 5% of the local people are Christians, most of the people live under extreme poverty with minimum income (less than \$1 a day.)

Prayer request:

1. This week I am preaching in the church, pray that people will be blessed.
2. Next week we will be doing TLT training for the pastors in the capital city, pray that people will benefit from the training. Many trainings will be conducted following that all over the country and also Liberia.
3. Pray that I can do more visitations and engage the people here to the best of my ability.

Sincerely, I want to thank all of you for your generous support, which will greatly bless the people and churches here. May God extend His kingdom and have mercy on the people here. In the last one year, I am blessed to be an intern in Good Shepherd Church, through which I have learned so much. I appreciate each of you for your constant prayers and kindness.

Specially, I want to express my gratitude to all of you for your generous financial support as so far I have raised \$6000 for my Mission to Africa, all of which come from you and other gracious donors. Conclusion: Once again, thank you my dear brothers and sisters. May the Lord bless you and reward your generosity.

In Him,
Joshua

Joshua's Challenge to Us

In times of trouble and distress we are called upon to renew and strengthen our faith in God. To paraphrase Art Linkletter's book title of "Old Age is Not for Sissy's", remember that being a faithful disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ is not for sissy's either. It's time to come together, take strength from each other in our family of faith, take up the cross, and do battle for Christ.

On a recent Sunday at church, God brought us 10 visitors! It's up to us what we do with them.

In chapter 24 the prophet Joshua was renewing the people's covenant with God and rallying Israel, reminding them of their failings and their worship of false gods. After challenging the people and reminding them of how the Lord had rescued them time and time again, he said in Verse 15: "...then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

JULY DATES

- No more 10:00am Friday Chapel services at the Seminary until August
- 1st (Sun.) 8:00am Prayer Meeting, 9:00am Adult Study
10:00am Worship with Communion – Rev. Dr. Laura Smit preaching
LISTEN Team (Prayer and Home Groups) meeting after worship
- 3rd (Tues.) Home Group; Mike Baynai 7:00pm
- 4th (Wed.) Independence Day; National Holiday**
- 8th (Sun.) 8:00am Prayer Meeting, 9:00am Adult Study
10:00am Worship
LOVE Team (Worship) meeting after worship
- 10th (Tues.) Session [At Baynai's home]
- 11th (Wed.) Softball
- 12th (Thurs.) Dana Bilyea's group
- 15th (Sun.) 8:00am Prayer Meeting, 9:00am Adult Study
10:00am Worship
LEARN Team (Education and Children's Ministries) meeting after worship
- 17th (Tues.) Home Group; Mike Baynai 7:00pm
- 18th (Wed.) Softball
- 22nd (Sun.) 8:00am Prayer Meeting, 9:00am Adult Study
10:00am Worship
LIVE Team (Missions and Media) meeting after worship
- 25th (Wed.) Softball
- 25th (Sun.) 8:00am Prayer Meeting, 9:00am Adult Study
10:00am Worship
Board of Deacons meeting after worship
- 26th (Thurs.) Dana Bilyea's group

EVENTS:

Sunday Devotionals:

1st - Samaritas (the Terraces) 3:30pm

8th - Samaritas (the Lodge) 2:15pm - Children to attend and help

15th - Vista Springs 2:00pm and 2:45pm

22nd - American House 3:00pm

PRESBYTERY COMING HERE IN OCTOBER

The Presbytery of the Great Lakes, of which we are a member church, will hold its bi-annual meeting here at Calvin Seminary in Grand Rapids on October 5 and 6. Things will begin on Friday evening at 7:30pm and will be over by 9:00pm. Saturday registration will begin at 8:30am, and the day will conclude around 3:00pm. The Presbytery is currently made up of 14 churches (mostly in Ohio) with approximately 3,000 members. The day-long event will include a business plenary, speakers, worship, break-out sessions and a time to share. We will be looking to recruit the following:

HOSPITALITY TEAM: four people for Friday night, six people for Saturday.

The role of the Hospitality Team is simply to greet people and to watch for folks that might need help finding their way around our building.

REFRESHMENT TEAM: three people for Friday night, three people for Saturday.

The role of those doing refreshments will be to make sure cookies, coffee and other refreshments are set out to be served at various times during the meeting.

WORSHIP TEAM: At least one musician for Friday evening and at least one for Saturday morning. Can use singers as well for both Friday evening and Saturday morning. Two People to prepare Communion for about 60 people for Saturday morning worship. The role of the Worship Team will be to provide music for the 30-minute devotional on Friday evening and the 45-minute worship service on Saturday morning.

SOUND TEAM: One or two people to work in the sound booth Friday evening (7:30-8:30pm), and one or two to work in the sound booth on Saturday (9:00am – 2:00pm).

RARE OPPORTUNITY

Presbyterians for renewal puts on a wonderful lay-person centered retreat in Montreat, North Carolina, every year in October called Wee Kirk Conference. This year the retreat is October 15-17. You can Google search “Wee Kirk Conference” to find out more information. Cost (including all meals and two nights lodging at the Montreat Conference Center) is \$180.00 per person or \$210.00 per couple. I have attended this conference in the past and found it to be a truly rare and wonderful experience. North Carolina alone in October is worth the trip... If there were a few of us interested, I would be willing to look into transportation for our group. Please let me know as soon as possible if you think you would like to attend! Thanks. Pastor Mike

JULY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES OF MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

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NEWS FROM THE ASSISTANT PASTOR

Rev. Dr. Laura Smit

Last month, I wrote about several events that I was anticipating in late May and early June. One of those was a conference at Taylor University in Indiana focused on the role of imagination in the works of C. S. Lewis and his friends. I was asked to give a devotional talk about the imagination in a New Testament passage, and I chose to present a meditation on the story of Mary and Martha from Luke 10:38-42, which I wrote after a seminar in Italy a couple years ago. It's a little long to copy here, but you can find the original essay and a picture of the fresco by Fra Angelico that inspired it at this website: <https://bit.ly/2I6q1b9>. I made the meditation fit the context (and the longer length requirement) by adding an introductory section based on Dorothy Sayers' reflections on this passage, since Sayers is one of the friends of Lewis who was under consideration at the conference. Sayers comments on this story in her 1947 essay "Are Women Human?"

I think I have never heard a sermon preached on the story of Martha and Mary that did not attempt, somehow, somewhere, to explain away its text. Mary's, of course, was the better part – the Lord said so, and we must not precisely contradict Him. But we will be careful not to despise Martha. No doubt, He approved of her too. We could not get on without her, and indeed (having paid lip-service to God's opinion) we must admit that we greatly prefer her. For Martha was doing a really feminine job, whereas Mary was just behaving like any other disciple, male or female, and that is a hard pill to swallow.

I first encountered this essay when I was a college student, planning on entering the ministry. I wanted so much to be allowed to study theology and the Bible in just the same way as male students, and I remember writing a rather scathing article in the Calvin Seminary student journal saying that if other women wanted to remain in the church kitchen like Martha, I would not interfere with them, but that I had no intention of letting them drag me back there with them. It was not the most tactful thing I've ever written, but I still think it was a legitimate reading of this story.

However, I no longer hear the story primarily in this way. I don't hear it as primarily about sexism because I find that even in egalitarian settings Christians tend to like Martha more than Mary. I think this shows the preference in our society and in the contemporary church for activity over learning, for work over worship, and for productivity over prayer. But Jesus says that Mary has chosen the better part. She exemplifies a life in which learning and worship and prayer join together as her source of purpose and meaning. The artist Fra Angelico assumes that Martha would have learned this lesson, and in his painting he portrays Mary and Martha joined together in seeking the better part, supporting Jesus in prayer as he prepares to go to the cross. It's a powerful picture, offering a beautiful interpretation of this story. I hope you'll follow the link above and take a look!

FOLLOWING JESUS

(As written by Fikre Norcha)

When Jesus began to minister, his priority was forming disciples, and their three-year training enabled them to carry out his future ministry to the whole world. According to the New Testament, the men he called were not identical or obvious. For example, he called fishermen and a tax-collector, but, for each, to follow Jesus meant going the way that he went, accepting his plan and sharing “in suffering and missionary authority.” (Bosch 2007, 75)

However, Jesus called his disciples to follow him not out of servile compulsion but in love and to build intimate relationship with them. His master-disciple relationship was “inner fellowship” (Kittel 1967, 417) not just as that of Rabbis and their followers. The disciples of Jewish Rabbis would submit themselves as slaves to their masters until such time when they could leave their schooling and become masters or Rabbis themselves. (Watson 1981, 23)

Bonhoeffer says that “when the Bible speaks of following Jesus, it is proclaiming a discipleship which will liberate mankind from every anxiety and torture which afflicts the conscience.” (1959, 31) Jesus’ call to a disciple involves physical and spiritual rest. (Matt 11:28) However, a disciple who is following Jesus grows in the unambiguous qualities that are inherent in responding to the call “follow me.” One must be unconditionally obedient and submissive to Jesus in any assigned task. It is also impossible to follow Christ without commitment and the personal discipline that Jesus himself had - a personal discipline of devotion or quiet time.

During the communist government of severe persecution in Ethiopia, we had our personal devotions in our own rooms and so were able to survive the communist antichristian pressure. Lastly, Jesus calls disciples to perseverance knowing that “discipleship means following Jesus in a personal and generally costly way.” (Boice 1986, 17)

So, Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church believers, I encourage you to follow Jesus in seasons and out of seasons. I pray for you as the Apostle Paul has prayed for Philippians that “your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may prove the things that are excellent and that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ.” (Phil 1:9-10)

*Fikre and family are moving to enable him to pursue future studies. For those who are interested, his future contact information is: 1908 NE 49th St., Kansas City, MO 64118
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