

The First Presbyterian Church

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PRESBYTERIAN POST



SEPTEMBER 2019

**In God, whose word I praise—
in God I trust and am not afraid.
What can mere mortals do to me?**

~ Psalm 56:4 ~

From the Desk of the Pastor



*I have come that they may have life,
and have it to the full*
~ John 10:10b ~



Spiritual Wellness

Spiritual Wellness. We are on a “spiritual health” sermon series. In this series, we shall ask how we should (in the spiritual sense) eat and exercise and rest. We shall also look at ways we might assess our spiritual health; what does a spiritually healthy life look like?

As we all know, one can feel fine and still be at grave risk. We have all heard the ads reminding people to faithfully take their prescribed hypertension medicine. The ads go something like this, “Take your hypertension medicine. It does not matter how you feel, because you can’t feel hypertension.” Health and wellbeing are not just about taking prescribed medicine; there are lifestyles we can adopt that will eventually ruin our health (e.g., poor nutrition, improper exercise, carrying too much weight, etc.). Too often, we allow unhealthy behaviors to become habits and unhealthy habits to become lifestyles, because the consequences are not immediately obvious. [They may be obvious in lives of other people, but we assume we are special, which is confirmed by the fact that for the longest while we still feel fine regardless of what choices we make.]

Spiritual wellness is kind of like that. We may be living spiritually unhealthy lifestyles and not really notice it for a long time. We are getting along and feeling fine, and so we think to ourselves that we do not need to take care of ourselves or that we are doing well enough.

One on-line dictionary defines health and wellness this way: “Health can be defined as physical, mental, and social wellbeing, and as a resource for living a full life. It refers not only to the absence of disease, but the ability to recover and bounce back from illness and other problems.”

You can see the elements of “health” in the above definition. First, health may be seen as encompassing many or even all aspects of life. Health includes the idea of full or abundant living. Lastly, health is more than the absence of ill-health, but rather includes a resilience against the attacks against our health that surely arise.

When health is perceived as the absence of ill-health, many unhealthy practices can creep into our lives that ultimately will undo us. No one gets sick right away from carrying too much weight, or exercising too little, or eating too much junk food. But over time

Spiritual health should be thought of in the same way: it encompasses many aspects of life; it promotes abundant living; it is more than the absence of poor spiritual health; and it provides resilience to recover from the onslaught of difficult challenges. And like with physical health, practices can creep into our lives that compromise our spiritual health. The consequences are not always immediate, but they nonetheless can be very serious.

While there are very practical limits to what elder folks can do to improve their physical health late in life, the very good Good News is that spiritual vitality can be vastly improved at any age. This is not just true in theory; it is true in practice.

What does “hitting the spiritual gym” look like? The answer won’t be identical for every individual, but there are two things which I call out in this month’s newsletter article that certainly apply to each of us.

Humility. An attitude of humility is central to good spiritual health. We might even think of it as part of our spiritual core. Out of humility comes awe of God. Out of humility comes right attitudes of confession. Out of humility comes our ability to plead with God for help. But how can we embrace and cultivate humility when we live in an Age of Arrogance? We are products of a culture that celebrates individual achievement and self-reliance. Whatever the merits of such attitudes in our secular lives, they are pure poison when they spill over into our spiritual lives. We were made to lean on God in all matters, precisely because God is wiser and more knowledgeable than we are and operates with better intentions than we ever will. When we really take hold of this, we will desire to draw in God with every breath we take. We shall desire to breath out all else with every exhalation. Humility is grounded in the belief that we are filled with contaminants of this broken world and our own broken thinking; humble living before a Most High God is grounded in a recognized need to be filled with his goodness for his purposes.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.
~ Proverbs 3:5-6 ~

If humility is at our “spiritual core,” what does core training look like? Core training requires quiet time and deep reflection. Core training requires an openness with God. We shall need to be unguarded; ready to hear what God will tell us.

For some, core training may be initially pursued through cognitive disciplines, for example thinking about God’s virtues and our weaknesses. For some, core training may be initially pursued by less cognitive disciplines, for example dwelling imaginatively on a singular, deep concept such as “What would my life feel like if I were more kind, like

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.
~ Psalm 139:23-24 ~

Jesus?”. Eventually, humility will evolve into a natural conversation with God in which you and I are ready to hear and accept and obey what God has to say, even when he lovingly gives us correction.

The Word. God’s Word is the normal means of grace in our lives. We should expect God to speak to our hearts, mind and spirit when we are in his Word. God’s Word is like vitamins and good nutrition. The usefulness of good nutrition is not usually experienced with instant gratification. Seldom have I heard someone exclaim, “Wow, I am really glad I ate that apple! I feel great!” Still, I have very often heard someone say, “An apple a day keeps the doctor away.” Being in the Word may involve discipline, especially if you find yourself in the midst of a “dry spell.” In the dry spells, we should plead with God in all humility to restore to us the joy of our salvation and the joy of being in his Word. We should always pray before we read the Word, but especially when we are in a dry spell. If you do not know what I mean by this, consider the following prayer and then modify it to make it your own:

Father, as I am about to open your Word, I ask for your blessing. Something is not right between us right now. Your Word seems remote to me. You seem remote to me. I believe that you intend for something better and I need something better. I ask that as I read your Word this day that you will unveil its meaning to me and that I would delight in it. Father, I believe that whatever my emotional response may be today, that your Word is just what my mind and my spirit need. I thank you for your Bible and I rely on you to bless me through your Word. Please protect me from distraction or wrong thoughts. I love you. Help me love you more. Amen.

Pursuing spiritual wellness apart from being in God’s Word is futile and willful. One might as well try to make the roster of an NFL team through meditation alone, forgoing the study of the playbook and listening to the coaches and working out with the team. Preposterous! The Word is not only truth in the sense of conveying God’s precepts and principles, the Word is where God’s Spirit enables you and me to believe that we are loved by God and empowered by God. The Word is where our truest identity as children of God becomes most real and most delightful. It is the Word that enables us to go deep with God in our prayer time, with awe and openness. It is in God’s Word that we find truths that can sting and at the same time set us free.

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

~ Hebrews 4:12 ~

Summarizing. Spiritual wellness will help us to live life to the full as God intended. It will allow us to be most blessed and be the most blessing to others. Spiritual wellness will empower us with resilience in times of hard news and setbacks. Like other forms of wellness, spiritual wellness requires discipline. Best of all, unlike physical wellness, there is virtually no upper limit to spiritual wellness no matter how old or out of shape we might be when we start.

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SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

SEPTEMBER	6	Barbara Elsenheimer
SEPTEMBER	7	Jim Robords
SEPTEMBER	10	Julie Timmerman
SEPTEMBER	10	Mark Stover
SEPTEMBER	10	Liz Kernan
SEPTEMBER	11	Dan Moore
SEPTEMBER	19	Olivia Chatain
SEPTEMBER	21	Ethan Rodriguez
SEPTEMBER	27	Darla Kennell



SEPT. ANNIVERSARIES

SEPTEMBER 25 Nick and Brecken Jones



ELEVATOR SCHEDULE

SEPTEMBER	1	Mike Whiteman
SEPTEMBER	8	Nelson Whiteman
SEPTEMBER	15	David Gates
SEPTEMBER	22	Tom Hager
SEPTEMBER	29	Service at Lacy Property



CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY

Christian sympathy is extended to the friends and family of Barbara McCaffery who passed away on August 9, 2019. Barbara was a long-time member of the Arkport Presbyterian Church.

TURNING POINT ITEMS

The following items will be graciously accepted at Turning Point: Toothbrushes, toothpaste, bar soap, body wash, hygiene products, toilet paper, and deodorant. You may leave your items in the back of the sanctuary. The Mission Committee thanks you for your continued generosity.

NEWS AND NOTES

PICNIC INVITATION

Rain or shine, on 8 September after church, Pat Nephew and Jim Robords are hosting a gathering at the Robords' Pond, 8330 Briggs Rd. in Fremont. Jim and Pat will provide hot dogs and fixings and ask that folks bring a dish to pass. There are some picnic tables but do feel free to bring a blanket or some lawn chairs. For the brave at heart, bring a swimsuit. The temperature of the pond has been in the upper 70's. Folks are also invited to fish. If you stay until evening, there will be a bonfire.

WORSHIP SERVICE AT THE LACY'S COUNTRY PROPERTY

As I write this overlooking the ponds, it is just pouring down rain! I am wondering if on Sunday, September 29th, will it be the same, raining or will it be sunshine and nice for an outdoor Worship Service and fall celebration? Only our Creator knows these things. Can't give the weatherman that much credit! We will count on His blessings for this day outdoors for Worship and celebrate this fall/harvest season with fellowship and fun. Maybe a baptism? A few games. If you like to fish, there are 3 ponds to chose from. I will supply the worms! I also have a few fishing poles if you'd like. A wagon ride through the woods for those adventurous ones. There will be BBQed hot dogs, fixins, sodas and lots to drink. Bring a dish to pass if you can. We'll have all the plates and cups and utensils etc. There will be covered tables for food and sitting but you should bring a chair just in case. The Lord has assured me the leaves on the trees will be beautiful!! As in prior years, a bon fire is just waiting to be lit. We will keep things close to the house for use of the facilities of course. If it looks like wet weather, then we'll gather at the church. We are looking forward to the Worship, fun and fellowship on 'The Hill'. Bring a friend! Save the date! Sunday, September 29th. --- Dan and Debi Lacy

FOND FAREWELL TO THE STOVERS

Our congregation gave a fond farewell to Mark and Regie Stover on August 18th as they prepare to start the next chapter of their journey through life leaving Arkport and moving to Pennsylvania to be closer to their grandchildren. (Who could blame them for leaving for such a good reason?) We wish Mark and Regie all the best as they make this move and thank God for the many years of selfless service they both gave to this church and church family. We have been truly blessed by having the Stovers in our lives.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Samaritan Purse Operation Christmas Child is gearing up for fall collecting. Last year five-area counties (including Steuben) collected 11,077 shoeboxes. We are truly missionaries who reach those children and families for Jesus Christ.

Please bring in items for the shoeboxes to the Coffee Connection Room. Wrap up for Operation Christmas Child will be November 17th - 24th. We will have a last-minute packing session on Saturday, November 23rd, 10 am to noon.

Questions? Contact Dianne Jones.



Arkport Presbyterian Church

September 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 COMMUNION SUNDAY 2 CENTS A MEAL	2	3 9:00 am - Bible Study	4 8:45 am - WINGS 6:00 pm - Casual Worship 7:00 pm - Bible Study	5 Ladies Clean in the Evening	6	7
8 PICNIC AT THE ROBORDS FOLLOWING WORSHIP	9	10 9:00 am - Bible Study	11 8:45 am - WINGS 6:00 pm - Casual Worship 7:00 pm - Bible Study	12 Ladies Clean in the Evening	13	14 9:30 am - Session Meets
15	16	17 9:00 am - Bible Study	18 8:45 am - WINGS 6:00 pm - Casual Worship 7:00 pm - Bible Study	19 Ladies Clean in the Evening	20	21
22	23	24 9:00 am - Bible Study	25 8:45 am - WINGS 6:00 pm - Casual Worship 7:00 pm - Bible Study	26 Ladies Clean in the Evening	27	28
29 WORSHIP AT THE LACYS' COUNTRY PROPERTY	30	1	2	3	4 ELDER OF THE MONTH: LINDA SCHROEDER	5