



CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

By Iris Hymel

Congregational Life is moving along. We held a successful Grandparent's Day Lunch. Everyone enjoyed the fellowship.

Saturday, October 28 brings Halloween and Trunk or Treat. A signup sheet will be posted. Please be thinking about how to decorate your trunk and provide lots of fun and treats for the children. This event is always a big success for both the children and the adults. I am looking forward to this as it will be my first time participating in Trunk or Treat. I have decided on Costumes, Treats, and Decorations for my trunk. Let's all work to make this a fun event for all. Ask your family and friends to join us and decorate their trunks.



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PASTOR'S CORNER

I friends, October is here, and with, hopefully, some more comfortable temperatures. As I am sitting here thinking about October, I am pondering fall, the changing leaves, football, baseball, cooler weather, and Halloween.

Yes, I'm thinking about Halloween with candy, costumes, parties, and above all else, masks. These masks may be scary, funny, silly, superheroes, cartoon characters, slipped on, painted on, or anything that hides the true identity of the wearer. But, has that not always been the real intent of a mask? The robber wears a mask so the police cannot peg him. The child wears a mask to enhance the game of imagination. The party goer wears a mask to have fun. Some masks have been intended to scare off evil spirits, while others are worn to attract. All masks hide something though.

Many people wear a mask, and no one knows it. I am not talking about a Halloween mask, or a villain's mask. I am talking about the smile that hides the pain. I am referencing the face we make when we do not want anyone to know how we are hurting.

A youth might laugh at a joke while crying on the inside. It is the laugh of a heavy person at a proverbial fat joke. It is the laugh of a poor person who has worn out clothes while others mock her. It is the laugh of the ridiculed cancer patient with no hair, while others tease, perhaps even with well-meaning. It is the face we all put on for those we are not comfortable with. It hides who we really are.

So here is a question. Who can you take your mask off for? Who do you feel safe around? It may sound like an easy question. However, it is far more complicated than one might think.

I have been accused in life of being too honest. I have caught this caution both at work and at home. I have been told I reveal too much of who I am. And I know it has cost me and gotten me into trouble. Let that sink in for a moment. Honesty has actually gotten me into trouble. I have experienced problems for not wearing my mask.

We all have a need to let down our proverbial guard. We all need to breath, to cry, to scream, to unload our overwhelming burdens. We need more people that both know us, and accept us.

On the other side, each of us has the ability, the calling, to be a safe person. It is one of the truly Divine things that God has laid upon each of us. We can help heal people by simply listening, embracing, and even proactively drawing out the real in the person in front of us.

Halloween is a great time to wear a mask. However, we should be allowed to be who we are to the world without punishment, and each of us should also be a safe place where masks can be discarded. Sadness and pain need not be covered up, but instead healing should be the real answer, not a mask.

Let us all come to God, and to each other, just the way we are; broken and loved.

While I am at it, I want so to share something with you this month. It is a poem of sorts that we used to share at Houston Presbyterian Cursillo/Pilgrimage. It was impactful for me, and I hope it is for you also.

(continued on next page)

Please Hear What I'm Not Saying Charles C. Finn

(continued from page 2—PASTOR'S CORNER)

Please don't be fooled by me. Don't be fooled by the face I wear, for I wear a mask. I wear a thousand masks, masks that I'm afraid to take off and none of them are me. Pretending is an art that is second nature to me, but don't be fooled, for God's sake don't be fooled.

I give you the impression I'm secure and that all is sunny and unruffled with me, within as well as without, that confidence is my name, coolness my game, that water is calm and I'm in command and that I need no one, but don't believe me, please don't believe me.

My surface may be smooth, but my surface is a mask--my ever varying and ever concealing mask. Beneath it dwells the real confusion, fear and aloneness. Beneath lies my smugness, my complacency, but I hide this--I don't want anyone to know it.

I panic at the thought of my weakness and fear being exposed. That's why I frantically created a mask to hide behind-- nonchalant sophisticated facades to help me pretend-- to shield me from the glance that knows-- but such a glance is precisely my salvation, my only salvation and I know it. That is if it's followed by acceptance. If it's followed by love, it's the only thing that can liberate me from myself, from my own self built prison walls and from the barriers that I so painstakingly erect. It's the only thing that will assure me of what I cannot assure myself, that I'm really worth while, but I don't tell you this, I don't dare--I'm afraid to.

I'm afraid that your glance will not be followed by acceptance and love. I'm afraid you'll think less of me and you'll laugh and your laugh will kill me. I'm afraid that deep down, I'm nothing and that I'm just no good and that you'll see this and reject me.

So I play my game; my desperate pretending; with the facade of assurance without and a trembling child within. And so begins the parade of masks, the glittering, but empty parade of masks and my life becomes a front. I idle chatter to you in suave tones of surface talk. I tell you everything that's really nothing and nothing of what's everything and what's crying within me.

So when I'm through going through my routine, do not be fooled by what I'm saying. Please listen carefully and try to hear what I'm not saying--what I'd like to be able to say, but for survival I need to say, but what I can't say.

I dislike hiding, honestly, I dislike the superficial game I'm playing, the superficial phony game. I'd really like to be genuine, spontaneous and me, but you've got to help me, you've got to hold out your hand, even when it's the last thing I seem to want or need.

You can help wipe away from my eyes--the blank stare of grieving dead. You can help call me into aliveness each time you're kind, gentle and encouraging. Each time you try to understand because you really care, my heart begins to grow wings, very small wings, very feeble wings, but wings.

If you choose to, please choose to. You can help break down the wall behind which I tremble. You can encourage me to remove my mask. You can help release me from my shadowed world of panic and uncertainty. From my lonely prison.

So do not pass me by-- please don't pass me by. It will not be easy for you. A lone conviction of worthlessness builds strong walls. The nearer you approach me, the blinder I may strike back.

It's irrational, but despite what books say about man, I am irrational, I fight against the very things that I cry out for, but I am told love is stronger than strong walls. In this lies my hope, my only hope, please help beat down those walls with firm hands, but with gentle hands--for a child is very sensitive.

Who am I, you may wonder? I am someone you know very well. For I am every man and every woman you meet.



**PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN**

**NEW HOPE PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN
BY IRIS HYMEL, MODERATOR**

Your Presbyterian are very busy. We met in a hybrid meeting on September 12, 2023. Five of us by Zoom and seven in person. Iris Hymel led the Bible Study, "Elizabeth's Sacred Encounter" from this year's Horizon Bible Study, *Sacred Encounters*. Debra Caldwell will lead the October Lesson, "The Exorcism in Gerase," at our October meeting.

Helen Galer gave the Treasurer's Report. Debra, our interim Historian followed Helen by showing the Historian's book compiled last year.

Debra then gave us her Mission report with an update on the Garden of Grace and the activities of the Garden Club. The blood drive was held September 17.

The planned clothing drive through KISD has been cancelled due to confidentiality issues. Several of our ladies will begin volunteering at Clothed By Faith. If you are interested in this cause, please contact Helen. Helen is spearheading this project.

We will begin working on our annual Seafarer's Boxes soon. Lavita Golightly is our CDC Liaison and she noted that the fundraiser is in progress and Red Apples are still available. The CDC needs Lysol and/or Clorox wipes to help them with sanitation issues.

Everyone is welcome to join us. We meet on the first Wednesday of each month September through May.



Building Congregational Vitality

In the past, congregational vitality was measured by worship attendance, giving per attendee, total membership, and other metrics. It is true that one mark of a vital congregation is a sustainable financial situation. As we embark on our stewardship campaign, we hope you will prayerfully consider whether you can increase your giving.

Please also consider giving of your time and talent. New Hope relies on the work of a few people who attend meetings, hammer out (and worry about) the budget, plan events, cut the grass, and do a hundred other tasks to maintain the church as well as do missional work. If you are asked to serve as an elder or committee member, we hope you will feel called to help.

In addition to the practical elements of maintaining a church, the Presbyterian Mission (PCUSA) defines Congregational Vitality as a worshipping community's, "spiritual strength and its capacity for purposeful mission."

In the coming months we will explore ways to deepen and expand our faith community's journey of inclusion, celebration, and affirmation of all people and welcome them into the life and leadership of the church.

PCUSA has developed the Matthew 25 Initiative to build "congregational vitality by challenging people and congregations to deepen their faith and get actively and joyfully engaged with their community and the world." It also calls us to learn about and challenge the factors that lead to inequality, poverty, and oppression in our own neighborhood and around the world.

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/>

Please join the Congregational Vitality committee.
(we will meet October 11 and 25 at 10 am)





growing together'

katynewhopegardenclub@gmail.com

In September, the Garden Club visited the Lifepath Church community garden in Cypress and had a talk by Harris County Master Gardener, Debra Caldwell, on Fall Vegetable Gardening.



Join us for our October Events!

10 AM, Saturday, October 7 **WORKDAY**

We will plant veggies donated by Urban Harvest.

7 PM, Tuesday, October 24 **AQUAPONICS**

The monthly meeting of the Garden Club will include a short business meeting, refreshments and a talk by Harris County Master Gardener, Bennie Matusek. Here is a video of Bennie's backyard aquaponics system:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B33IS6S05y0&feature=youtu.be>



MISSION AND OUTREACH

Thank you to Terry Owens and all of the donors, for making the September 17th Blood Drive a success! We had 18 donations for a total of 22 units.

Terry also took about \$225 of food to Katy Christian Ministries.



New Hope Clothing Drive

October 1-31

PLEASE WASH ALL CLOTHING TO BE DONATED



- Not too badly worn
- Modest in appearance with no inappropriate slogans or wording.

Shoes should be

- Clean on the inside
- Not too worn or scuffed up
- Soles and heels intact
- Tied or rubber banded together

Only **NEW** socks, underwear, pajamas, and swimwear will be accepted.

We will add a token of your donation to the clothesline in Fellowship Hall every time you donate a check or bag. Help us fill the clothesline!

Clothing should be

- Clean, without any stains
- Without rips, tears or holes
- Working zippers and not missing buttons

MISSION AND OUTREACH (CONTINUED)



We come together to promote the peace of Christ by addressing systems of injustice in our own communities and around the world.

 MATTHEW 25

 PEACE & GLOBAL WITNESS
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
PEACEMAKING AND RECONCILIATION

October 1, 2023

25% of this Offering stays with our congregation to support peacemaking and reconciliation in our own community.	25% of this Offering goes to our mid council to join with other congregations to support peacemaking work in our region.	50% of this Offering supports the work being done by Presbyterians across the globe.
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Our Peace & Global Witness Offering enables the church to promote the peace of Christ by addressing systems of injustice in our own communities and across the world.

Thank you for your participation in the Peace & Global Witness Offering.

IF WE ALL DO A LITTLE, IT ADDS UP TO A LOT!

Thank you!

GREETINGS FROM THE C.D.C



“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go”. Joshua 1:9

September welcomed our students back to our little school. We were delighted for all the shining faces and sounds of laughter. A joyous sound indeed.

October has been promised as a relief from the incessant heat and we expect delivery! The children will celebrate the color orange, and the almighty pumpkin with its ooey, gooey insides.

Our teachers will be discussing important members of our community such as the Farmer and the Fire fighter. Farmers play such an important role in provided nutritious foods for our dinner table. Fire fighters protect us and save our families when we are faced with a dangerous situation like a fire. They must be very brave. October is fire Prevention month. The topic will be ‘is it a tool or a toy?’ Ms. Anne has some very fun and practical lessons prepared in Motor Skills which will help the children understand and respect fire and its uses.

Fall Festival and Halloween are in the works. The children are very excited and are counting their sleeps until the Big Day! □



YOUR SESSION AT WORK

Linda Owens, Clerk to Session

No report from Session. Our wonderful Clerk is on a cruise!! Have fun on your well deserved vacation. We will look forward to Linda report next month



LOVE is not some small-minded ideal that we bypass on the way to weightier theological principles.

LOVE is PhD-level CHRISTIANITY. In our pursuit of Jesus, we will spend the rest of our lives learning to love more passionately, intimately, intentionally, and transformationally.

THERE IS NO HIGHER CALL.

(Jayson D. Bradley)