

THE BEACON

The Newsletter of Pine Street Baptist Church



Thanks to all of those from Pine Street Church who helped to make the Oregon Hill Center's 2020 "COVID-19 Sensitive" Christmas Store a huge success! 62 children were registered through the Oregon Hill Baptist Center. 11 different RCN churches participated in sponsoring these children by purchasing items on their wish lists and helping to make sure they and their families have a Merry Christmas.

Jennifer Turner



2: Bobby Carrington
6: Dolores Treadway
7: Frances "Bootsie" Rudock
10: Dorothy Blackburn
12: Betty Stowell
15: George Hall
16: Emily Tribble Hite
17: Peggy Williams
18: Tina O'Mary
19: Julian Neal
21: Joyce Robinson

2020 Lottie Moon Offering

Church Goal: \$2,000

Given: \$1,995

The Christian Calendar

January 3: Epiphany Sunday

The word Epiphany comes from a Greek word meaning "manifestation or appearance," and has become closely associated with the revelation of Christ in connection with the visit of the Magi.

January 10: Baptism of the Lord Sunday

2020 has been a challenging year for all of us. Anyone, regardless of circumstance, has been affected by this pandemic. Personally, what has been most challenging for me is the lack of connection with others, in particular the church family that I so value. Despite the hardship, I have also found positive aspects and enjoyed the extra quality time with my family. I have wondered about the experiences of others and how they are coping. In particular, I was curious about our church staff and how their lives and routines have changed. I assumed others might also be curious and thought this might be an interesting opportunity for connection within the church. Starting with Philip, I asked a few questions about his recent experiences to be written up in the Beacon. My plan is to follow up with the other staff members in subsequent issues. I hope you enjoy!

Jessi Vaught

A Conversation with Philip

How long have you been at Pine Street?

In July 2021, I will have been Pastor at Pine Street for 30 years. It is hard sometimes to believe that this much time has passed. I actually began working with Evelyn Berry at the Oregon Hill Baptist Center in 1989 as an intern from Union Theological Seminary. At the time of my graduation from seminary, Pine Street needed a pastor. One thing led to another, and I have been blessed to spend my entire career with the wonderful community of faith at Pine Street.

How has the pandemic changed how you spend your time at Pine Street?

The current pandemic changed everything about what I do as Pastor. The regular parts of my ministry had to be adjusted to meet the current situation. One of the most significant changes has been using social media to connect people to church, especially when we were not meeting. Recording worship services, editing them, converting them to be uploaded, and then uploading them online has been a learning experience. However, this has allowed some of our members to connect and connect the church with people who never attended. I plan on continuing this ministry once things return to normal.

Pastoral Care and Visitation changed as I could not visit as I usually do, especially during the first several months of the pandemic. When conditions began to improve, I was able to visit our members in nursing home care and assisted living locations and members who had not been able to attend in-person worship. Also, cards and calling, and social media enable me to connect with some. I do know that I have written more notes this year than my first 29 years, it seems. I was able to visit some folks having surgery by meeting them ahead of time in parking lots when they did not permit people to enter. I also conducted several funerals over the last year, which were very much different than before.

I also began a daily blog where I could offer a written devotion online for people. Four times a week, I have been writing a devotion and placing it on the church's FACEBOOK page as a means of encouragement. In addition, each Wednesday, I offer a video devotional for people to watch as well. And each Thursday morning, I join Marie, Clint, and Jennifer in providing for our homeless friends through the Oregon Hill Center. This has allowed me to connect with many of these individuals that I did not know before.

What does a day in the life of Philip look like serving as pastor?

One of the things about pastoring a church is that any week can turn out in a way you did not plan for. Flexibility is key. Each week, however, there are certain things that I know must be addressed.

Worship and Sermon Preparation – Worship is an essential part of the life of any faith community. People who attend worship desire to offer praise to God and hear how their faith can enable them to live in the world. As the church's Pastor, I know that I must bring a sermon to the congregation each week to speak to their needs. A good part of each week is spent in the preparation and writing of the sermon. Likewise, making sure that the worship flows with the same theme is essential as well.

Bible Study – Each week, depending on the time of the year, I will spend some time preparing for the Wednesday night Bible study and the Sunday School class that I co-teach with Jennifer.

Pastoral Care – This is the unpredictable part of pastoral work. Any week can create a variety of care needs from the church and community. The hospital board can quickly fill up with individuals I will visit over the week. If surgery is involved, I will try to meet and pray with the individual before being taken into surgery. If it is a serious surgery, I will often wait with the family until they hear the outcome.

The funeral can also be an unexpected part of any week. I stopped counting the number of funerals I have performed over the years. Funeral preparation is important to me. I try to make each service as personal and meaningful to the family as I can, even if it is someone the funeral home has called and asked if I would perform since they did not have a minister.

Senior Friend Visitation – Each week, I try to make at least 1 or 2 visits to individuals living at home, nursing care facilities, or assisted living homes.

Likewise, there is the weekly call to check in on folks who may be going through various stressful issues. Just a check-in through a call, card, or visit can mean a lot to these individuals and families.

There are always *administrative issues* to be addressed each week, as well. Not too many weeks pass when there is no committee meeting that meets or requires my attendance. Also, over the years, I have served in various capacities of leadership with Richmond Baptists and Virginia Baptists. I just concluded two three year terms as Chairperson of the Finance Committee for the Richmond Association.

Outreach – Depending on the time of the year, there is some outreach event or mission event that will require my time. Whether it is the outdoor movies, Halloween outreach, sports ministry, and the like, I am always trying to discern ways to extend the church beyond ourselves.

Spiritual Enrichment – Finally, I try to find times each week to maintain my spiritual health through prayer, devotional Bible reading, and the like if I am going to be an effective minister.

What has been the hardest part of the pandemic for you personally?

There is no doubt that personal connection with people has been the most difficult. I never realized how much that personal contact energized and encouraged me in my ministry until the pandemic. Returning to in-person worship helped a lot, but the simple things of sharing a meal together, holding hands in prayer, etc., are sorely missed still.

Decision fatigue – The pandemic has required many decisions regarding what and how we do things as a church. These decisions affect every member, and with any decision, not everyone agrees. Finally, like everyone else, at times, I felt discouraged and depressed as things continued to drag on.

What positive changes do you hope to see come out of the pandemic?

Hopefully, we have all learned some things during this last year. I have become much more aware of the significance of relationships with my family, my circle of friends, and my church family. The world slowed down and I, like others, found myself able to share more time with my family at home rather than engaged in some other activity.

As a church, I think one of the most important lessons learned is that the church is not a building but a way of living in the world. Although our facilities closed, the church never closed. We had to discover new ways to minister in the changing situation. Hopefully, when life returns to normal, we will continue to see the church in this way.



**The church staff would like to wish you and your family
a safe and happy new year.**

