

# *Skipwith Pilot*

## *A Pastor's Musings*

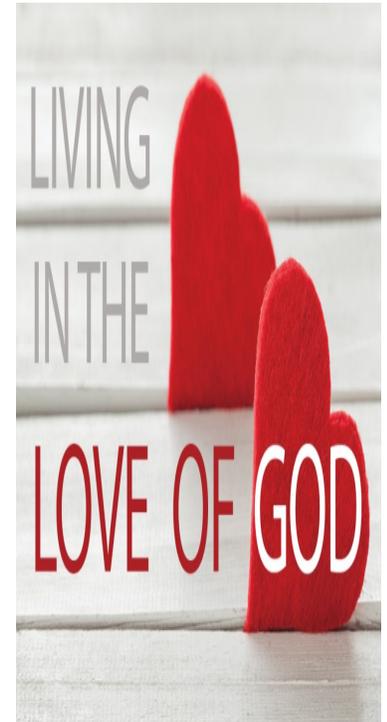
We continue to be challenged on many fronts today. Even with vaccines available, we are still averaging over 3000 deaths each day across America because of the relentless spread and mutation of the COVID-19 virus. We no longer believe that it only impacts “other people” because most of us know at least one of the deceased personally. We watch in wariness and disbelief as scores of our neighbors, locally and throughout the country, wait in long lines at food banks and employment commissions in hopes of securing food and jobs. The corruption among so many of the leaders within our national and state governments leaves us disillusioned and disgusted.

Within the church, our anxiety runs high over the inevitable split looming in our United Methodist denomination over grant full inclusion of the members of the LGBTQIA community into our fellowship, both in word and practice. And more intimately, within the congregation of Skipwith Church, our hearts are reeling from the untimely deaths of four of our faithful and well-loved members – all within a month. We are stunned. We are sad. We are changed.

These challenges, and many more, fill our prayers with pleas for God to have mercy. In my prayer journal I wrote, as the psalmists often did, “How long, O God? What must we do for you to hear, see and act to help us and heal us?” I was drawn, again and again, to meditate on the story of the Ninevites in the third chapter of the book of Jonah.

The people of Nineveh were sworn enemies of the Israelites for whom Jonah was a prophet. They were well-known for their ruthlessness and their violent, wicked ways. Jonah was told by God to go to this enemy nation and tell them to repent or be destroyed, to give them a chance to change their ways. The people of Nineveh hear and believe Israel’s God (not their own gods) and immediately call for repentance demonstrated by fasting, putting on sackcloth and sitting in ashes (signs of mourning and sorrow) and by changing their ways!

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In a sermon during one of our recent Zoom Worship experiences, I urged each Skipwith Church family member and friend of the church to engage in a daily fast of one meal – or some other daily activity that is valued. At the time of the fast, I challenged us to give 30 minutes to lifting up prayers of repentance for the words, actions and attitudes that do harm to others or that prevent good from coming to others.

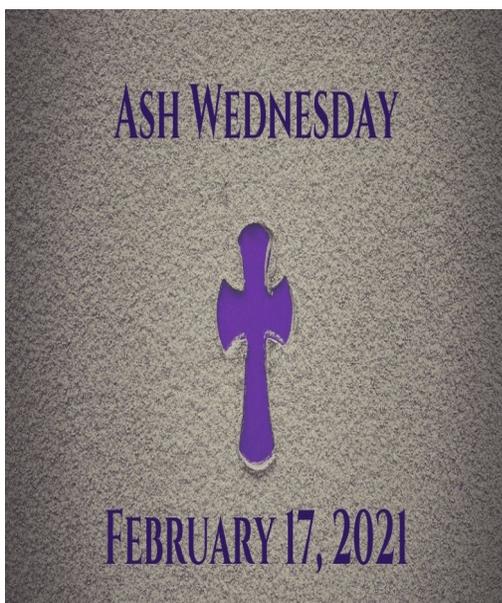
These prayers of repentance should reflect your relational commitments – personally (among family & circle of friends), as a community (with schools, law enforcement, social service, etc.), as a church (locally, across the Virginia conference, and denominationally), and as a citizen of our nation. In each of the areas of our living, we are to ask ourselves, “Of what must we repent (turn away/stop doing and turn back to God’s will) that God might see our genuine sorrow and act.

Read and meditate on Jonah 3:1-10 and 2 Chronicles 7:13-14 for a Biblical example of what you are being asked to do, and for what purpose.

Remember, it is God with whom we have made a covenant and to whom we have promised our ultimate allegiance . . . and it is this covenant with God that governs and informs all of our other relationships.

Please join me today in creating a “movement of repentance” that God might see and have mercy, and forgive us and heal us. Commit to this challenge to fast and offer prayers of repentance daily. Why? “...if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land” (2 Chr. 7:14).”

~Pastor Todd



**7:00 PM on Zoom**  
**You will receive a letter with**  
**instructions and a small amount of**  
**ashes. Zoom connection information**  
**will be sent out on the Tuesday**  
**before Ash Wednesday.**

## *If God Would Place Angels on His Christmas Tree*

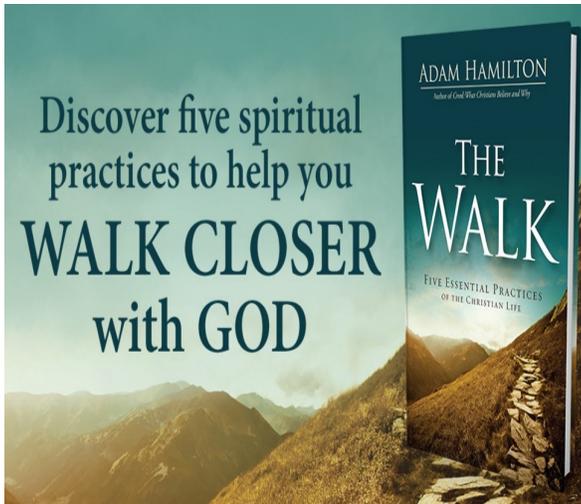
This poem was written by Tom Crane on the night of January 8-9, 2021 while the clamor of warning alarms were everywhere- I wonder if God had a hand in that! At any rate, the words are Tom's, but the feelings of warmth, love, and joy are felt by Betty, Tom, and their family. Your generosity, caring, prayers, and servitude in these difficult times are overwhelming. Thanks for all you do and have done.

We love you all,  
The Cranes and the Hydes



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If God Would Place Angels  
on His Christmas Tree, He'd  
Start with those who called, texted, emailed,  
visited, sent cards and certainly those who prayed  
fervently. Next, He would place those who sent a quilt,  
brought candy, fruit, flowers, plants and trees. And, of course,  
all that food- foods in all amounts, varieties, and delicacies. And those,  
of course, who prayed patiently. Lastly, He would add those who gave  
without asking or being asked: those who raked, blew, bagged, and hauled  
leaves, seeded yards, and, of course, made and sent foods. Some of you may  
see yourselves in one group. Others may see yourselves in two groups,  
and some may be seen in all three groups, but know this:  
the angel at the top of the tree  
- the Lord's Only Son-  
is the one who showed us  
All how it was to be done.



**Lenten Bible Study  
beginning February 24 for  
6 consecutive Wednesdays.  
Classes begin at 10:00 AM on Zoom.**

Each person will need to order their own book from Cokesbury (\$9.99) or Amazon (\$14.79). The book can also be downloaded on ebook. Please call the church office or Pastor Todd to let us know you will be participating.



We can't wait to celebrate with you. The Virginia Conference has designated **February as Heart Havens Month, one of six special offerings throughout the year.** There are seven Heart Havens homes across the Conference, where men and women with a developmental disability are empowered to be full members of the body of Christ, and active participants in their communities.

The theme for Heart Havens Month this year is "A Different Perspective." **Heart Havens' goal is 100 monthly Heart Havens donors.** Online donations can be made here <https://heart-havens.networkforgood.com/> and donors can choose monthly under the frequency drop down menu or click here to learn other ways to give. <https://hearthavens.org/media/1462/recurring-giving-flyer-form-2021.pdf>. You may also make a donation through the church. Please notate on your check or envelope "Heart Havens".

**February is Heart Havens Month!**



*Our heartfelt love and condolences to the families of:*

*George Kellam, Jr.*  
*Deceased—December 11, 2020*

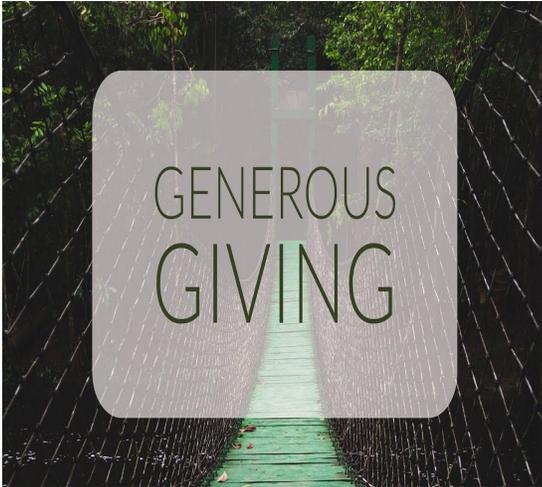
*Phyllis Temple*  
*Deceased—January 19, 2021*

*Mary Moran*  
*Deceased—December 29, 2020*

*Betty Crane*  
*Deceased—January 21, 2021*

*Roy Fouraker*  
*Deceased—January 30, 2021*





Once again the family and friends of Skipwith UMC have opened their hearts to helping others with their generous giving:

Thanksgiving special offering to Welborne UMC Food Pantry—over \$800

Christmas special offering for UMFS—\$1300

Covenant Woods and The Hermitage—Checks were given to help support their Stocking Stuffer program at both facilities. All of the residents were able to receive full stockings.



Are you ready for a new adventure in 2021? Are you looking for ways to travel during the wilderness of Lent? If so, join others on a Spiritual Adventure for Women on Saturday, February 27, 9:00 AM to noon via Zoom. The retreat is hosted by the Spiritual Life Center of Virginia with Spiritual Director Joy Crawford, the Rev. Kelley Lane, and the Rev. Lisa McGehee as your guides. The cost is \$20 per person. The web address to register is:  
<https://www.spirituallifecenterva.org/spiritual-adventure-for-women.html>.

For more information, contact Joy at [joy@spirituallifecenterva.org](mailto:joy@spirituallifecenterva.org), Kelley at [kelleylane@vaumc.org](mailto:kelleylane@vaumc.org), or Lisa at [lisamcgehee@vaumc.org](mailto:lisamcgehee@vaumc.org). The adventure awaits!





February 1—Paul Sacra  
 February 1—George Farry  
 February 9—Whit Crowell  
 February 9—Joyce Davis  
 February 11—Dot Chick  
 February 12—Kristi Harmon  
 February 15—Beth Tolley  
 February 17—Ron DePue  
 February 18—Bruce Chambers  
 February 19—Carrie Christ  
 February 21—Earl Cheatham  
 February 22—Rita Mathews  
 February 26—Lois Parker  
 February 27—Tom Muldoon

## Finance Report

Reported figures as of December 31, 2020

Funds collected to date for FY 2020-2021:  
 \$114,375

Funds expended to date for FY 2020-2021:  
 \$97,661

Funds still required to meet current obligations (negative is good):  
 \$(16,714)

Have you considered using common stock as a gift to the church? Have you been reading about using part of your IRA for charitable gifts? If you are interested, call Jenny at the church for more info.

**SKIPWITH UNITED METHODIST  
CHURCH**                      **FEBRUARY 2021**

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Return Service Requested

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Richmond, VA  
Permit No. 2039



*Love God*  
*Follow Jesus*  
*Serve Others*

**JOIN US FOR WORSHIP ON  
SUNDAYS AT 11 AM ON**



Join a Meeting

Visit our website, [skipwithumc.com](http://skipwithumc.com), for sign-in information