

“Celebrate 190th! Developing Wisdom”
Stewardship 3: History, Present & Future

Preached November 3, 2019
Batavia Presbyterian Church, Ohio
Prepared for 15Sep13, UPC 140, Trinidad, CO

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Texts: Ps 121, Luke 18: 18-30, 1 Tim 4: 4-10

Memory Verse: Jesus said: “*Come to me, all of you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*” Matthew 11:28

Read Luke 18: 18-30

God’s Gifts Began at the Beginning

This week we will look back at the evidence of God’s interest in the people who have served this church, have a look at our present situation, and begin to dream about our future of serving God in this place.

As I was reading through the church history this week, I saw my cat staring longingly through the window—as the rain continued to pour down and the temperatures plummeted. “Why can’t all days be sunny and warm?” she must have wondered.

During significant phases in this church’s history similar ideas must have come into the minds of its members. For example.

- As the months dragged into years and the membership dropped and they couldn’t find a pastor to serve more than a few weeks or provide occasional services. (1839-44, 1850-60)
- It must have been difficult to go through rough times without a shepherd to plan with them and energize them when things began working in their favor and rejoice with them as they anticipated a better future.
- I think especially of the time when a fresh young pastor named French arrived—only to find that the new church building had only four walls and no roof. (1861)
- Or the time that one of the women in the church was seen dancing in public and was forced to apologize to the session. What would they have thought of Jesus’ parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector? Should I tell our session that I have been seen dancing in public?

The problem of the rich, young ruler—having too much money to let it go and serve God and follow Jesus—the problem of too much money in our gospel message does not seem to apply to our congregation today or to our forebears—none of us is excessively wealthy. So, how does Jesus’ message apply to us?

We will consider that question in a few minutes, but let us look first at the many ways God has blessed this congregation and the community in which we share God’s blessings with others.

There are so many times, and events, and situations over which we have no power. (My cat thinks I should turn off the rain and warm things up outside.), but we discover that through it all—God is there, blessing and encouraging, revealing weaknesses and providing strength, dipping into the bottomless wells of mercy to give us hope so that we can share God’s love with others.

Ancient Blessings

Most of human history isn’t written on paper, or even stone. Much of history is embedded deep within our memories, and some of its deepest secrets are buried beneath us. God loves Batavia and the river valley in which it lies.

God has loved this place on the earth’s surface for millions of years (or 6,000 if you agree with certain quarters), and God laid down wealth within its bosom during several thousands of years. Then God drew people from every part of the earth to tend to its beauty and opportunity.

In the early eons of time God created wild animals and a dense jungle to support them. Today you can visit the Dinosaur remains and find fossils from this period. If we had been standing here then, we would be treading water in a giant sea.

During the Cretaceous period, about 64 million years ago, an Asteroid 7 miles wide crashed into the Gulf of Mexico near the tip of Mexico (Alvarez Crater) and created a crater nearly 20 miles deep. It blew poisonous chemicals into the atmosphere 18 miles high, and this air was taken all over the globe by the winds, killing all living things for miles around. The Dinosaurs and all their prey and all the lush tropical vegetation toppled and covered the ground with debris for miles around.

The most recent Ice Age covered the land with frozen snow, and glaciers pushed top soil from Canadian regions south into Indiana and Ohio. The Till Plains, marking the beginning of the Corn Belt in western Ohio and south of the Lake Erie Plains are a gently rolling landscape and provide one of the most fertile farming regions in the United States.

Later warming trends melted the ice into a vast inland sea. The pressure from that water created a chemical reaction that turned the jungle compost into coal, and veins of it were tucked into the mountains covering vast areas.

But then ocean levels dropped and created land bridges between North America and Asia, between South America and Australia, and many animals and people migrated to what would become other continents.

Volcanoes created gold and silver in their depths, and the mountains turned over in their sleep bringing the veins of minerals closer to the surface and pushing metal nuggets into the streams.

God was preparing the land for the people he would send over the next few hundred years.

Immigrants initiate the 190 years of Ministry in Batavia, Ohio

About 6,000 years ago **Native Americans** wandered into the area. They grew gourds, squash, corn and sunflowers. Over time as they drew an abundance of fish from the rivers, they noticed that the many streams flowed into rivers flowing to the south, and eventually, those rivers emptied into the Gulf of Mexico.

People in Europe who were longing for a better life and a river valley in which to farm began to make plans to cast their lots with the people who were coming to America. Among them were many people from the *Betuwe* (Batavia in English) region of the Netherlands. Batavia is a historical and geographical region in the Netherlands, created by large fertile islands in the river delta formed by the waters of the Rhine and Meuse rivers. This area was an important frontier region during the Roman Empire, and it was a source of brave imperial soldiers. The “Batavian Island” in the Rhine river is mentioned by Julius Caesar in his commentary. A later commentator pointed out that the people there were originally a tribe in Germany who were forced to find a new home, but modern archaeologists believe that the area was pre-Roman and pre-German, apparently already called Batavians, and are considered cultural ancestors to many Europeans.

Some of these Batavians stopped in the Dutch East Indies, some settled in New York, and others continued to move west until they arrived here. Many of them came through the Cumberland Gap.

Because Ohio links the Northeast to the Midwest, much cargo and business traffic passes through its borders along its well-developed highways. Ohio has the nation’s 10th largest highway network and is within a one-day drive of 50% of North America’s population and 70% of North America’s manufacturing capacity.

Batavia, Ohio was surveyed on May 28, 1788 and the town was platted in 1814. Ezekiel Dimmit constructed the first cabin in the potential town in 1797. The community grew slowly from 426 residents in 1830 and 537 people in 1840. The Clermont County seat moved from New Richmond to Batavia in 1824, and Batavia incorporated as a village in 1842.

In 1857 prospectors discovered gold in the streams out west—and many people came through this area seeking jobs, or farm land, or a new home, or peace.

More people from the east flowed in following the devastation of the **Civil War**. Neighbors had to learn to get along and work together without regard for the past anger during the war. As families grew in the west, pastors were needed to perform weddings, baptisms, and funerals.

The **Norfolk and Western** Railroad stopped at Batavia from March 1877 to April 1971, and an interurban railway served the communities in southwestern Ohio ran through the town from 1903 to 1934.

However, *Irish* and *Asian* immigrants came to work on the railroad.

Creating a Worshipping Community

William Tennent arrived in Philadelphia in 1718, bringing Presbyterianism to America. In ten years the Westminster Confession was adopted by the Presbyterian church and soon a schism developed between the Old Side and the New Side, which lasted for more than 30 years. In 1801 a Protestant Revival put new spirit into the church following their meeting in Cane Ridge, Kentucky, and in 1807 the first Methodist church was organized in Batavia.

In December of 1829 three men and five women met with some church leaders from Lane Seminary in Cincinnati to create a new Presbyterian Church in Batavia, and they held their first worship service the following day.

The building used by the little Presbyterian church was a new **frame church** building on Market Street, south of Main in 1830, but it was not completed until their first pastor, Rev. George Beecher, arrived in 1833. He was the son of Lyman Beecher, who had helped organize the church, and his sister was Harriet Beecher Stowe, writer of Uncle Tom's Cabin.

In 1835, Rev. Amos Dresser (1812-1904) was arrested during a trip to the south as he distributed pamphlets advocating anti-slavery in Tennessee. His defense sounded much like Stephen's defense in Jerusalem. He endured 20 lashes and left with none of his belongings. He served as an occasional pastor here.

As America moved toward its Civil War, Batavia Presbyterian stood firm in its anti-slavery sentiment and was a strong support of the Underground Railroad—and it is the only church listed in the pamphlets at the Underground Railroad Museum in Cincinnati. In 1842 a freed slave (Henry H. Garnet) was ordained as a Presbyterian minister and went on to preach to Congress and became a US Ambassador to Liberia.

Church membership could be stringent. In 1839 a Session resolution forbade membership in the church to “any individual who shall make, sell, or use as a beverage, intoxicating drinks,” and stated that “No minister who is guilty of slavery may occupy the pulpit.” But the church held no services from 1839-1844 and only occasional services for periods of two to four years between 1839 and 1858 with only one session meeting in 1854 to grant letters of dismissal.

The church was very grateful for the service of Rev. Edward Schofield (1844-1850), who led them during the Cincinnati cholera epidemic.

To get a little perspective: Rev. Marcus and his wife Narcissa Whitman, missionaries to the Pacific Northwest, were killed in 1847 by Cayuse Indians because they were blamed for the measles epidemic that decimated native populations but left them untouched.

In 1858 “a little band of faithful women and two old men” helped raise money for a new church building, and it was moved to its present location at 293 North St. The next year, however, all the church records were lost after they were given to Presbytery. They weren't found again until 1865. In 1861, the General

Assembly pledged its loyalty to the Federal Government, and all the southern Presbyterian churches withdrew from the national association. They didn't reunite until 1983 (120 years later)!

In 1861 the cornerstone was laid for the new brick building, and it had four walls, but no ceiling or roof or floor—so the man they wanted to call as their new pastor almost turned his back on them. But Rev. John L. French served the church faithfully as they kept renewing his pulpit supply status for four years, and he helped the church complete the building and raise its membership. They had to meet in Robinson's Hall in the winter because the church could not be heated.

Finally, in 1867 the new vestibule and tower were dedicated and 100 people attended the service, but a foot of snow blew wildly around the village all day, so many were unable to attend.

In 1877 the Norfolk and Western Railway began stopping in Batavia, and about this time membership rose to 113 as Rev. William Carson served as pastor. Soon (1880) the church celebrated its 50th Anniversary, and Milton Jamieson wrote a church history for the celebration and donated a house on 5th street to be used as the manse for the preachers for the next 90 years as it was updated with electricity, additional rooms, a new furnace and additional bath and hardwood floors.

During the next decade many things happened. Sheldon Jackson, a missionary to the far west, established Presbyterian Churches all across the west, the Women's Association (Ladies Aid Society) was created by Mrs. Gowdy (1884) and reorganized by Mrs. Nina McCulloch in 1920. The chapel (parlor) and kitchen were built (1886), a new bell was given by Ezra Krinks, and Sunday School grew in membership to 217. In 1889 stained glass windows were put into the sanctuary, and in 1895 the first Presbyterian hymnal was published, and became the model for future hymnals.

Mid-1880s: Bat Masterson was sheriff. Butch Cassidy was robbing the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe.

Church Choir, made up of many singers who have given freely of their time and ability, was been a central part of worship for many years, and many pianists and organists have provided music to enhance worship.

Hymns: Old and New

Parishioners preferred the old hymns, like those of

- Charles Wesley (1707-1788): "Finish then thy New Creation, pure and spotless let us be..."
- Edward Perronet (1725-1792): "All hail the power of Jesus name..."
- John Newton (1725-1807): "Glorious things of thee are spoken, Zion, city of our God."

They were somewhat skeptical of the new, modern hymns like

- James Montgomery (1771-1854): “Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o’er all the earth...,”
- Henry F. Lyte (1793-1847): “Abide with me, fast falls the eventide,” or “Praise, my soul, the King of heaven; to his feet thy tribute bring.”
- John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892): “Dear Lord and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways!”
- Julia Ward Howe (1819-1910): “Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord: he is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;”
- William Whiting (1825-1878): “Eternal Father, strong to save, whose arm doth bind the restless wave, who biddest the mighty ocean deep its own appointed limits keep...”

1922-1972: **Donald Jamieson** served as the church organist and choir director for nearly 50 years. A wonderful musician, he wrote many beautiful organ pieces and played weekly until his death in 1972, when he suffered a heart attack at the church organ during a worship service and died on the way to the hospital.

Sermon Topics of the 1870s

Inspiration of the Holy Scripture was a hot topic, and clerics strongly debated with writers of “profane history,” what we now call secular history.

Pastors at this time probably drew from the prolific sermons of the English evangelist, Charles Spurgeon for their preaching. An 1870 Vanity Fair article states that **Charles Spurgeon** (1834-92) was an “original and powerful preacher... honest, resolute, sincere, lively, and entertaining.” He had begun preaching at age 16, and published more than 3500 sermons. About 25,000 copies of his sermons were sold in England weekly, and insights from them are still used today. One sermon (1890) is 12 pages, single spaced. He probably reached 10 million people in his lifetime. He said (1890):

“There are different ways of replying to the invitation of the Gospel when you mean to refuse it. They are all, at best, bad, and they may all be classed under one head, for ‘they all with one consent began to make excuses.’ (Luke 14) Some created excuses, but all thought very lightly of the giver of the feast.”

Problems and Possibilities From 1902-1914

In 1902 the scandal all the preachers were cautioning their congregations about was the new “lazy daisy” skirt which showed a lady’s ankles!

Death and difficulty were close on the heels of the nation. President James Garfield was the second president to be assassinated (1881) and President William McKinley (1897-1901) was the third.

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in March 1911 in NYC alerted the public to the dangerous conditions under which most people worked and the number of young people in the work place. The doors were locked, and 146 garment workers were killed in the explosion and fire, and two of the girls were 14-years-old. Most were Jewish and Italian immigrants, women aged 16-23.

It wasn't until 1938 (when adults were willing to work for children's wages) during the Depression that the Fair Labor Standards passed (FDR, New Deal) and child labor laws were finally put into place. Note: children are still working up to 10 hours/day in agriculture, which is not covered by child labor laws.

There were also trials and disasters from without: **Spanish-American War** (1899); the direct hit of a hurricane on **Galveston** Island, killing 8,000; the **Earthquake** and Fire in San Francisco which drove many people east to Colorado and Texas; and the **First World War** (1914-18). These local and national catastrophes drove people to the safety of the mountains.

Good things were happening in the worshipping community. In 1902 the pastor (Rev. Howard Billman) and his wife helped the church to rent space and start an **Industrial School** to teach girls in the community to cook and use homemaking skills.

Hugh L. Nichols, an elder, served as Lieutenant Governor of Ohio (1911-1913) and became the first Chief Justice of the Ohio Supreme Court (1913-1920)

1902: Milton Jamieson established an **Endowment Fund** for the church

1912 & 1918: Revivals led by Rev. Steward and Rev. John Robertson

1912: Water-powered pipe organ installed. When electricity was available in the city (1936), it was switched to electricity

Sermon Topics From 1915-1941

As the nation moved into the affluence of the 1920s, highways began to be paved. The debate in the early 1920s was: who was going to pay for the new roads? It was the wealthy people who owned the cars that needed better roads. The state, which had few vehicles and a small population that needed roads was not particularly interested in funding the improvements and paving of its highways. In 1916 the Federal Highway Act provided 50/50 contract with local governments for paving roads. Finally, a gas tax in 1919 funded roads, and the CHC began spending millions annually. Convict labor was often used, and the gravel and other necessary ingredients were quarried locally.

Billy Sunday (1862-1935) was the best known preacher during this period. He was a Presbyterian Evangelist travelling around the country preaching against the evil of alcohol and other sins. A former professional baseball player, he often tore off his jacket as he warmed up to his topic, and occasionally he climbed up his pulpit. He has left us with numerous quotations. [read quotes]

One of the hot topics among pastors in 1930s was about evolution. A young girl in England had discovered a dinosaur bone, and people began to wonder about the length of those first seven days and other problems with Genesis 1. A book of Academic Bible Doctrines (1931) states: The enemy has originated the theory that the first week of time was not composed of seven literal days but of long, indefinite periods of time,” and that would mean that “the vegetation created on the third day would have died during the long period of darkness following; Adam would have been many thousands of years old before of the close of the first Sabbath, yet the Scriptures say he lived 930 years.”

C. S. Lewis explained this conundrum in *The Magician’s Nephew* by having the children watch as Aslan creates Narnia. He showed that growth and change need not happen as it does now: it could have been easily speeded up to make necessary changes possible.

1919: **National Parks** are created in the United States

1922: Kitchen added

Batavia Presbyterian was organizer and charter member of Batavia Fellowship of Churches.

1930: PCUSA’s constitution is amended to allow women to become ordained elders

1940: First woman served as elder: Emma Wilke

Sermon Topics From 1941-1970

At that time scholars had brought the Hebrew name of God: YHWH into the vocabulary of the people by telling them that God’s real name was “Jehovah” or “Yaweh.” In actuality, the letters representing God’s name in the Bible cannot be pronounced. The Jewish writers marked it so that no one could pronounce it because saying God’s name might unleash power.

Billy Graham, born in NC in 1918, had become a very popular evangelist and an advisor to presidents in 1949 when his ministry was backed by William Randolph Hearst.

1942: Considered merge with Methodists but decided against it.

1945: Maple Grove Cumberland Presbyterian Church closed and its members joined Batavia Presbyterian

1948: New kitchen and restrooms

1949: Fellowship Hall added, along with new furnace, new floor and carpeting in Sanctuary, electrical wiring, and basement entrance, renovated kitchen.

Among the contributors was John F. Grant of Houston, TX (\$5,000).

1949: Rosanna Hoberg wrote history of Batavia Presbyterian for anniversary.

1954: PCUSA becomes first church body to endorse the Supreme Court's ruling against racial segregation

1956: First woman ordained as minister of PCUSA

1962: Bought Van Horn house and began using garage for benevolence sales and gifts of clothing, food and furniture to poor in community

1962-2008: Ellen Woods provided long-term management and operation of the church's Mission Garage, which provided support for food, clothing, and financial assistance to many local families. Upon her death in 2008, the church partnered with the Inter-Parish Ministry to provide food for the needy using church facilities. More recently the church opened "Helping Hanger" to provide free clothing monthly and a "Blessing Box" to provide some food and essentials to local residents.

Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. leads a March on Washington and addresses a crowd of 200,000 giving his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. Presbyterian Eugene Carson Blake is among the speakers. Many African-American Presbyterian helped organize the event, and another president was assassinated—JFK in Dallas (1963).

Church Events & Pastors From 1971-2019

The church celebrated its 140th anniversary when Richard Nixon was president (1969-74), and Rev. Herbert Bates was your pastor. 1970-1991: Nursery school provided at the church, sponsored by the YWCA, Acorn Academy, Head Start, and the church.

The church has a history of fine pastors with excellent leadership skills and excellent preaching, including Rev. Lloyd Baird and Rev. John L. French.

1974-1985: House on Wood St. became manse

1984-1985: Presbyterian overseas representative for Lebanon, Ben Wein, was captured by members of Hezbollah and held captive for 16 months

Several church members have lived long and productive lives: Mrs. Caroline Fairman was 90 in 1991, Mrs. Josephine Hulick died at 103, and Mr. Joseph Platter, a veteran of the Civil War, was 97 in 1991. Joining this church seems to lengthen your life span.

Activities sponsored by the church included

- Board of Trustees refurbishing the sanctuary, renovating the exterior of the church, redecorating the pastor's study, and purchasing a new piano.

- Deacons minister to the congregation in many ways.
- The Presbyterian Women’s Association served women through sponsoring Bible Studies and mission programs and fund-raising.
- Church School held classes for children and adults of all ages, and a Bible study class met on Tuesday evenings.
- A church newsletter was published by various people throughout the years.

1997: Men’s Group formed for Bible study, fellowship, and a brief worship service.

Harry Kroger was a long-time faithful choir member who was the foundation for the bass section of our small choir. He also led a devotional at the Men’s Group (1997) that meets monthly at a local restaurant.

Ida Kennard started the “Mitten Tree” ministry to collect gloves, caps and scarves to decorate the church Christmas tree and then provide these items to local underprivileged children. Her project evolved into the “adoption” of needy families in Batavia to provide gifts of clothing and toys at Christmas, and the project continues today.

Joan Woods was a faithful church member and choir participant who provided a very generous bequest from her estate upon her death in 2007. Proceeds from that gift have enabled the church to significantly increase our outreach to Batavia and beyond. That money made it possible to renovate the chancel and provide an open, flexible space for worship.

1971-1973: Rev. Fred Sanner

1973-1983: Rev. Bruce B. Scott

1983-1984: Rev. Robert Clark

1985-1991: Rev. Lloyd L. Baird

1991: Rev. Marilyn “Casey” Wells

1992-2004: Rev. Ronald W. Lukat. During the pastorate of Rev. Ronald W. Lukat a new furnace and air conditioning were added to the church. A contemporary was presented for several months, but ultimately stopped.

1998: Rev. Lukat was suffering from a serious heart condition and Rev. Al Davies, a retired minister from Mt. Washington served as temporary supply pastor until March when Rev. Lukat conducted worship once a month.

2004-2006: Rev. Lloyd Dunavant served as interim pastor

2006-2016: Rev. Allan c. Lane

2017-2018: Rev. David Choate

2018-present: Rev. Dr. Bonnie Canizaro

Gospel Reflections

None of us feel like our background and presentations match that of the Rick Young Ruler in our gospel reading, and our review of our church history show our weaknesses and difficulties as well as God's blessings.

In fact, none of the church leaders we're thought about today seem to match this identification of someone so rich that they cannot follow Jesus.

So why study this text?

Jesus' response to the young man is appropriate: "What is *good*?"

How would you qualify *good* to help you understand?

Mark informs us that Jesus loves this man (Mark 10: 21), and we are to love one another as we learn from one another.

The Leader's question is a contradiction: What must I *do* to *earn*?

Think about that question for a minute: we are unable to earn God's grace. No one can do anything in order to receive an inheritance, just like we cannot earn eternal life with God.

Jesus tells him: Go, Sell, Give, Follow (18:22)

Here's Jesus' message to each of us. We must have "no other gods" before our Lord. Trusting God and following Jesus is the only way we are saved.

Salvation comes only through God's mercy and not through anything we can do.

Only God makes salvation possible.

So—here's the message for each of us: What stands in the way of your desire to follow Jesus?

Jesus points out that whatever fascinates us distracts us from following him faithfully. As we look at the history of this church—and our own personal histories—we discover successes and failures.

We all make mistakes; we all get distracted.

God alone provides the solution, so we are called to Trust, Believe, Give, Follow. If you have difficulty identifying your besetting sin 1) talk with friends, 2) identify the things that occupy your thoughts, 3) create a spiritual growth plan.

Follow. True security can be found only in Jesus.

If you cannot take a year, take a season. If you cannot take a season, take a period. If you cannot take a long time together, take several times. Find peace.

Conclusion and Call

Look at your memory verse and remember the words that Jesus promised—
"Come to me, all of you who labor and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest." (Matt 11: 28)

Let us Pray:

Father, we are such busy and devoted people. We do not want to stop a moment before we go about doing good deeds. But you know us better than we know ourselves. You know that we need rest and reflection. You know that we need to be quiet for a time in order to hear your voice. Give us the grace to withdraw from our daily tasks and listen to you.

In the name of the one who made all this possible, Jesus Christ. Amen

Benediction

God calls us to a time of rest and reflection. A time of rest for the land and rest for ourselves. Find time to spend in rest. Listen to God. Go in peace. Amen

Resources

- 1) "Historical Documents 1870-2013
- 2) "1 Tim 4 Commentary" in NIB
- 3) "Billy Sunday" online quotes
- 4) "Charles Spurgeon" online messages
- 5) "Billy Graham" online quotes

Texts: Luke 18: 18-30, Ps 121, 1 Tim 3

1 Timothy 4:1-16 ^{RS} Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will renounce the faith by paying attention to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, ² through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared with a hot iron. ³ They forbid marriage and demand abstinence from foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴ For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, provided it is received with thanksgiving; ⁵ for it is sanctified by God's word and by prayer. ⁶ If you put these instructions before the brothers and sisters, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound teaching that you have followed. ⁷ Have nothing to do with profane myths and old wives' tales. Train yourself in godliness, ⁸ for, while physical training is of some value, godliness is valuable in every way, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. ⁹ The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance. ¹⁰ For to this end we toil and struggle, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe. ¹¹ These are the things you must insist on and teach. ¹² Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. ¹³ Until I arrive, give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching. ¹⁴ Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders. ¹⁵ Put these things into practice, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. ¹⁶ Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers.

Psalms 14:1-7 ^{NRS} <To the leader. Of David.> Fools say in their hearts, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is no one who does good. ² The LORD looks down from heaven on humankind to see if there are any who are wise, who seek after God. ³ They have all gone astray, they are all alike perverse; there is no one who does good, no, not one. ⁴ Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers who eat up my people as they eat bread, and do not call upon the LORD? ⁵ There they shall be in great terror, for God is with the company of the righteous. ⁶ You would confound the plans of the poor, but the LORD is their refuge. ⁷ O that deliverance for Israel would come from Zion! When the LORD restores the fortunes of his people, Jacob will rejoice; Israel will be glad.

Not Used

Trinidad

CO Presbytery was growing so large that it divided into the northern area (Denver) and southern area (Pueblo), which met for the first time in 1881 in Trinidad.

In 1882 the Second Presbyterian Church was formed by a Presbytery committee to serve the **Spanish** speaking community in Trinidad. At first the 20 charter members and the newcomers met in homes, but they built and occupied the building at 400 E. Main Street for many years. (Rinos) The **Jewish** community began worship and school in 1883 and built its synagogue in 1899.

In 1899 the church began publishing a weekly newsletter called "The Presbyterian." The new pastor of the church, Rev. Theodore **Hawley**, was both an architect and a pastor, so he

designed the new, red brick church at 224 N. Commercial. In 1965 Nelle Hawley, the pastor's daughter, wrote:

“September 2, 1901 is a date long to be remembered. President McKinley was assassinated and eight Hawleys arrived in Trinidad. Our first Sunday here we walked to the church, and a policeman met us at Main and Commercial and led us to the church. During the sermon a shower came up, so umbrellas were raised in some parts of the church, as the roof was in bad condition. Perhaps my dad was chosen as pastor because he had been architect in his younger days. When the old church was moved away, services were held in the old Opera House over Hausmans Drug Store. The new basement was soon finished so services were held there until the upstairs was completed. I rode around town on horseback collecting things for our Rummage Sale as there were very few telephones. About 1903 the first car came to Trinidad, and our family was soon invited to go for a ride. We rode as far as Main and Commercial when the car stopped. Everyone had to get out because the engine was under the seat. By the time it was repaired with a hairpin, there was quite a crowd watching us.

Margaret Hawley, the youngest daughter, lay the cornerstone for the new building on April 3, 1902, and several records were placed within it: a copy of the Bible, Chronicle News, a coin and a list of church members. It was dedicated in July 1902 at a total cost of \$12,644.

A central concern of the worshipping community during this time must have been the numerous explosions, fatalities, accidents and injuries that were occurring in the mines. The miners had canaries, but there was always the threat of carbon monoxide or the explosion of coal dust. More than 484 miners were killed by explosions from 1902-1923 in coal mines in Las Animas county. In addition there were numerous accidents such as: the roof caving in (most common), problems with mine cars and locomotives, shaft and slope, suffocation, falls, stepping on sharp objects, and fires. Primero Mine: 24 (1907), 75 (1910); Starkville: 56 (1910); 79 (1910); Hastings: 121 (1917).

Conditions were so dangerous in the mines that a state-wide strike was called in 1913, and between 69 and 199 people died or were killed as a result of that strike, which was called “the deadliest strike in US history” by Thomas Andrews. The Ludlow Massacre was a part: the attack on a tent colony of 1200 miners and their families on April 20, 1914 resulted in the death of 2 women, 11 children and the violent death of 19-25 people (machine guns/CO Natl Guard).

The FPC had 162 members by 1900. The **Italian Presbyterian** Church was started as a mission work of the Presbytery of Pueblo in 1916 by Antonio Sulmonetti of Denver. It was organized in May 1918 as a church with 24 members, and it built the church at 723 Stonewall (now Nazarene).

The Ladies Aid and missionary society (later Presbyterian Women) was organized in 1876 and served the church and the community in many ways. They contributed money toward the building of the new church and contributed \$1650 toward the purchase of a pipe organ for services. They sold silver spoons and gave the church stained glass windows with proceeds. In 1959 the pastor's wife, Mrs. Shirley Baker organized United Pres. Women, which served the church through Bible study and missionary support. Community projects between 1984-1991 include Mother's Morning Out, Window Works, Family Guidance Services, and a Recycling Collection station.

Roosevelt's **New Deal** helped to employ young men and roads began to be paved throughout CO. Finally there was a Great North-South highway from Cheyenne, WY to the Raton Pass, and Trinidad was linked to the nation by Hwy 85. CCC brought more work to the area. The first CO state map showing Interstates was 1961.

By 1919, under the leadership of Rev. J. F. Shephard, the FPC church grew to almost 1,000 people. Among them were two who were direct descendants of charter members.

Tri-C (Comrades, Christians, Co-Workers) was a group of church women organized in 1930 to benefit the population through giving and ministry.

Here in Trinidad someone dug tunnels under Main Street so that liquor could be provided to those willing to pay during **Prohibition**. The **Dust Bowl** and the **Depression** drove more immigrants toward Trinidad, jobs, and opportunities.

Reverend George McDougall served this church from 1933-1941 as World War II loomed on the horizon. Japanese internment camps were set up outside the city.

Reverend Paul Whiteside became the pastor for seven years. In 1944, he received permission to preach on Sunday evenings to the little congregation developing in **Aguilar**. CLP Sam Madrid served this community as their pastor from 1983 until they joined this congregation.

Reverend H. H. Liechty, Ruth Shell's father, served as pastor 1947-59 as the US was plunged into the Korean War. In 1958 the church newsletter was being distributed to more than 200 people, and the pastor was providing morning devotions on the local radio. In 1959 a fire in the manse, the home for the pastor, destroyed the upper floor.

In 1961 the Second Presbyterian Church and the Italian Presbyterian Church joined with the First Presbyterian Church to become one: **United Presbyterian**.

Rev. B. Franklin Elser revitalized the church when he served as pastor (1975-81). The coal mines closed, and the economy suffered. Other sources of attraction for tourists and immigrants had to be found.

In 1992-1998 UPC had its first woman pastor, Rev. Sylvia Edwards, and the church celebrated its 125th anniversary.

Rev. Richard Spinner and Sam Madrid have both served this congregation on numerous occasions. The dwindling congregation of the First Baptist Church decided to give their building and an endowment to preserve it to this church in 2003. Rev. Justin Schlesinger-Devlin served as pastor (2001-2003) and led the congregation on a walk to their new home on San Pedro on a snowy April day in 2003. My pastorate here follows that of Rev. Gary Gardner (2003-2010).

Call to Celebrate Jubilee

As we look forward to the future, we go back to the past. Read **Leviticus 25**

How does this passage from the third book in the Bible—written thousands of years ago apply to us and our lives today?

God's plan for Jubilee, and my challenge to you today to celebrate Jubilee this year—seems counterintuitive. Scientists discovered in the last 50 years that the land does need a rest, and people need rest and change in their work schedules. Farmers and ranchers have discovered that cattle need to be moved from one field to another to allow the land to recover, and rotating crops, irrigation, and sculpting the rows to account for hills and valleys help the soil to hold water. All these techniques make sense to us now, but you can imagine that the Israelites would not want to make changes in the ways they were used to working. Who would want to leave the land fallow the year after a bumper crop?

God knows that people need a weekly Sabbath, and now that principle is extended to a sabbatical rest every seven years and a year of rest every 7 X 7 years: a year of Jubilee! And the

reason given is that God knows us best, and God knows best what we—and the land on which we live and work, and our ideas need rest and reflection. Notice how bright and alert you are when you are rested (coffee)?

God is saying in this passage that he is the owner and controller of the land, and we are God's tenants. Imagine if you managed a farm for a wealthy owner who asked you to clean the place and renew all its buildings and equipment every seven years. Not only would the owner be upset with you if you neglected to obey his instructions, but think how run-down the farm would become after years of neglect of cleaning and upkeep. Our minds, our bodies, our land, our work needs rest and reflection—upkeep—too!

So, brace yourself. The ideas God is calling us to embrace and the suggestions I have for you today seem counterintuitive. This will be an extremely difficult plan for most of the people in this church today. However, the church needs to take a year of Jubilee. Trinidad needs to take a year of Jubilee.

Did you notice, too, that the poor of the area can come by and eat of the produce that came up of itself during the year of Jubilee? How often do we freely share of all the benefits God has provided to us? We can learn a lesson in sharing here, too. The wildlife has a chance to repopulate itself as well. Although I admit I am a little apprehensive about the local squirrels ability to repopulate over 12 months.

The year begins with a Day of Atonement—a time of repentance, saying you are sorry to those whom you have mistreated, and confessing your sins to God. God's forgiveness provides you with a clean slate, just like the land is able to replenish its minerals and consistency. And all this takes place under the eyes of God—no one is to take advantage of another.

All of us need to take a year to rest from the most oppressive and tedious of our work and reap the benefits of all the projects and plans and work we have been doing for the past several years. Rest is the first gift given to the newly formed humans in their home in paradise. The world had been created to ideally suit them, and within 7 days they are to prepare to receive their first gift: Rest. And God joined them.

Celebration of Jubilee ties together the central tenets of our religious beliefs and our concerns for the society in which we live. Jesus united these concerns during his ministry.

As Jesus began his ministry, he stood up in the synagogue and read the passage from Isaiah 61:1

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” Then he began to say: “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4: 16-21)

The celebration of Jubilee now begins with worship of our Savior and listening to his voice, inviting Jesus to live within us and run our lives.

Use this time of Jubilee

- To relax and rediscover your strengths
- To contemplate—what are your priorities? What should be the priorities for your church and your city?
- Pray for God's voice to reach you and direct
- Seek discernment about the plans you are considering and the ideas you have.
- What is God calling this church, this city, and each of us to do, or see, or hear?

God will care for us as we take a time of Jubilee just as God cares for us as we sleep each night.

Leviticus 25:1-55 ^{NRS} The LORD spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying: ² Speak to the people of Israel and say to them: When you enter the land that I am giving you, the land shall observe a sabbath for the LORD. ³ Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in their yield; ⁴ but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of complete rest for the land, a sabbath for the LORD: you shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard. ⁵ You shall not reap the aftergrowth of your harvest or gather the grapes of your unpruned vine: it shall be a year of complete rest for the land. ⁶ You may eat what the land yields during its sabbath-- you, your male and female slaves, your hired and your bound laborers who live with you; ⁷ for your livestock also, and for the wild animals in your land all its yield shall be for food. ⁸ You shall count off seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the period of seven weeks of years gives forty-nine years. ⁹ Then you shall have the trumpet sounded loud; on the tenth day of the seventh month-- on the day of atonement-- you shall have the trumpet sounded throughout all your land. ¹⁰ And you shall hallow the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: you shall return, every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family. ¹¹ That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you: you shall not sow, or reap the aftergrowth, or harvest the unpruned vines. ¹² For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you: you shall eat only what the field itself produces. ¹³ In this year of jubilee you shall return, every one of you, to your property. ¹⁴ When you make a sale to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor, you shall not cheat one another. ¹⁵ When you buy from your neighbor, you shall pay only for the number of years since the jubilee; the seller shall charge you only for the remaining crop years. ¹⁶ If the years are more, you shall increase the price, and if the years are fewer, you shall diminish the price; for it is a certain number of harvests that are being sold to you. ¹⁷ You shall not cheat one another, but you shall fear your God; for I am the LORD your God. ¹⁸ You shall observe my statutes and faithfully keep my ordinances, so that you may live on the land securely. ¹⁹ The land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill and live on it securely. ²⁰ Should you ask, What shall we eat in the seventh year, if we may not sow or gather in our crop? ²¹ I will order my blessing for you in the sixth year, so that it will yield a crop for three years. ²² When you sow in the eighth year, you will be eating from the old crop; until the ninth year, when its produce comes in, you shall eat the old. ²³ The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; with me you are but aliens and tenants. ²⁴ Throughout the land that you hold, you shall provide for the redemption of the land. ²⁵ If anyone of your kin falls into difficulty and sells a piece of property, then the next of kin shall come and redeem what the relative has sold. ²⁶ If the person has no one to redeem it, but then prospers and finds sufficient means to do so, ²⁷ the years since its sale shall be computed and the difference shall be refunded to the person to whom it was sold, and the property shall be returned. ²⁸ But if there is not sufficient means to recover it, what was sold shall remain with the purchaser until the year of jubilee; in the jubilee it shall be released, and the property shall be returned. ²⁹ If anyone sells a dwelling house in a walled city, it may be redeemed until a year has elapsed since its sale; the right of redemption shall be one year. ³⁰ If it is not redeemed before a full year has elapsed, a house that is in a walled city shall pass in perpetuity to the purchaser, throughout the generations; it shall not be released in the jubilee. ³¹ But houses in villages that have no walls around them shall be classed as open country; they may be redeemed, and they shall be released in the jubilee. ³² As for the cities of the Levites, the Levites shall forever have the right of redemption of the houses in the cities belonging to them. ³³ Such property as may be redeemed from the Levites-- houses sold in a city belonging to them-- shall be released in the jubilee; because the houses in the cities of the Levites are their possession among the people of Israel. ³⁴ But the open land around their cities may not be sold; for that is their possession for all time. ³⁵ If any of your kin fall into difficulty and become dependent on you, you shall support them; they shall live with you as though resident aliens. ³⁶ Do not take interest in advance or otherwise make a profit from them, but fear your God; let them live with you. ³⁷ You shall not lend them your money at interest taken in advance, or provide them food at a profit. ³⁸ I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, to be your God. ³⁹ If any who are dependent on you become so impoverished that they sell themselves to you, you shall not make them serve as slaves. ⁴⁰ They shall remain with you as hired or bound laborers. They shall serve with you until the year of the jubilee. ⁴¹ Then they and their children with them shall be free from your authority; they shall go back to their own family and return to their ancestral property. ⁴² For they are my servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as slaves are sold. ⁴³ You shall not rule over them with harshness, but shall fear your God. ⁴⁴ As for the male and female slaves whom you may have, it is from the nations around you that you may acquire male and female slaves. ⁴⁵ You may also acquire them from among the aliens residing with you, and from their families that are with you, who have been born in your

land; and they may be your property. ⁴⁶ You may keep them as a possession for your children after you, for them to inherit as property. These you may treat as slaves, but as for your fellow Israelites, no one shall rule over the other with harshness. ⁴⁷ If resident aliens among you prosper, and if any of your kin fall into difficulty with one of them and sell themselves to an alien, or to a branch of the alien's family, ⁴⁸ after they have sold themselves they shall have the right of redemption; one of their brothers may redeem them, ⁴⁹ or their uncle or their uncle's son may redeem them, or anyone of their family who is of their own flesh may redeem them; or if they prosper they may redeem themselves. ⁵⁰ They shall compute with the purchaser the total from the year when they sold themselves to the alien until the jubilee year; the price of the sale shall be applied to the number of years: the time they were with the owner shall be rated as the time of a hired laborer. ⁵¹ If many years remain, they shall pay for their redemption in proportion to the purchase price; ⁵² and if few years remain until the jubilee year, they shall compute thus: according to the years involved they shall make payment for their redemption. ⁵³ As a laborer hired by the year they shall be under the alien's authority, who shall not, however, rule with harshness over them in your sight. ⁵⁴ And if they have not been redeemed in any of these ways, they and their children with them shall go free in the jubilee year. ⁵⁵ For to me the people of Israel are servants; they are my servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.