



First Light

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In Christ Let Our Answer Be Always 'YES'!

“As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been ‘Yes and No.’ For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you...was not ‘Yes and No’; but in him it is always ‘Yes.’ For in him every one of God’s promises is a ‘YES.’”

(2 Corinthians 1:18-20a)

If you’ve lived long enough you may have learned the importance of repeatedly learning to say “No” in life. When squeezed by peers to cave into peer-pressure and do something wrong, it’s always right and valuable to learn to say “No.” When temptations arise to disobey God it’s important to have the moral fiber and courage to be able to say “No.” Parents, faced with the pleading demands of the children often have to learn to say “No.” When we are asked to add yet another worthy cause onto our already over-crowded lives, it can very important to voice the definitive “No.” Saying “No” can be the mark of a person who has established valuable, healthy boundaries in their life. But always saying “No” can also be the mark of a stubborn, closed, and selfish life.

On the other extreme, being labeled a “Yes man (woman)” is not usually considered a compliment. The person who always feels they have to say “Yes” to every request can reflect a lack of appropriate boundaries or a person who has no real personal convictions. A “Yes person” is a people pleaser. They say “Yes” because they don’t want to ever be contrary nor trouble the waters. But that may neither honor God, others, nor oneself.

Paul was not a people pleaser. He was a God pleaser. He said in Galatians 1:10 *“If I were still trying to please men I would not be a servant of Christ.”* In other words, Paul was all about pleasing God, even if that didn’t please people.

And John says, *“But Jesus on his part would not entrust himself to people, because he knew all people...for he himself knew what was in everyone.”* (John 2:24-25) Jesus entrusted himself to his heavenly Father because he knew his Father was absolutely trust-worthy.

So is there a time and a place when is it always right to say “Yes” and never right to say “No”? The answer is “Yes.” Paul said, *“In Christ,”* or in the things pertaining to Jesus and his call on our lives, *“Our answer is always ‘Yes.’ For in him every one of God’s promises is a ‘YES.’”*

In other words, since God and his promises are absolutely and always for us (Romans 8:31), it’s right and good that we should always be for God and given over to the things of God.

Please don’t misunderstand me. This doesn’t mean that we always should say “Yes” when we’re asked to serve. We may already be very committed in another area of service and our saying “Yes” would over-involve us. **What it does mean is this: the posture of a child of God should always be a posture of openness, hunger, and eagerness to receive from God and to be involved in those things that honor God.**

When it comes to receiving from the triune God let our response always be “Yes” here I am, hungry and ready for whatever you have for me. When it comes to being generous in our love for God and others, let our response always be a “Yes.” Anything else is a step away from grace.

Your “Yes man” for God in 2018,
Pastor Andy

ANNUAL MEETING

Our annual meeting date has been set for
Sunday, February 18, 2018

Limits, Weakness and an Antimony

It feels like I've been absent from you all for quite a while. I was off most of December using my vacation days, and then promptly got sick. Can I just say, contrary to what you ladies think, the man-flu is a real thing. I can almost hear your eyes rolling... Anyway, I ended up sleeping during the day on the couch and watching a lot of Netflix... grateful for both a couch and Netflix, but boy- am I glad that's over.

As I was hacking, sniffing and general feeling miserable, I was able to reflect on and experience a bit of the reality of my own weakness and limits. It was glaringly obvious to me how very little control I had over my own body. How much I depended upon things I couldn't control to enjoy life - or more to the point, to BE alive. I didn't choose to be here (alive), I really didn't choose God- I responded to his grip on me- once he made me alive, and even granted me the gift of faith to acknowledge I needed His forgiveness and love offered in Jesus. And yet my choices are real, and have real consequences. God gives us the dignity of causality, while maintaining his sovereignty over all.

One day in grad school a professor told us, "We humans are at the same time both contingent and volitional creatures." We looked at him blankly... and then with great patience he said, "We depend on things outside of ourselves to live AND we make choices that effect life." We still looked at him a bit befuddled, and in exasperation he said this, "God is absolutely sovereign AND he takes our choices very seriously."

Back in 1998 in class, this was an intellectual exercise and puzzle- but now, 20 yrs later, I understand what he is saying in my bones. Many things happen in life over which we have zero control. Sickness, death of loved ones, downsizing, natural disaster- AND good things too... at the same time, I make choices that effect this life, and its outcomes- for my body - diet, exercise, medicine, etc... All under God's mysterious providential care and hand.

How these things come together I don't understand- God's sovereignty and human choices. Both are mysteriously true yet shouldn't be. Theologians call two things that cannot both be true yet scripture tells us most certainly are true - an antimony. We can, and should ponder and reflect upon this mystery, this antimony. But, we understand our choices in this life matter, even as we rest in and trust God's sovereign love and grace as revealed to us through scripture in Jesus Christ. I'll leave you with something my Dad said to me a couple weeks ago:

Life is short
Death is certain
Eternity is forever
Make your choices based upon these things.

First Presbyterian Church
547 Seventh Avenue, Fairbanks, AK 99701
(907) 452-2406

LEAD PASTOR

Andrew Ekblad
andrew.ekblad@fpcfairbanks.com

ASSOCIATE PASTOR

David Moody
david.moody@fpcfairbanks.com

OFFICE MANAGER

Tillila "Til" Beetus
tillila.beetus@fpcfairbanks.com

DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRIES

David McConnell-Booher
david.booyer@fpcfairbanks.com

INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Heidi Van Harper
heidi.vanharper@fpcfairbanks.com

Newsletter submissions must be received in the church office
by the 20th of each month.
Submissions may be dropped off or emailed to Til.

Sound advice, that...
God's blessings to you and yours,
Pastor Dave

DECEMBER 2017

FINANCIALS

Total Receipts	\$539,962
Total Expenditures	\$553,597
Net	(\$13,635)

DID YOU KNOW??

You can get your bulletin early, save money and
help save the planet!
Please email Til if you would like an electronic
copy of our bulletin.

YOUTH MINISTRY

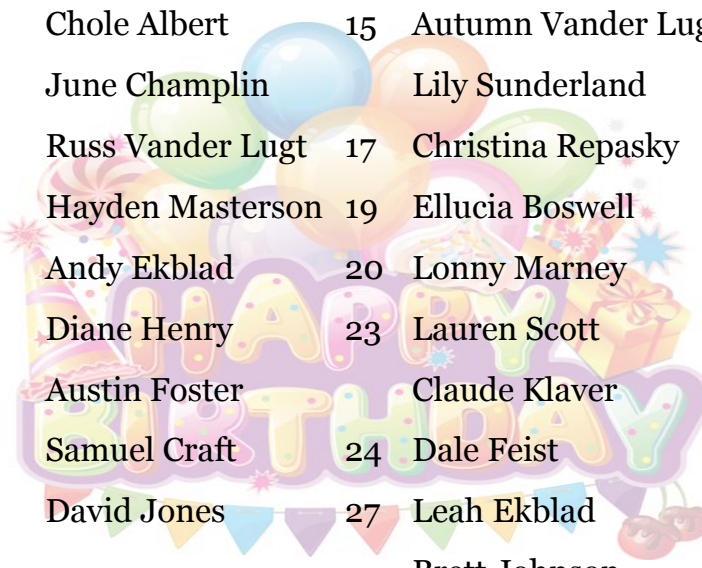
As we approach Lent, it is important to remember that we are indeed mortal. But just as the Word of God reminds us that we are dust, we also hear that dust and death are not the final Word for those who trust and follow Jesus Christ! Let us take this season to renew our trust, to breathe deeply in the Holy Spirit, and to give generously toward everyone in need. In Dr Martin Luther King's final book, he reminds us that the final word from God is Hope. Let us continue to carry and share that Hope of Jesus.

"When our days become dreary with low-hovering clouds of despair, and when our nights become darker than a thousand midnights, let us remember that there is a creative force in this universe working to pull down the gigantic mountains of evil, a power that is able to make a way out of no way and transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows. Let us realize that the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice ... Let us go out realizing that the Bible is right: "Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." This is our hope for the future, and with this faith we will be able to sing in some not too distant tomorrow, with a cosmic past tense, "We have overcome! We have overcome! Deep in my heart, I did believe we would overcome." - MLK

Grace and Peace,

David McConnell-Booher

Join us in wishing our February babies a Happy Birthday and prosperous new year!



4	Chole Albert	15	Autumn Vander Lugt
6	June Champlin		Lily Sunderland
7	Russ Vander Lugt	17	Christina Repasky
	Hayden Masterson	19	Ellucia Boswell
8	Andy Ekblad	20	Lonny Marney
	Diane Henry	23	Lauren Scott
9	Austin Foster		Claude Klaver
12	Samuel Craft	24	Dale Feist
13	David Jones	27	Leah Ekblad
			Brett Johnson

If you would like to make any additions or corrections to this list, please contact Til at the office

**Receive
an Impartation of God's love**

**Ash Wednesday Service
Valentine's Day
7:00 p.m.**

COMING UP IN YOUTH MINISTRY

Confirmation Class - We will be doing a complete study on our Christian Faith for all interested youth. This is the necessary work all students must complete before being baptized or affirming their Baptism and entering into full participation in the church body here at FPC. The course will take place during normal Sunday Youth Group time (1-4pm) from February through May. It is not too late for your child to be a part of this Confirmation course. Please contact David soon to sign up!

Hot Lunch Fundraiser - On February 18 the Youth will be serving a delicious hot luncheon before the Annual Congregational Meeting. This will be a fundraiser for our Mission Trip to Puerto Rico in July, we appreciate your support!

Dinner/Talent Show Fundraiser - On February 23 the Youth and the Choir will host a long time FPC favorite - THE TALENT SHOW! The Youth will be cooking a delicious dinner before the show begins. Please contact David to add your performance to the line-up and make sure we can set up what you need beforehand (Spotlights, Microphones, Back-Up Accordionists, No Brown M&Ms in the Green Room, etc). will be a fundraiser for our Mission Trip to Puerto Rico in July, we appreciate your support!

Ice Fishing and Spiritual Retreat February 24-25 - The Youth will be traveling to Harding Lake and Knox Retreat Center for Ice Fishing and a Spiritual Retreat.

Please contact David for more information.

Elders On Session

Ted Riggs, Sr.

Brian Rozell

Terry Reichardt

Joyce Tapper

Perry Schneider

Kathi Stevens

Nancy Dreydoppel

Debra Foster

Kathy Rahmandar Halfhill

Michelle VanHatten

Charlotte Wilbur

Sarah Curtis

Bill Beaudoin

Michelle Harpole

Donna Brewer

Jim Williams

Barb Page

June Champlin

Board of Deacons

Linda Mullen

Barbara Nore

Keith Nore

Darlene Lundberg

Lonny Marney

Michele Marney

Logan Foster