

*Our Vision is to be Christ to each other and  
our community— doing  
justice, loving mercy and  
walking humbly with our God.*

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### ***FROM THE DEACONS BENCH***

My first word to you as we begin a new year together is one of thanks and gratitude. You responded amazingly to our request for generous giving in December. I don't have access to all past financial records, but I suspect it may be our best December offering, at least in recent memory. You are to be commended for your faithfulness during this most challenging of years.

At the same time, I encourage you to offer your own expressions of gratitude to our wonderful pastor and staff. They have responded to the difficult challenge of providing continuing meaningful worship experiences by means of venues not previously explored. In the process, we have all had the opportunity to experience wonderful music, thought provoking sermons, and the creative involvement of many of you as you recorded videos to be included in one or another of the worship services. Incredibly, it seems to me, we have experienced growth in these months. Nine new members have joined while we have been essentially a "virtual" church. I look forward to the opportunity to welcome these new friends more warmly as we eventually return to something like a normal routine. We have also found creative ways to continue our mission to the larger community through our provision of meals for Hope Center for Children, the "virtual" coat giveaway, with assistance from Regenesys, a drive-through Trick or Treat experience which was well received by the community, and probably others that slip my mind at the moment. We are still Fernwood Baptist Church and we continue to be committed to Worship, Belong, Serve, and Invest to the glory of God and the well being of the world around us.

As we continue to endure the scourge of the pandemic, please be in prayer for the members of Fernwood and others who are connected to the congregation as they struggle with the virus. We escaped it for a good long while, but it is now affecting our congregation in significant ways. Because of the explosion of cases everywhere, we will obviously continue to worship virtually, for now, through February. The Deacons will discuss in-person worship each month, using our best judgment regarding best practices. Please let the Church Office know if you or persons you know need assistance we can provide. I am proud to be a member of Fernwood.

***Gerald L. Keown***  
Deacon Chair



**Prayers of the People Highlights**  
**January 31-February 6, 2021**

**Lynn & Michael Hutchinson**  
**Lome', Togo**  
[www.cbf.net/hutchinson](http://www.cbf.net/hutchinson)

**Prayers of the People Highlights**  
**February 7-13, 2021**

**Familia**  
[www.cbf.net/familia](http://www.cbf.net/familia)

## **Family Night Supper Support - Will You Help?**

We are supporting a local mission with meals. The Hope Center for Children are excited and pleased to be receiving these meals. Tina will be preparing larger casserole type meals along with sides. They have 3 residential homes that she will be preparing for. These meals will be hot and fresh and delivered on Wednesday afternoon at 5:30pm at each location.

Are you willing to continue to pay for your meal, but allow it to be served to your neighbors? If you would like to help pay for some meals, you can write "Family Supper" on your check or choose "Family Supper" when you give online. Please give generously and help spread the word to others. Thank you to those of you who continue to support this important ministry!



## **Choral Corner**

One of the great Protestant hymns in our hymnal is A Mighty Fortress is Our God. Although the text was written by Martin Luther, we are most familiar with a harmonization for this hymn by perhaps the greatest of all composers, Johann Sebastian Bach. His musical version is present in most Protestant hymnals today.

While we know Martin Luther more as the catalyst of the Protestant Reformation, he was actually a fine musician as well.

His original tune for this hymn is quite different than what we are accustomed to hearing, and in some parts of Germany, it is the preferred version of the hymn. Today's Choral Corner features a video of the original hymn being sung by the congregation at the very seat of the Reformation... Wittenberg, Germany. This is the church that Martin Luther served as a Catholic priest, and it was here that he posted his 95 theses that challenged many practices of the Catholic Church. The service in which the hymn was sung took place on October 31, 2017, the 500th anniversary to the day of Martin Luther's courageous protest.

The text below shows the original German (sung in the video) alongside the English translation that we sing today:

Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott,  
ein gute Wehr und Waffen.  
Er hilft uns frei aus aller Not,  
die uns jetzt hat betroffen.  
Der alt böse Feind  
mit Ernst er's jetzt meint,  
groß Macht und viel List  
sein grausam Rüstung ist,  
auf Erd ist nicht seins gleichen.

Mit unsrer Macht ist nichts getan,  
wir sind gar bald verloren;  
es streit' für uns der rechte Mann,  
den Gott hat selbst erkoren.  
Fragst du, wer der ist?  
Er heißt Jesus Christ,  
der Herr Zebaoth,  
und ist kein anderer Gott,  
das Feld muss er behalten.

Und wenn die Welt voll Teufel wär  
und wollt uns gar verschlingen,  
so fürchten wir uns nicht so sehr,  
es soll uns doch gelingen.  
Der Fürst dieser Welt,  
wie sau'r er sich stellt,  
tut er uns doch nicht;  
das macht, er ist gericht':  
ein Wörtlein kann ihn fällen.

Das Wort sie sollen lassen stahn  
und kein' Dank dazu haben;  
er ist bei uns wohl auf dem Plan  
mit seinem Geist und Gaben.  
Nehmen sie den Leib,[7]  
Gut, Ehr, Kind und Weib:  
lass fahren dahin,  
sie haben's kein' Gewinn,  
das Reich muss uns doch bleiben.

A mighty fortress is our God,  
A bulwark never failing:  
Our helper He, amid the flood  
Of mortal ills prevailing.  
For still our ancient foe  
Doth seek to work his woe;  
His craft and power are great,  
And armed with cruel hate,  
On earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide,  
Our striving would be losing;  
Were not the right Man on our side,  
The Man of God's own choosing.  
Dost ask who that may be?  
Christ Jesus, it is he;  
Lord Sabaoth is his name,  
From age to age the same,  
And He must win the battle.

And though this world, with devils filled,  
Should threaten to undo us,  
We will not fear, for God hath willed  
His truth to triumph through us.  
The Prince of Darkness grim,—  
We tremble not for him;  
His rage we can endure,  
For lo! His doom is sure,—  
One little word shall fell him.

That word above all earthly powers—  
No thanks to them—abideth;  
The Spirit and the gifts are ours  
Through him who with us sideth.  
Let goods and kindred go,  
This mortal life also:  
The body they may kill:  
God's truth abideth still,  
His kingdom is forever.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=spNUXzYY08U>

I would love to steer you toward an excellent film on the subject of Martin Luther and the Reformation. It is called simply Luther and was released in 2003. It stars Joseph Fiennes as Luther and is a fascinating account of this pivotal event in history that changed the church forever.

*Stafford Turner*

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**OFFICE HOURS**

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**Publication Notice**

The next bi-weekly e-blast newsletter publication will be **Wednesday, February 10, 2021**.  
Deadline for all articles is **Tuesday, February 9, 2021 at Noon**.

PLEASE NOTE: You may submit your information via email ([angie@fernwoodchurch.org](mailto:angie@fernwoodchurch.org)) or through the church office. Please do not submit any information over the phone. Information submitted after the deadline will not be published until the following issue (no exceptions). Thank you for your understanding!