

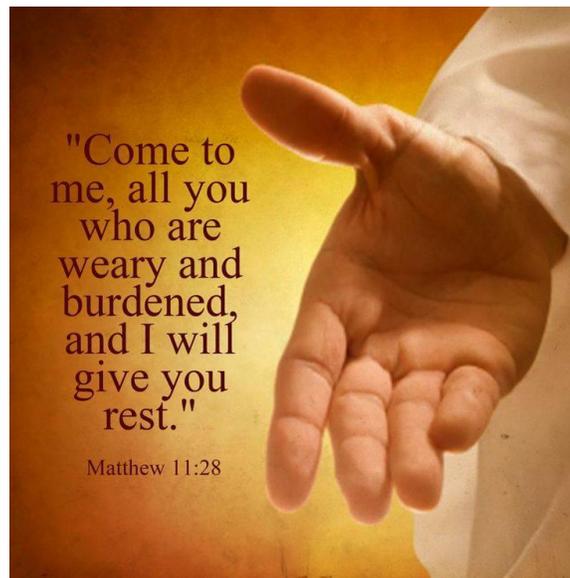


# FIRST and ForMOST

First Presbyterian Church of Annandale

March 2018

## FROM YOUR PASTOR



***"Jesus said, 'Come to Me, all of you who are exhausted and so heavily burdened, and I will give you rest.'" (Matthew 11: 28)***

### **Have you ever been exhausted?**

I've always thought that there is a big difference between being just tired and being exhausted. For me, tired is a short-term thing...something that can be remedied with a good night's sleep. However, when I become exhausted, that's something that happens over a longer period of time...and, in my case, causes me to feel dull, sullen, unmotivated, and less capable of making good decisions.

When I was younger, one of my father's nicknames for me was "***Bop Till You Drop***". I would go and go and go and go...until I would just drop like a sack of potatoes. Sometimes I would get sick. At other times, I would have to sit more, lay down more, and rest more...which was, for me, just about the worst thing that could happen to me! Sitting and doing nothing bored me nearly to death! I would say to myself (over and over), "***Why sit around when I could DO SOMETHING?***"

Well, over the years, I have learned (mostly from the “**School of Hard Knocks**”) that my body has its limits...especially as each year passes and I get one year older! And, even though I still like to “go, go, go”, I have developed a greater appreciation for the value of rest. When I was younger, I believed to the core of my being that rest was equal to laziness! And, the **LAST** thing that I wanted anyone to think about me was that I was lazy! But, now, I have learned that rest (taken in moderation and at the right times) is NOT laziness. Rather, it is (at least for me) one of the most important ways that leads to wisdom.

By this, I mean to say that when I rest now, as a 55 year old man, I allow myself to think about my life...to “**smell the roses**” ... to pray...and, to remind myself that my life is truly a gift from God.

When I was young, resting was something that I did because I had to do it. And, all the while I would dread it...curse it...fight it...and, pretend that it was doing nothing good for me! Now, when I rest, I welcome, cherish, and appreciate it. I use it in a positive way to listen, hoping that I will be able to “**hear the still, small voice of God.**”

Sometimes, I still have the fleeting thought rush through my mind that resting is still a form of laziness. But, that thought doesn't last nearly as long as it used to last. And, for that, I am truly thankful.

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In the realm of our Christian walk with the Lord, stress will invariably be experienced by each every one of us. Sometimes the events of life will produce so much stress, that we may even come to believe that we cannot see how we will ever make it through the darkness. The death of a loved one. A divorce. The loss of a child. Being fired from our job. Realizing that we have become addicted to something that will eventually kill us...and taking the seemingly impossible steps necessary to get help. Dealing with depression, anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, and other biochemical brain disorders. The list goes on and on and on...

No matter what difficult or even devastating challenge that may present itself in our lives, there is always one place that we can go to get help...and that is to Jesus. You see, Jesus loves us all so very much. And, He wants to be there for us. He wants us to hear Him saying to us over and over, “**Come to me, all of you who are exhausted and so heavily burdened, and I will give you rest.**”

Now, even though the challenges and pain that we face in life may be so “**loud**” and “**deafening**”, we may not hear Him saying this to us. But, that doesn't mean that He's not saying it. That doesn't mean that He's not there for us. That doesn't mean that Jesus is silent.

On the other hand, what this all does mean is that, no matter what, Jesus Christ will **ALWAYS** be there for us **even when we are not there for Him.**

There is nothing that we can do to change that. And, therein lies the amazing and miraculous power of Jesus Christ: **He never gives up on us...never has...and never will!**

For me, this one truth is something that I have had to learn and accept over the years. And, it has been a truth that has helped me to learn that rest is **not** laziness. Rather, rest is an opportunity to spend time with the Lord; to feel His presence and comfort; and, to experience His healing touch.

It is when I am truly resting that I often realize and find great strength in the enduring promise of God found in Romans 8:38. There is absolutely ***“nothing that can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”***

May God grant you (as God has granted me) the wisdom to more fully realize and appreciate how precious and important it is to simply rest.

Your Friend and Pastor,



## **PREACHING SCHEDULE FOR MARCH 2018**

### **March 4, 2018 *Service of Holy Communion***

Scripture Lesson: ***John 2: 13-22***

SERMON: ***“WHAT DO YOU DO WITH YOUR ANGER?”***

*Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching*

### **March 11, 2018**

Scripture Lesson: ***John 3: 1-21***

SERMON: ***“CAN WE REALLY HATE THE SIN AND LOVE THE SINNER?”***

*Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching*

### **March 18, 2018**

*Candidate for Ministry, Ms. Stella Lee, Preaching*

### **March 25, 2018 *Palm Sunday Service***

Scripture Lesson: ***Mark 11: 1-11***

SERMON: ***“HIGH HOPES AND MISTAKEN EXPECTATIONS”***

*Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching*

## MEET FELLOW CHRISTIANS

### LET'S HONOR SAINT PATRICK



When I looked for a fellow Christian whose birthday or date of death we remember in March, I found two names: President Andrew Jackson, whose birthday was on March 15, and Saint Patrick, who supposedly died on March 17. For this edition, I choose Saint Patrick, who is honored in Ireland, and all over the world.

What do we know about Saint Patrick? Most of what we think we know is based on legends. But it is a fact that he spread Christianity all through Ireland as a missionary during the 5th century AD. He is even called the apostle of Ireland.

Saint Patrick was born somewhere in Britain. His father was a deacon from a Roman family of high social standing. His mother was a close relative of St. Martin of Tours, and his grandfather was also a member of the clergy. Unfortunately, when he was 16 years old, Patrick was captured by Irish pirates and brought to Ireland, but after six years he escaped his captor. We know that he came to France and went to Auxerre, where he studied and entered the priesthood. He was ordained as deacon by the Bishop of Auxerre around 418 AD. In 432 Patrick was ordained as a bishop and sent by Pope Celestine I to Ireland to spread the gospel to non-believers, as well as to provide support to the small community of Christians already living there.

Patrick returned to Ireland as a missionary. In Ireland Patrick first met with resistance, but still managed to spread Christian teachings along with other missionaries, through preaching, writing and performing countless baptisms. As the Irish already practiced nature-oriented pagan rituals, they were incorporated into church practices.

It is believed that Patrick drove away all the snakes from Ireland! More important is that he may have introduced the Celtic cross, the combination of a native symbol of sun-worshipping with the Christian cross. It is also believed that Patrick used the shamrock, which is now a symbol of Ireland, as a metaphor for the Christian Holy Trinity.



Saint Patrick died about 461 AD in Saul, Ireland, and is said to have been buried in the nearby town of Downpatrick. The Catholic Church recognizes him as the patron saint of Ireland.

Interestingly, Patrick is known as Saint Patrick, while, according to Roman Catholic practice, he is not really a “Saint”, having never been officially canonized by the pope.

St. Patrick is annually honored on March 17, known as St. Patrick's Day, most likely the date of his death. For more than 1,000 years, the Irish have observed St. Patrick's Day as a religious holiday. Traditionally, families attend church in the morning, but also observe other rituals, like eating a meal of cabbage and Irish bacon. St. Patrick's Day is not only a religious holiday. It has become a secular feast as well, a robust international celebration of Irish culture.

### **CONCERTS IN MARCH**

Sunday, March 4<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. **Rob Freeman Chorale** will present a concert of Lenten music.

Sunday, March 18<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m. **Valerie Harris** will play on the organ.

**Come hear the music and bring your friends, neighbors, and relatives!**

## THE PHYSICAL LAWS, PT. 2: THE LAW OF MINIMAL MEDICAL INVASIVENESS

Introduction – I have been writing a series of articles based on Greg Anderson’s book entitled **THE 22 (NON-NEGOTIABLE) LAWS OF WELLNESS: *Feel, Think and Live Better Than You Ever Thought Possible***. Greg Anderson is a cancer survivor. In 1984 his doctors told him he had 30 days to live. His cancer had spread and his doctors had surgically removed one of his lungs. He was in such bad physical condition his doctors had given up on him and told him to prepare himself for his death. Yet, as Anderson writes, he knew others had survived cancer so he set out on a desperate attempt to find out what these cancer survivors had in common.

While on his journey of discovery about the common characteristics of cancer survivors he began to write. His books include **THE CANCER CONQUEROR, THE TRIUMPHANT PATIENT, 50 ESSENTIAL THINGS TO DO WHEN THE DOCTOR SAYS IT’S CANCER, HEALING WISDOM**. Notice that these books were written over an extended period of time and that he did not die as his doctors had predicted. His books are based on his findings and his own personal lifestyle that evolved as a result of his findings. This book, **THE 22 (NON-NEGOTIABLE) LAWS OF WELLNESS**, is a summation of the principles on not only how he lives his life but they also serve as a guide for wellness for us all. Please note that he is not just writing about surviving cancer but he is talking about the idea of “wellness” as it applies to all of life. The subtitle of this book is ***Feel, Think and Live Better Than You Ever Thought Possible***.

In the *Introduction* to **The 22 Laws**, he says that the term *wellness* is one of the most powerful words in the English language and one of the most important ideas of our time but it is also one of the least understood words. He says that wellness is more than a “medical fix” but is a way of living – *a lifestyle sensitive and responsive to all the dimensions of body, mind, and spirit, an approach to life we each design to achieve our highest potential for well-being now and forever*. This reminds me of the words of Jesus who says, “...The thief does not come, except to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” John 10:10 (Modern English Version)

I mentioned earlier that Anderson structures his book around eight different groups of laws: Part One. **THE UNIVERSAL LAWS**. Part Two. **THE PHYSICAL LAWS**. Part Three. **THE EMOTIONAL LAWS**. Part Four. **THE SOCIAL LAWS**. Part Five. **THE INTELLECTUAL LAWS**. Part Six. **THE VOCATIONAL LAWS**. Part Seven. **THE SPIRITUAL LAWS**. Part Eight. **The Greatest Law**. This article will be on the third of the three **PHYSICAL LAWS**, the **LAW OF MINIMAL MEDICAL INVASIVENESS**.

As is the case when Anderson presents his individual laws of wellness he calls for a “paradigm shift”, a new way of viewing the situation. In this chapter he shares some ideas that are enlightening and might even be considered controversial to some. For example, and I quote,

*The Law of Minimal Medical Invasiveness has a corollary that says, “American medicine is first and foremost a business.” This means that the people you are counting on aren’t always thinking of you first. They have payrolls to meet, mortgages to pay. Sometimes this means you’re overtested, overtreated, and given care that does not honor the LAW OF MINIMAL MEDICAL INVASIVENESS.*

He says, “The dangers of being overtreated are at least as great as the dangers of being undertreated. He gives an example of the man who was overweight, smoked cigarettes, and had severe chest pains. He was pushed into bypass surgery. Anderson writes that for several months the man felt better, but he never made any attempt to lose any weight, he continued to smoke, occasionally abused alcohol and got no exercise. Now he’s battling emphysema.

Anderson asks what did this person *really* need? He says that bypass surgery was way down the list and that he really needed to begin by changing his lifestyle. He says that healthy nutrition and exercise would have been a good start along with getting rid of his cigarettes.

He says that one of the saddest and most suppressed statistics of our time is that the rate of hospital acquired infections has doubled over the last ten years. I must note here that this book was written in 1995 so I am not sure of the statistics these days. Anderson wrote, “...four of every ten people admitted to the hospital are there as a result of the medical care they received. And, if you add up all the deaths in this country that are estimated to have been the result of medical mishaps, errors, and negligence, you come to a shocking realization: health care is America’s third or fourth leading killer!” He says that the Law of Minimal Medical Invasiveness demands that medical *patients* become medical *consumers* and assume a new, proactive role in the treatment of illness and the maintenance of health. He says that this is especially important for women, adding that, “...the American medical establishment seems to consider being a women’s disease rather than a gender description.” He says that countless medical tragedies have been perpetrated on women and lists the following:

- the DES and thalidomide fiascos;
- silicone breast implants;
- a 600 percent increase since 1970 in the number of cesarean sections performed;
- estimates that over half of all hysterectomies are unnecessary;
- the common belief that the symptoms of menopause are an illness.

Anderson says that we can't afford to be passive consumers but that we must become active participants in our medical care. He speaks of the need for *clinical reform*, saying that all medical procedures should be based on medical need and effectiveness rather than financial grounds. Here he states that minimal medical invasiveness lies at the heart of clinical reform.

He goes on to suggest that we see ourselves as the manager of a team with the goal of keeping ourselves well, or to get well again if we are ill. He used the analogy of a baseball team but you can use whatever team that you wish. Just understand that *You* are the manager. This team can include your primary care physician, medical specialists as needed, family, friends, which can be part of your support group. I would go so far as to add members of your religious congregation. He says to remember that you are the manager and you decide how to use your team.

Here he says that knowledge is needed to make your decisions and to acquire the facts we need to study. Become an expert as in the case of a real manager, so that you can be certain that you are receiving the right care. I should add here that Anderson early on in this chapter posed the question who is the most important member of your medical team? Do you think it's your surgeon? Your internist? Your cardiologist or oncologist? Maybe your nurse, a technician or your spouse?

He then says, "Understand this clearly: the most important person on your wellness team is YOU. It is *your* wellness we are talking about. Your health is at stake. You are the central character. You are in charge."

Anderson emphasizes that one of your most important challenges is to insure that your medical treatment is as minimally invasive as possible while still being appropriate. He says facts show that if you live near a major medical center you are more likely to have a prostate operation, a hysterectomy or any number of other procedures and that we have been conditioned to believe that this is good, that these operations are appropriate. He also adds that statistics show that people who live far away from major medical centers and who do not have all these procedures have about the same survival rate as those people who do have the procedures.

Anderson says, The Law of Minimal Medical Invasiveness does not mean we don't visit a doctor but it does mean that we challenge each and every test and procedure. He adds that too often people surrender leadership to their medical team without knowledge or understanding of either the prescribed procedures or the expected outcome. He says that least invasive is the key issue. We should ask ourselves, "How can my health be enhanced with the least physically invasive, the least chemically toxic, the least psychologically violent approach?"

He says that Vicki Hufnagel, an obstetrician-gynecologist and gynecologic surgeon, reports in her book **No More Hysterectomies** that hysterectomies are performed in the United States at double the rate for the United Kingdom. And she asks, "Are we sicker than our Continental cousins?"

Hufnagel cites the ease and availability of hysterectomies in the United States as the reason for the different rates. She believes the American medical profession must radically change its thinking on elective hysterectomy for benign a disease and patients must become informed, participating in each medical decision. Only then will we be less likely to undergo unnecessary surgery.

I will conclude this article with the following quotes:

*The best way to improve health is to change our behaviors. The call goes out for each of us to become better, more informed purchasers of health care. Then we can team up with those who provide health care and demand and get the best, least invasive treatment possible.*

*Medical consumerism, and a commitment to personally practice total wellness, are necessities if we are to live a full life.*

*Honor and esteem the doctor who says, "We want to treat you right but do only what is absolutely necessary, and with minimum side effects. We're going to help your body heal."*

My next article will be on the first of the three Emotional Laws, THE LAW OF STRESS-HARDINESS.

*Submitted by Bill Jokela, Parish Associate*

## **THE FPCA MEN'S BREAKFAST**

**First Presbyterian Church of Annandale**

**Saturday, March 3, 2018 at 8:30 AM in Room 105**

**Come One, Come All to this Great Fun And Fellowship Event!**

## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

### January 17, 2017

Looking at the Session Meeting as a worship service, Dr. Chris Looker asked the Lord for his blessing. Organist Felipe Dominguez joined the meeting briefly, in order to have the Session approve the repair of the pipe organ. Dr. Looker called Session's attention to FPCA's relationship with the First Korean Presbyterian Church of Virginia, also located in FPCA's building. They decided to stay here, and pay rent. Ms. Stella Lee reported that the students of Annandale High School are responding very positively when she spends Bible time with them on Fridays twice each month. Dr. Looker's report included that Music Director Ron Freeman will retire by the end of April 2017, and that 2 Worship Services are being planned to start by August or September 2017, a Traditional Worship Service and a modern service, providing a more relaxed atmosphere to attract young people. Session also had a preliminary discussion of using the Seeds for the Future Account.

Reporting for the **Worship Commission**, Elder Sandy Mori suggested that, an Elder should accompany Dr. Looker when serving Communion to a homebound member.

Reporting for the **Church Growth, Evangelism, and Congregational Life Commission**, Elder Jabeen Ghulam informed Session that the Commission was working on packaging welcoming gifts for visitors, and on updating FPCA's membership list.

## ATTENTION!

***Deadline for the April issue of FIRST and ForMOST is March 20, 2018. Please e-mail your announcements and reports to the Editor, Marta Strada, LUXI7777@verizon.net, or put them in the FIRST and ForMOST drawer in the church office. Thank you.***