

SEPTEMBER 2020
First Brethren Church of New Paris
From Pastor Jeff Estep

“Heavenly Father, I pray that this day I may live in your presence and please you more and more.

Lord Jesus, I pray that this day I may take up my cross and follow you.

Holy Spirit, I pray that this day you will fill me with yourself and cause your fruit to ripen in my life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.”

Anglican priest and Evangelical church leader John Stott began each day with this prayer. I admire this prayer for a couple of reasons. First, for the noble discipline of beginning each day in a consistent attitude of humble prayer. (I am not usually so profound in my first waking moments. Other than perhaps saying, “Good morning, Lord,” trying to focus my thoughts as I get around for the day can be as difficult as herding a dozen inebriated cats.) The other aspect to Stott’s prayer I like is the verb he uses in reference to the Fruit of the Spirit- RIPEN! I must confess, when I think about the Fruit of the Spirit (and indeed when I have taught about it), I have often spoke more about its mere existence in our lives, and not about whether that fruit is maturing. The word “ripen” reminds us that not only do we need to see the Fruit of the Spirit within us, it should be developing, maturing, becoming sweeter, RIPENING!

This month we will conclude our sermon series on the Songs of Ascent. I have enjoyed this sermon series, and the opportunity to look at psalms used to prepare hearts for worship at a time when we were gathering as a body for the first time in several months. It has been fun, but alas, there are only 15 Songs of Ascent in Scripture.

So at the end of September, we will begin a new sermon series about the Fruit of the Spirit, which Paul describes in Galatians 5. We are likely familiar with this list, perhaps we have them memorized, or have sang children’s Sunday School songs about them. But what exactly does this fruit look like in our lives? Is the fruit something we must manufacture, or does it come about naturally as God moves through us? We will look at these questions and more during this sermon series, which I am entitling “How Sweet It Is”.

In this series, we will cover a different “fruit” each week, defining what Paul means by each word, and how these qualities play out in the lives of individuals as well as in the church. One of the resources I will be using to prepare these sermons is the book, “Cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit” by Christopher J.H. Wright, (\$13.99 on Amazon). If you’d like to do a deeper dive into the subject than I can cover in a 25 minute sermon, feel free to pick up a copy!

Before I close my article, I want to thank everyone for their patience and flexibility over the last few months as we have settled into some different rhythms of worship. I want to thank our musicians and worship leaders as we have adjusted the number of songs and the order of worship. I want to thank everyone for honoring the social distancing guidelines we’ve put into place, and helping us to glorify God while keeping others safe. And I want to thank you for adjusting to new technologies and means of delivering ministry to others. These last six months have certainly involved a lot of learning, and though you may not all consider me an “old dog”, adjusting to these “new tricks” has been interesting to say the least. But I believe God has good things in store for us, and I look forward to what God has for us as we continue to navigate these challenging seas.

In Christ’s Love,

Pastor Jeff

Sermon Titles:

9/6- Christ is our King!

9/13- Unity!

9/20- Lift Up Your Hands

9/27- How Sweet It Is! Fruit of the Spirit Sermon Series

CHILDRENS MINISTRY

After SIX MONTHS off, we will begin our Kids Club meetings again this month. Starting Wednesday, September 16th, Kids Club will meet from 6:30-7:30pm in the church fellowship hall. This change of location will allow us to better social distance. We will be doing most of the same activities, crafts, lessons, music, and snacks that kids have always enjoyed, but in a slightly different setting. This year, parents are welcome, (but certainly not required) to attend. If you would like to help with Kids Club, please talk to Pastor Jeff or Jamie. We'd love to have your help!

Also in September, the New Paris Bible classes will begin meeting at our church during the day on Thursdays. We have had to make a lot of changes to keep kids and members of our church safe this year. The classes will be meeting in the fellowship hall and in the Youth room. All surfaces and chairs used by kids will be wiped down after each class, and kids will be wearing masks when entering and exiting the building. If you need to come to the church on Thursdays, please be aware that these rooms will be in use from 8:30-2:15 each Thursday.

We also hope to begin a new ministry to families in September. We will be giving parents connected to our church the book, "Mama Bear Apologetics", a new book that helps parents teach their children a Biblical worldview. We will be encouraging parents to read this book, and Pastor Jeff will begin sending a weekly email to parents with some thoughts on the book's various chapters. We may try to have a couple of book discussions, as well. Here at First Brethren, we want to be a ministry support to families, and to help parents raise young men and women of God. Parents, please see Pastor Jeff for your copy of the book! I pray you will find it useful for your family!

Finally, we hope you have enjoyed the Children's Messages we have included in our Sunday morning worship services. We are looking for one or two volunteers that might be willing to help Jamie organize and teach these lessons. Jamie has been getting her material for these messages from a book, which we are happy to let others use to prepare their lessons. If you are interested in serving on a rotating basis in this way, please talk to Jamie!

In Christ,

Pastor Jeff and Jamie Estep

BUTTERFLY MORNINGS

By the time the newsletter goes to publication, the Butterfly Morning ladies will have received a letter cancelling Bible study for the remainder of the year. This decision was made based on careful consideration for the potential health risks for this group of “older” women. It seems unlikely that we will resume study until a vaccine is mass produced and dispersed to a majority of the high-risk population.

This will be the first time we have cancelled an entire year of study since 2003. It was at that first meeting of about fifteen (39 are now on our roster) women that we committed to a journey of spiritual transformation: Conforming to the image of Christ for the sake of others. We came to understand that there was a difference between trying to be like Jesus and training to be like Jesus.

Bible study was just one spiritual discipline that could help us walk in the Spirit and grow into the disciple our Lord and Savior called us to become. We memorized the fruit that should be evident in our words and deeds: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control. We discovered that sharing with like-minded sisters-in-Christ was a gift of fellowship that provided blessings beyond Tuesday mornings.

Although we have not met in person, we are assured by the teachings of the Apostle Paul that we are to encourage one another and be united in love, so that we may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that we may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:2-3). I will look forward to the day we will meet again for I know spiritual sister-hood can survive a pandemic. *Peggy*

Pastor Appreciation 2020

Sunday September 13th is a scheduled “Worship in The Park” event. We have reserved the pavilion and the indoor venue for a fellowship meal after the outdoor worship service. We plan to use this as an opportunity for community outreach and as a way to show our appreciation to Pastors Jeff and Megan for their service to our church family. October is the month we usually select for Pastor Appreciation; however, we are taking advantage of the “safer” park space for a meal.

Please bring your own lawn chairs for the service. During our June in the park event, some people chose to sit at picnic tables rather than bring chairs. For those that want to sit in their vehicles, you should be able to hear the music and the sermon from the parking lot behind the big building or from the smaller lot on the opposite side of the park area.

You do not need to bring food unless you feel it is safer to bring your own lunch. The meal (including drinks) will be provided at no cost. We will take every precaution to serve the food with your safety in mind. Table seating will be available inside the building or you can take your food outside at one of the picnic tables. Restrooms are available inside the park building. COVID safety practices are recommended when entering the building for food. Please wear a face mask inside and use the hand sanitizer as soon as you enter the building. Wear your mask while you are in the food service line and stand at least six feet from anyone that is not a family member. The main course, salad and bread will be dished out for you. When picking up pre-packaged items, only touch the item you intend to eat. When you leave your table to exit the building, please wear your mask. We want to keep everyone as safe as possible.

We are looking forward to a great day in the park and our first meal together this year. If you have any questions, please give us a call.

April McKeown@ 536.1371 Bonnie Reagan@ 238.4344 Peggy Miller@ 238.4809

Your Pastoral Board

Deacons Article

JOY

There are countless times in the Bible that the word "JOY" is used in some form. Joy is a "Fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5: 22-23). Since the beginning of 2020 it seems that all of the "Fruits of the Spirit" have been more difficult to maintain, especially Joy. We should pray daily that God will help us maintain our Joy as we face each day in this world as we know it in 2020. Since hugs are unacceptable at this time, we can all share a Joyful Spirit within our church family, and with everyone we come in contact with. Only God has answers – but we can have joy. Please make your Deacon Board aware of any needs you have as well as anyone you may know that we can help in some way. We appreciate our church family and ask for your continued prayer support.

Jimmy Gill, chm.



BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

Birthdays:

Johnathan Estep-5 Grace Cline-6 Jim Read-7 Bev London-8
Donna Yoder15 Ruby Thompson19 Shelley Amstutz-23
Diana Coleman-25 Becky Hostetler-28 Bonnie Reagan-30



Anniversaries:

Tim & Sheila Mullins-1

Scott & Kari Miller-17

Mick & Diana Stump-30