

# THE LAWTON CHRISTIAN

*The official newsletter of the First Christian Church of Lawton*



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## From the Pastor's Pen

by Rev. Paul Appleby

FCC Family & Friends,

It has been nearly one year since COVID-19 changed the way we live our lives. With more and more doses of a vaccine being made public, hopefully we are living through the final weeks of the "new normal." While it is exciting to think about a life where we can embrace our friends, attend church services, and shop without fear, social distance, or the lower third of our faces covered, it is with a heavy heart that on the day I am writing this (February 22) as a nation we have experienced the loss of over 500,000 lives as a result of the global pandemic.

We should thank God for the men and women who have helped us through this time: the researchers that worked day and night to find a vaccine and develop

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treatment programs for people who have suffered from this disease, the doctors, nurses, support staff and assisted living facility employees who have worked through intense days and nights, for emergency workers and first responders, for fast food workers, grocers, automotive workers, federal, state, and local workers, those in ministry (ordained and lay) who have found new ways to connect with people, and those who have demonstrated their love of their neighbors by wearing masks in public and practicing social distancing. We also pray for all those who have suffered and experienced loss as a result of this unprecedented illness.

Now, though, is the time to look ahead with hope. The days are coming when we will meet again in person. I am hopeful that they are coming "soon and very soon." In the meanwhile, I ask that you remain vigilant. Continue to wear your masks in public and to socially distance as we look to keep those who have yet to receive their vaccines safe. If you have not yet registered to get your vaccine, please do so. If you need help figuring out how, contact your elder, and he or she will be happy to walk you through the process. It is my hope that as the month passes new cases will become rarer and rarer, that God's word of life and health will carry the day, that we will be able to meet again in person to celebrate the resurrection at Eastertide (though this will require the efforts of all of us to halt the spread of COVID and the support of our board and our regional church governance), and that we will have a speedy return to the old normal.

In the meanwhile, Elder Sage Appleby has volunteered to host a new ZOOM call on Sunday Mornings from 9:30 to 10:00 where anyone who wants can hop on and visit with friends prior to the beginning of our Virtual Worship Services at 10:00 AM. These calls will be just to fellowship, visit, and see familiar faces. So, feel free to come and chat with us. Links to the chat will be sent out with the announcements for Sunday services, so keep an eye on your inbox!

Peace in Christ,



Rev. Paul Appleby  
Pastor, First Christian Church of Lawton



# Worship Corner - March 2021

## Kyrie Elieson - "Lord Have Mercy"

by Rev. Paul Appleby

It seems appropriate to turn our attention to the mercy of God during the season of Lent. After all, this is supposed to be a time of introspection as we think about those things that hold us back from growing into the fullness of Christ, whether they are sins that have a grip on our lives, growing edges in our development that are difficult to attend to, or simply the worries and cares of this life. For all of this and more, we turn to God's mercy.

Mercy is more than pity, it is an exercise in sympathy, empathy, lovingkindness, and charity. Mercy is one of God's most celebrated attributes in the Scriptures. As creatures made in God's image, mercy is to be one of our defining characteristics as well. If we're honest, though, it is one of the most difficult habits of the heart to learn. That is why cries for mercy and encouragement to practice it have always been at the core of Christian worship.

In fact, the Greek phrase, "Kyrie Elieson" predates the Christian faith and was used both by Jewish people in their celebrations and by the Romans in theirs. For Christians, it remains untranslated in Catholic, Orthodox, and many Protestant traditions as a part of their weekly worship. In our Lenten worship series, *Kyrie Elieson*, we will turn our attention toward our need for mercy from God, from our neighbors, for our world, and for ourselves. For without mercy, it is impossible to please God and to live as we were made to live.

### **The Second Sunday in Lent (2/28) "For Our Own Best Intentions- Kyrie Elieson"**

**Synopsis:** Often we confuse our own best ideas and best intentions with the will of God. This can come through impatience, or simply the failure to acknowledge our own human limitations.

**Scripture:** Mark 8:31-38

**Songs:** "The Church of Christ in Every Age" (CH475) and "Be Still My Soul" (CH566)

### **The Third Sunday in Lent (3/7) "For Stumbling Blocks and Foolishness- Kyrie Elieson"**

**Synopsis:** Human beings tend to make things harder than they have to be. We like to make people jump through hoops to earn a place in our society and a place in our lives. We love being smart but often turn out to be too smart by half. But God does not operate that way... thanks be to God.

**Scriptures:** 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

**Songs:** "Shout to the North" and "In the Cross of Christ I Glory"

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### **The Fourth Sunday in Lent (3/14) “For Our Sins- Kyrie Elieson”**

**Synopsis:** Martin Luther once described the state of being a Christian as simul justus et peccator (simultaneously justified and a sinner). He is right. We are all sinners saved by the grace of God. But sin is not just a personal issue. It can be corporate, it can be national, it can be a force that moves through all humanity pushing us to death, oppression, and dehumanization. Life, for the Christian, involves a constant process of uncovering the depths at which sin is at work in ourselves, our communities, and our world and turning from them to the light of the cross of Christ for God’s healing, saving grace and mercy.

**Scriptures:** Numbers 21:4-9; Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21

**Songs:** “God is Here” (CH280); “Amazing Grace” (CH546)

### **The Fifth Sunday in Lent (3/21) “For Hard Hearts- Kyrie Elieson”**

**Synopsis:** Hard heartedness is a spiritual condition when we double-down on being wrong. It comes about through pride and through a trick of the human mind called “the sunk cost fallacy”- that’s the idea that because we have invested so much in a thing (whether it is a clunker of a car, a relationship that isn’t healthy, or a way of looking at the world) we would be a fool to stop sinking more time, effort, money, and love into it... Could mercy for ourselves and others be the cure for these conditions?

**Scriptures:** Jeremiah 31:31-34; John 12:20-33

**Songs:** “Make Me a Servant”; “Now the Green Blade Riseth” (CH230)

### **Palm Sunday (3/28)- The Week that Changed the World**

**Synopsis:** Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week and the start of a mini-worship series *The Week that Changed the World*. Here we will celebrate Christ’s entry into Jerusalem, an event that kicked off a chain of events that would lead from the temple, to the courts, to a cross on a hill outside the city gates, to an empty tomb.

**Scriptures:** Mark 11:1-11; Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

**Songs:** “Hosanna, Loud Hosanna”, “All Glory, Laud and Honor” (CH192)





| Sun   | Mon   | Tue   | Wed   | Thu                                | Fri | Sat   |
|---|---|---|---|------------------------------------|-----|---|
|   | 1<br>Monday Morn-<br>ing Minute on<br>FCC YouTube<br>Channel  | 2<br>10 am CWF<br>(Christian<br>Women's<br>Fellowship)<br>Business<br>Meeting | 3<br>5:30 pm To-go<br>Sack Meal                       | 4<br>5:30 pm Elders'<br>Meeting    | 5   | 6   |
| 7<br>9:30 am Zoom<br>Fellowship<br>10 am Virtual<br>Worship on<br>FCC<br>YouTube<br>Channel                                     | 8<br>Monday Morn-<br>ing Minute on<br>FCC YouTube<br>Channel  | 9   | 10<br>5:30 pm To-go<br>Sack Meal                      | 11                                 | 12  | 13  |
| 14 Daylight<br>Savings Time<br>Begins<br>9:30 am Zoom<br>Fellowship<br>10 am Virtual<br>Worship on<br>FCC<br>YouTube<br>Channel | 15<br>Monday Morn-<br>ing Minute on<br>FCC YouTube<br>Channel | 16  | 17 St. Patrick's<br>Day<br>5:30 pm To-go<br>Sack Meal | 18<br>6:30 pm FCC<br>Board Meeting | 19  | 20  |
| 21<br>9:30 am Zoom<br>Fellowship<br>10 am Virtual<br>Worship on<br>FCC<br>YouTube<br>Channel                                    | 22<br>Monday Morn-<br>ing Minute on<br>FCC YouTube<br>Channel | 23  | 24<br>5:30 pm To-go<br>Sack Meal                      | 25                                 | 26  | 27<br>10:30 am<br>Heart<br>Sisters meet<br>at Pam<br>Shepherd's<br>Home |
| 28 Palm<br>Sunday<br>9:30 am Zoom<br>Fellowship<br>10 am Virtual<br>Worship on<br>FCC<br>YouTube<br>Channel                     | 29<br>Monday Morn-<br>ing Minute on<br>FCC YouTube<br>Channel | 30  | 31<br>5:30 pm To-go<br>Sack Meal                      |                                    |     |   |

## Joys

- Susan (Sam and Phyllis Bowman's daughter-in-law) is back to work following COVID and cancer surgery.
- Madison (Joe Bailey's granddaughter) is back in school after having COVID.
- Bryan (Bill and Darlene Ramsey's son) and family are doing fine following their house fire.
- Kathie (Ro Bielinski's friend) is doing better with her medical attention.
- Richard (Tony and Donna Curtis's son) and family are fully recovered from COVID.
- Carol Labutti (Wendi Lindley's cousin) is much better.

## Prayer Concerns (Cancer)

- Matthew Fullerton (Lori Anderson's brother-in-law/David's brother)
- Darla (the mother of Becky Tannery's niece)
- Anne (the sister of Ro Bielinski's friend)
- Holli Hill Scholtz (former FCC musician)
- Jerry Foster (Joe Bailey's cousin)
- Karla Maudlin (Becky Tannery's friend)
- Richard Terry (Becky Tannery's friend)
- Susie Garrett (the mother of Becky Tannery's daughter's friend)
- Kathy (Melissa Pratt's sister)

## Other Health Concerns

- Sherri Denning (waiting on guidance from doctors)
- Don Nelson (Amber's friend, husband of Wendy) surgery for blocked artery behind eye
- David Pratt (symptoms of a heart attack)
- Teresa Sherrill (recuperating from hip surgery)
- Mary Denning (adjusting to a new heart medication that is working so far)
- Don and Phyllis Henke (health issues)
- Ursula Asuncion's husband (health issues)
- Mark Fanti (healing slowly from a broken hip)
- Coy and Peggy Citron (health reasons)
- Barbee and Bill Barker (continued strength)
- Marge and Melissa Lutz (health issues)

## Prayer Concerns (COVID)

- Stewart Ronald (recent widower of Wendi Lindley's friend)
- Sandi Pounds (Amber Delger's friend)
- Patty DiLeo (Friend of the daughter of the secretary at Westside Christian Church in Duncan.)
- Wendy Nelson (Amber Delger's friend)
- Teachers, students, and educational staff
- All hospital staff
- Those who are quarantining in hopes that they do not get COVID

## Prayer Concerns for those who have lost loved ones

- Friends and family of Florence Gillam Hobin Birdwell (Brian's mother)
- Friends and family of Mary Butler
- Friends and family of Johnny Abernathy (Mary Laird's brother)
- Friends and family of Roger Clark

## Other Concerns

- Amber Delger (taking a difficult class)
- Those affected by the winter storm, including children and grandchildren of Bill and Barbee Barker.
- Please pray for our city, our country, our leaders, our troops, and the world during this difficult time.



## Agape Ministry



**Wednesday To-Go Meals (5:30 - 6:30 pm) are as follows:**

- March 3 - Chicken Patty Sandwiches
- March 10 - Beef Over Noodles
- March 17 - Chicken Fritters
- March 24 - Hot Dogs with Chili
- March 31 - BBQ Beef

**Outdoor Food Pantry:**

Thanks to Konrad Delger, a new, larger Outdoor Pantry Box has been built! It is located right in front of the church - you can't miss it (see pictures below). Donations are always needed and appreciated for the Outdoor Pantry Box. Useful items include **ready-to-eat foods such as fruits, fresh vegetables, bread, cheese and crackers, peanut butter, cereal, canned meats with easy-open tops, and bottled water.**



## Happy Birthday!



- 3/2 Teresa Sherrill
- 3/4 Chuck Russell
- 3/12 Albert Rivas
- 3/14 Erika Whittenberg
- 3/15 Delana Huggins
- 3/21 Jane Springli
- 3/21 Judy Bailey
- 3/22 Klint Fountain
- 3/23 Patsy Bassel
- 3/25 Theresa Aubrey
- 3/25 David Pratt
- 3/27 Payne Davis
- 3/28 Julie Davis

## Happy Anniversary!

(No anniversaries this month)

# March Health Tip: Max Lucado's 5 Steps on Managing Anxiety

Are you struggling with anxiety during these difficult times? Max Lucado offers five steps to interrupt that downward spiral and offer your anxiety about the coronavirus up to God. Nothing is too big for Him!

Anxiety is an out-of-control thought pattern. It settles over the mind like a severe weather system, spewing thunderclouds and casting lightning bolts. Life feels like an airplane in a tailspin. It feeds on what-ifs and worst-case scenarios. What if the coronavirus changes my life forever? How long until there's a vaccine? Until the economy recovers? I could lose my health. I could lose my job. I could lose it all. Down. Down. Down. Don't give in to this thought pattern. It's a sinkhole. Don't catastrophize your way into quicksand. Take a deep breath and then ...



## **1. Pray about it.**

At the first hint of an anxious thought, take the thought captive. Don't tolerate the devil, not even for a second. Lasso the anxious thought with a word of prayer. Lord, there is an intruder at the door. Please take over!

## **2. Identify the culprit.**

Generalities are not permitted. None of this: "I'm worried." Get specific: Lord, I'm worried about the layoffs at work. Now, that's better. But even more detailed: I'm worried that I will lose my job. Will I be able to find more work? Will we have to move? Specificity disarms anxiety.

## **3. Take a reality check.**

Is this a legitimate concern? Or is this a vague, ill-defined, rumor-fed possibility? They say layoffs are inevitable. Who are they?

## **4. Take an action step.**

Assuming the concern is legitimate, what can you do? Make a list of two or three steps you can take to resist the urge to try to solve everything immediately.

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**5. Ask: “Can God solve this?”**

Is this challenge within His skill set? Is He overwhelmed by this setback? Are the angels pounding on the door of heaven trying to convince Him to come out of hiding? Is He resisting? I can't handle this challenge. It is too great. I don't know what to do! I'm stumped, stuck, and stalled out.

No ... I don't think so either. God is never baffled or belittled. Take the problem to Him. Reflect on this verse: “No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from me, declares the Lord” (Isaiah 54:17, NIV). And, pray it through:

Lord, Thank You that “before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely” (Psalm 139:4, NIV). Thank You that there are no surprises with You. Help me find deep comfort in the fact that You are unshockable and nothing is too great, too terrible, too large, or too heavy for You. Help me see the problems that I face today in light of how big You are. Amen.

© Max Lucado (adapted from *Anxious for Nothing*, Thomas Nelson, 2017). This post was originally published at [maxlucado.com](http://maxlucado.com).

## Spring Forward

Daylight Savings Time officially begins on Sunday, March 14th at 2:00 am.

Be sure to **set your clocks forward one hour when you go to bed on Saturday, March 13th**, and you will be good to go!



## Girl Scout Cookie Sale

The 2021 Girl Scout Cookie Sale is currently in progress! The last day to order is March 25th.

Please contact **Sienna Shepherd at 580-713-1179** to place your order, and she will deliver directly to your doorstep! You may also contact **Ro Bielinski at 580-248-3690**.

Thank you for your continued support!



# Church Staff and Contact Information

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**Facilities Manager - Konrad Delger**

**Financial Secretary - Patty Neuwirth**

**Sound Technician - Brian Herring**

**Media Technicians - Evan Aubrey and John Bowman**

**Nursery - Beverly Watson and Elizabeth Calhoun-Dean**

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