Sent: Tuesday, January 14, 2020 10:32 AM
Subject: Emily Wood: An Invitation to Community

Hi!
Happy January, everyone! Can you believe it? Welcome to a new year, and a new decade. I believe God has great plans for us as women, and I'm excited to see it all unfold. I know He wants us to realize every day how much we are loved, valued, seen, and known.

Do you ask God to give you direction coming into a new year, or even a "word" to help define your focus for the year? Last week as I prayed for direction, I wrote the word "slow" in my journal. It's not the most exciting word (ha!), but for me it is very good direction. It is confirmation I'm supposed to focus on the following verse: *"Know this, my beloved brothers (and sisters); let every person be quick to hear, SLOW to speak, SLOW to anger."* (James 1:19). I want to keep meeting with you ladies and listening to you. Will you reach out to me to set up a time for coffee or lunch? My contact info is below.

What are you longing for this year? I'm longing for community. As a church, community is what we bring to this world as it grows more and more connected online and disconnected in person. We are the hands and feet of Christ, meeting each other's needs in the flesh. Praise God! He wants us to live in community – not isolation. So, I'm so grateful we have one another, and I can't wait to dream with you about how God wants to use you, and all of us, to share the love of Christ with a hurting world.

One great way to experience community is through a Bible study. Visit www.firstpres.com/women to see what we have to offer. I would also like to grow this list. Is there something you would love to study or a time you would prefer to meet? Would you like to lead a study, prayer group, walking group, or something new? Or host a group in your home? I'd love to talk to you more about this. And I want to leave you with one thought – sometimes community doesn't look like what we thought it would. Consider showing up anyway. What do you have to lose?

May God give you vision for 2020,
Emily Wood
First Pres Director of Women's Ministry
Office: Room 201, I'm here Monday-Thursday, 8:30-3:00
Phone: 350-5218
Email: emilyw@firstpres.com
Please call, email, or stop by for a visit anytime! I would love to see you!

P.S. Thank you to the lovely ladies who showed up Sunday night for IF:Pray. It was a wonderful night of prayer, worship, and community. Special thanks to Sarah Amstutz for leading us in worship!

Sent: February 11, 2020 1:35 p.m.
Subject: An Invitation to Love (and to our Retreat)

Hi all!

Happy February! I hope you are somewhere warm and cozy on this snowy, winter day. I don't know if any of you can relate, but it bothers me that "love" has become a cheesy word in our culture, celebrated with chocolates and flowers on Valentine's Day...or not at all. For us as believers, love is the foundation of everything (John 3:16). Can we take a minute and get excited about the true meaning of the word "love" and just how powerful it is?

- "Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens, Your faithfulness to the skies." Psalm 36:5
- "And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity." Col. 3:14
- "Above ALL, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins." 1 Peter 4:8
- "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God...God IS ...**We love because He first loved us**." 1 John 4:7-21 (read all of it)
- "The greatest of these is love!" 1 Corinthians 13. Please read it today – it is SO good.

I could go on and on! What is your favorite verse about love? These verses are not just for weddings. They are the basis of our faith and truth for us today as children of God, daughters of the most High King. Lord, will You remind us this week how much we are loved and how lovely we are to You? You have put Your Spirit and Your beauty within us – thank You for this great gift!

Do you know what I'm getting excited about? Our Women's Retreat is coming up on Sept. 11-13 in Santa Fe, and it is going to be amazing! You can register now by clicking on this link: https://firstpres.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/343193. Please reach out to me if you have questions, if you aren't sure you will know anyone going, and/or if you want to help with the retreat! Will you please pray about joining us, even if you are afraid? "Perfect love drives out fear" (1 John 4:18). So, step out in faith, sign up, and come! What have you got to lose?

May God wrap you up in His love this week,

Emily Wood

First Pres Director of Women's Ministry
Office: Room 201, I'm here Monday-Thursday, 8:30-3:00
Phone: 350-5218
Email: emilyw@firstpres.com
Please call, email, or stop by for a visit anytime! I would LOVE to see you!

Sent: March 10, 2020 1:07 p.m.
Subject: An Invitation to Gather (March 31)!

Hi!

Happy March! Is anyone else ready for spring? Even though the early morning darkness has been hard with the time change this past weekend, I'm ready to "spring forward"! I came across a verse this morning and want to share it with you: *"Let us know; let us press on to know the Lord; His going out is sure as the dawn; He will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth"* (Hosea 6:3). We know the dawn is coming, and what a gift to think of God coming to us as the spring rain. Come, Lord Jesus!

We are also in a season of Lent, and I must confess I have not been very disciplined in what I've given up. Thankfully His mercies are new every morning, and each day we are given the opportunity to begin again (Lamentations 3:22-23). Sometimes I get confused and think Lent is about my performance or self-discipline, but in my weaknesses and failures I experience my need for God even more. We all need reminders that this life is really all about Him, don't we?

On that note, I'm so excited to tell you about something new we have planned for the end of March! Will you join me Tuesday evening, March 31, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. for The Gathering, a night of fellowship, story, and prayer? We will meet at my house – 3011 South Hayden Street. We will have snacks and drinks and lots of fun!

I've talked to many of you who are hungry for time together with other women – time to get to know each other, time to pray, and time to have fun! So, we are going to get together and fellowship, our very own Shauneen Hatfield will share her story with us, and we are going to pray. And if you need to feed your family dinner first, come at 7:15 to hear Shauneen's testimony. Please reach out to me if you have questions, want to know more about this, or if you want to bring a snack, drink, or dessert! I hope you will step out of your comfort zone and come! What have you got to lose?

May you see God everywhere every day,

Emily Wood

First Pres Director of Women's Ministry
Office: Room 201, I'm here Monday-Thursday, 8:30-3:00
Phone: 350-5218
Email: emilyw@firstpres.com
Please call, email, or stop by for a visit anytime! I would love to see you!

P.S. Don't forget to sign up for the Women's Retreat on Sept. 11-13 in Santa Fe! You can register now by clicking on this link: https://firstpres.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/343193.

Sent: March 24, 2020 1:47 p.m.
Subject: An Invitation to Hope

Hello ladies,
I know I just wrote to you two weeks ago…but didn't life feel different two weeks ago? I did not even mention the coronavirus (COVID-19) at the time. I guess I was *hoping* it would end up not being such a big deal. Well, today I think it has never been more important for us to come together and make sure we are putting our hope in the right place.

In times like these, where we place our hope makes all the difference. This morning I was walking outside listening to these incredible words from Paul as he preached in Athens:
"And He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward Him and find Him. Yet He is actually not far from each one of us, for 'In Him we live and move and have our being.'" Acts 17:26-28

I can't claim to understand much these days, but God's Word is truth we can hold onto, and one of these truths is this – it is no accident we are living through the coronavirus right now. God put you on this earth at this time, and you are supposed to find God in the midst of this. If you, like many of us, are wondering what you should be doing each day, find God and share Him with the rest of us! Bring hope, light, and love to the people God has placed around you. Even if it is just one phone call a day, it is needed for that one person you call. We all need community and one another even more than we did before!

Three updates:

1. We will not hold The Gathering at my house next Tuesday, 3/31, but we are not canceling it! I will keep you updated as we can determine a new date.
2. What is feeding your soul right now? Please respond back to me and share! I have loved walking outside in this beautiful spring weather and listening to the Bible through the Dwell app. Right now, Dwell is offering a free 60-day subscription to churches! All you have to do is click on this link, create a free account, and download the app: https://dwellapp.io/signup/with/FirstPres%20
3. Prayer is how we fight this battle so let's join together in praying for God's will to be done in this time and for all who are sick or helping those who are sick. Let's pray together and believe in faith for many to come to know Him during these trials.

I will be in touch by email more regularly for a while because we need God, and sometimes we need each other to help find Him in each day! I thank God for how He reveals Himself to me through so many of you. Please, please respond if you have a specific need or a prayer request. Our church body exists in part for times like these, and it is okay and even good to admit we need each other!

May God fill you with hope today,

Emily Wood
First Pres Director of Women's Ministry
I'm working from home right now. I'd still love to hear from you!
Phone: 418-0404 Email: emilyw@firstpres.com
P.S. While our church is not meeting in person on Sunday, we are live streaming our worship service! Go to www.firstpres.com for more info.

Sent: March 31, 2020 1:24 p.m.
Subject: An Invitation to Receive (and no Gathering tonight!)

Hello all!

Another week has passed, and life continues to change dramatically. Is anyone else feeling humbled by all the words you are "eating" now? ("I could never homeschool my kids", or "I would never go X days without visiting my grandkids", or "I never miss a Sunday at church", and on and on!) What words are you "eating" these days? And I haven't even gotten to all our canceled plans! Thank you, God, for reminding us every word, plan, and promise we make hangs on Your will.

I've talked to many of you (and by talk I also mean texting or emailing!), and I must share the encouragement I've received about what is feeding your soul these days! But I also want us to be real here. Along with the moments where we experience God's presence, we also have moments where we wonder where God is and why He is allowing this. It is okay to not be okay sometimes. We are here for the hard days too. On those days we especially need the encouragement from others! It is hard for all of us (me included) to admit we need some help. But what if the most beautiful part about this coronavirus is us fully depending on God and each other as the body of Christ every single day?! May it be so, Lord.

> *"Ask, and it will be given to you, seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks RECEIVES, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened."* Matthew 7:7-8

God is so near. Will you RECEIVE the love of God in every form it is offered to you today? That may be answering the phone when a friend calls, letting others bring you groceries, or receiving prayer. God is near, but He won't force Himself on you. You must RECEIVE Him. Here is how some of our sisters in Christ are receiving God in this time:

1. Music – Sharissa in our church office shared this awesome song with me, and I must pass it on! Click on the link below and let God's love flow over you: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1vUhwyjdk8A&list=PLODGvTXbsj_SyI07Sn0e_Yju_wU2NM2yU&index=11
2. Diane Dabney shared this great quote by Max Lucado: "If we feed our faith, our fears will starve; if we feed our fears, our faith will starve".
3. Getting outside and practicing gratitude! Amy Laur and others
4. Prayer! Stacey Chambers, multiple
5. Listening to wonderful sermons! Nancy Williams
6. Staying connected to people! Sonya Letson and others
7. Reading/Listening to the Bible! Allison Silvertooth and others

Announcements:

1. Do you feel led to move your existing Bible study or prayer group online, or to create a new one? First Pres wants to help! We have Zoom accounts for our Women's groups, and I'm happy to train you on how to use it. If I can do it, I know you can too! You can use your phone or computer to get video and audio of the women in your group. No, it's not as good as meeting in person, but let's embrace where God has us right now and try new things together!
2. We will not hold The Gathering at my house tonight, Tuesday, 3/31, but we are not canceling it! I will keep you updated as we can determine a new date.
3. Don't forget you can listen to the Bible through the Dwell app for free for the next two months! All you have to do is click on this link, create a free account, and download the app: https://dwellapp.io/signup/with/FirstPres%20

Please let me know if you need prayer or specific help of any kind...I know you will RECEIVE it with joy!

May you fully receive the love of God today,

Emily Wood
First Pres Director of Women's Ministry
I'm working from home right now. I'd still love to hear from you!
Phone: 418-0404
Email: emilyw@firstpres.com

P.S. While our church is not meeting in person on Sunday, we are live streaming our worship service! Go to www.firstpres.com for more info.

Sent: April 7, 2020 12:53 p.m.
Subject: An Invitation to Holy Week

Hi!
How is everyone doing this week? I hope you are staying home, staying healthy, and finding joy in the small things. And if you are in a position where you still go to work, I pray you are sensing God's presence with you. I know some days are easier than others. Who am I kidding? Some moments are easier than others! Yet God is still good, even when it doesn't seem like it. And God is still near, even when I struggle to find Him. Sometimes I call a friend and ask for help, truth, and perspective when these hard moments hit, and that always helps me.

On that note, I have some exciting news to share! We are going to feature different women in our church sharing a brief testimony of how God is meeting them in this season. I'm praying it puts a face to some of our emotions and shows us ways to find God in the midst of them. Check out our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/firstpresamarillo) and our website where all of our online connection is happening (www.firstpres.com/first-pres-live) to see these encouraging stories starting this week.

It is Holy Week! Thank you, Jesus, for what you did this week so many years ago. We want to remember Your great sacrifice and worship You, the Giver of eternal life because You gave up Your own life. Need some encouragement on how to experience God's presence this week? Here are a few ideas:

1. I like these Lent devotionals because they include music, art, and poetry along with scripture and a written devotional. You can find them here: http://ccca.biola.edu/lent/
2. Want to read/listen to what the Bible says Jesus was doing each day of Holy Week? Author and speaker Annie Downs is sharing these verses daily on her podcast: https://www.anniefdowns.com/podcast/
3. Check out all the great Holy Week services First Pres will be holding online at http://firstpres.com/first-pres-live: a Maundy Thursday service with communion (I'm excited to try this!), 4/9 at 7 p.m.; a Good Friday service, 4/10 at 7 p.m.; and then Easter Sunday traditional service at 8:30 a.m. and contemporary at 11 a.m. Lord, please transform our homes into holy and reverent places of worship.
4. Get outside, walk, and listen to the Bible through the Dwell app for free now through June 8! All you have to do is click on this link, create a free account, and download the app: https://dwellapp.io/signup/with/FirstPres%20

Please let me know if you need prayer or specific help of any kind. Our church is here for you!

May you worship God in spirit and in truth this Holy Week,

Emily Wood
First Pres Director of Women's Ministry
I'm working from home right now. I'd still love to hear from you!
Phone: 418-0404
Email: emilyw@firstpres.com

P.S. Don't forget to watch for our women's testimonies this week – you may see some familiar faces!

Sent: April 14, 2020 12:39 p.m.
Subject: An Invitation to Reflect

Hello ladies,

How was your Easter Sunday? I know it was a *different* Easter for all of us – thank you, God, that the miracle of the resurrection is our hope and reality no matter how we experienced it this past weekend! (If you did have a powerful experience, please email me back and share. I'd love to hear!)

My Lent devotional ended with this powerful call to action: "*You have been given an opportunity to reveal the character and nature of God to the world. Let the light shining in your heart scatter its rays into other hearts around you.*" Yes! May all of us to scatter light to those around us. Lord, would you give us divine appointments to reflect You and the grace to do it well? I love these verses on reflecting the image of God:

> *"I appeal to you therefore, [sisters], by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."* Romans 12:1-2
>
> *"To put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness."* Ephesians 4:22-24
>
> *"Therefore be imitators or God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."* Ephesians 5:1-2
>
> *"For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known."* I Corinthians 13:12
>
> *"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another."* 2 Corinthians 3:18

Thank you, Lord, that we get to reflect You – what a high calling for us all! Speaking of reflecting God, have you seen our women's testimonies yet? We are featuring different women in our church sharing a brief testimony of how God is meeting them in this season. So far you can see Kelli Glass (https://youtu.be/_4dJCJ-wtV0) and Virginia Maynard (https://youtu.be/lELn5hhhwNI) and 18 year old Anne Kathryn Currie should be up later today! Check out our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/firstpresamarillo) and our website where all of our online connection is happening (www.firstpres.com/first-pres-live) to see more of these encouraging stories in the weeks to come.

Just a couple of announcements:

1. Would you like a way to connect with women right now through a small group for Bible study and prayer? We can meet by conference call if you prefer no video or by Zoom or Facetime if you like. Please email or call me (info below) if you are interested.
2. Please let me know if you need prayer or specific help of any kind. Our church is here for you!

May we all reflect the image of God this week,

Emily Wood
First Pres Director of Women's Ministry
I'm working from home right now. I'd still love to hear from you!
Phone: 418-0404
Email: emilyw@firstpres.com

P.S. Don't forget you can listen to the Bible through the Dwell app for free through June 8. My favorite voice is David's with the piano and cello music in the background! It sounds nice, doesn't it? Click on this link https://dwellapp.io/signup/with/FirstPres%20, create a free account, and download the app.

Sent: April 21, 2020, 2:09 p.m.
Subject: An Invitation to Hold On

Hi! How are you feeling about our COVID-19 reality today? At five weeks into it are you still on a rollercoaster of emotions and thoughts, going from feeling okay, to good, to sad, to mad, to who knows what?! Me too. I keep asking God to explain all of this to me!

Are you surprised to know He hasn't explained any of it to me in an audible voice? I want specifics, and answers, and clarity, and unity of thought among believers, and a clear ending tied up with a pretty bow. (If any of you have figured all of this out please let me know so I can share!) Instead of those things, He has given me His Word. He has given me the Holy Spirit living within me. And He has given me other believers to lean on. And guess what? Even on the hard and frustrating days, it is enough. What about you? How are you coping? Here are some important verses to HOLD onto:

"And He is before all things, and in Him all things HOLD together." Colossians 1:15

"For I, the Lord your God, HOLD your right hand; it is I who say to you, 'Fear not, I am the One who helps you." Isaiah 41:13

"Fight the good fight of the faith. Take HOLD of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses." 1 Timothy 6:12

If you have a few minutes, look up each of these verses and read each of these three chapters. There is so much to be found in them! Thank you, God, for holding us all together, for holding us in Your right hand, and for giving us eternal life to hold onto. Will You help us to hold tight to You when we feel like we are losing our way?

Speaking of holding tight to God, have you seen our women's testimonies from last week? We are featuring different women in our church sharing a brief testimony of how God is meeting them in this season. Last week we featured 18 year old Anne Kathryn Currie (https://youtu.be/ci0dQADhXXI) and our Women's Ministry moderator Beth Throckmorton (https://youtu.be/2Cj05Q17Tfw)! This week you will hear from Denise Carter and 18-year-old Allie Proffer. Check out our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/firstpresamarillo) and our website where all of our online connection is happening (www.firstpres.com/first-pres-live) to see more of these encouraging stories in the weeks to come.

Announcements:

1. Would you like a way to connect with women right now through a small group for Bible study and prayer? We can meet by conference call if you prefer no video or by Zoom or Facetime if you like. Please email or call me (info below) if you are interested.
2. Please let me know if you need prayer or specific help of any kind. Our church is here for you!

May we rest in the knowledge that God is holding everything together this week,

Emily Wood, First Pres Director of Women's Ministry
I'm working from home right now. I'd still love to hear from you!
Phone: 418-0404 Email: emilyw@firstpres.com

P.S. Don't forget you can listen to the Bible through the Dwell app for free through June 8. This is something I listen to daily to HOLD onto God's truth and goodness and love for me. Click on this link https://dwellapp.io/signup/with/FirstPres%20, create a free account, and download the app.

Subject: An Invitation to Look Up
Sent: April 28, 2020, 1:03 p.m.

Hello!

Happy Tuesday everyone! How are you doing this week? I am praying for God to bring refreshment to your souls and a lightness to your spirit. I'm praying the same thing for me! Life can feel pretty heavy right now, can't it? I'm still holding onto the verses we talked about last week and one I missed but our lovely Michal-ann Bell shared with me, –*"Let us HOLD unswervingly to the hope that we profess, for He who promised is faithful."* Hebrews 10:23.

This morning as I walked and listened to the Bible, I felt a little numb. None of the words were sinking in, and I was having trouble holding onto the meaning. And it wasn't because the words were not powerful! My mind was elsewhere, and I realized I have been fixing my attention too much on the news and Netflix. So, while I'm still feeling a little numb, I know what to do, and I think you do too. We have to fix our eyes on Jesus!

"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith…" Hebrews 12:2

"I lift up my eyes to the mountains — where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth." Psalm 121 (read all of it!)

Our faith is not based on a feeling, but our feelings so often dictate our actions and our outlook on life. Will you join me in LOOKING UP today? Lord, we know our help comes from You so help us to fix our eyes on You even when we are surrounded with distractions. The enemy would love for us to squander these days, but do not let him! Look up! Check out Lauren Daigle's song, "Look Up Child" here https://youtu.be/7NAYz0zh_Es for a little musical inspiration.

Speaking of keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, have you seen our women's testimonies from last week? We are featuring different women in our church sharing a brief testimony of how God is meeting them in this season. Last week we featured Denise Carter (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPgEMhwE6MM) and 18-year-old Allie Proffer (https://youtu.be/bCl7qyMQe4o). Be on the lookout this week for Sarah Cline and Laurie Pinkston! Check out our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/firstpresamarillo) and our website where all of our online connection is happening (www.firstpres.com/first-pres-live) to see more of these encouraging stories in the weeks to come.

Announcements:

1. I'm working on a small group Bible study we can do using Zoom while we are social distancing. More to come on that this week. Please email or call me (info below) if you are interested.
2. Please let me know if you need prayer or specific help of any kind. Our church is here for you!

May we LOOK UP and fix our eyes on Jesus this week,

Emily Wood
First Pres Director of Women's Ministry
I'm working from home right now. I'd still love to hear from you!
Phone: 418-0404
Email: emilyw@firstpres.com

P.S. What verse is helping you keep your eyes fixed on Jesus right now? Please email me back and share!

Sent: May 5, 2020, 2:51 p.m.
Subject: An Invitation to Worship

Happy Tuesday, everyone, and Happy May!

Praise God we have made it to today! I don't know if you have noticed, but the news continues to become more anxiety-inducing, especially on a local level. We have over 1,000 active COVID-19 cases in Potter and Randall County, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is here in Amarillo to help us with the outbreak. It is certainly a time for prayer. And it is especially a time for praise. Yes, I said praise! Let me explain.

As I listened to Lezly Welch's testimony today on our First Pres Live page (https://youtu.be/jPBm1Gka9mo) , I was curious about her mention of Habakkuk so I looked it up. I needed the reminder so thank you, Lezly – we are supposed to praise God in the midst of difficult times! There is POWER in praising God. We see it throughout the Old and New Testaments – check out 2 Chronicles 20 or Acts 16. God wants us to praise Him when times are hard so let's get to it! Check out these verses to help you start singing:

*"Through Him [Jesus] then **let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God**, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name."* Hebrews 13:15

*"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, **singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God**."* Colossians 3:16

*"About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and **singing hymns to God**, and the prisoners were listening to them."* Acts 16:25

*"Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on its vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, **yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation**."* Habakkuk 3:17-18

I think we all know we are supposed to be praying, but are you singing? For some more inspiration, have you seen our women's testimonies from last week? We featured Sarah Cline (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gORsqUSagU) and Laurie Pinkston (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmUkj8kSJ7Q). Now that we have a growing number of these wonderful videos, we put them all in one place so you can catch up on any testimonies you have missed on our Women's Page (http://firstpres.com/women).

Announcements:

1. Thank you to those who have expressed interest in an online small group Bible study while we are social distancing. I'm still working on it so stay tuned! Please email or call me (info below) if you are interested.
2. Please let me know if you need prayer or specific help of any kind. Our church is here for you!

May we worship God in spirit and truth this week,

Emily Wood, First Pres Director of Women's Ministry
I'm working from home right now. I'd still love to hear from you!
Phone: 418-0404, Email: emilyw@firstpres.com

P.S. Here are a few of my favorite worship songs right now. What are yours?

Way maker https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SE_M9noEhNE

Another in the Fire https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BDZD1SMz6tY

Raise a Hallelujah https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2XtRuPfaAU

Subject: An Invitation to Seek Truth (and Service Opportunities)
Sent: May 12, 2020, 2:48 p.m.

Hello again!

I have to be honest – I am not a very patient person. I'm ready for this whole thing to be over! How about you? I keep hearing people share how they are enjoying their time, and I'm just done. (: I have to keep reminding myself I don't have control over the timing of the coronavirus, and as I pray and praise God, I also need to seek truth. God's word is full of it. As I walked this morning (in the cold and mist!) listening to the Bible, I heard these words:

"*Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.*" James 5:7-8

And just a few moments ago, I was reading this:

"Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." Philippians 4:11-13

Thank you, Lord, for reminding me You've got this. I would love to hear how you are doing these days if you want to email me back or give me a call (info below)! Be sure to listen to our very own Shelley Chaloupka's amazing words of truth here https://youtu.be/LWuMw5R26iU. Also have you seen our women's testimonies from last week? We featured Lezly Welch ((https://youtu.be/jPBm1Gka9mo) and Hannah Moore (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCpOJVThdNU). And you can find all of our women's testimonies in one place on our Women's Page (http://firstpres.com/women). We have some very wise women in our midst – what a blessing and an encouragement!

Service Opportunity: We have a special opportunity to serve this week from Kim Zimmer (https://youtu.be/YwYe2Vs3dmY). This week First Pres is supporting two amazing organizations that love and support single women, Eveline's Sunshine Cottage (www.evelinessunshinecottage.com/) and the Gratitude House of Downtown Women's Center (https://dwcenter.org/). We want to offer encouragement to the ladies they serve. The ladies at the Sunshine Cottage are all single moms, rearing children and attending college. The ladies of the Gratitude House are all women conquering addition, some have kids with them, some have kids who are grown, some have kids elsewhere and a few have never had children.

Ready to love and serve and be a light? For this challenge you have three options: Bronze, Silver and Gold.

1. Bronze: Write a letter to the ladies at the Gratitude House cheering their commitment to make a better life for their kids and themselves.
2. Silver: video yourself with a message of encouragement to the ladies of Downtown Women's Center. They will share this through their private alumni page.
3. Gold: make a salad, casserole, and a dessert for one of the 8 moms and their 2-5 children living at Eveline's Sunshine Cottages. You are more than welcome and highly encouraged to partner with a friend to make this meal.

Please contact Kim Zimmer (kimz@firstpres.com) with questions or to share how you want to serve!

Announcements:

1. Be on the lookout for another email this week about an online Bible study!
2. Please let me know if you need prayer or specific help of any kind. Our church is here for you!

May we seek God's truth daily this week,

Emily Wood

First Pres Director of Women's Ministry

I'm working from home right now. I'd still love to hear from you!

Phone: 418-0404

Email: emilyw@firstpres.com

Subject: An Invitation to Something New
Sent: 5-19-20, 12:38 p.m.

Hi!

Happy Tuesday, everyone! Can you believe Memorial Day is less than a week away? And then it is summer! Is anyone else ready for a NEW season? This morning I was drawn to these verses that may be familiar to you, but they are so good as we pray and yearn for the end of this season of COVID-19.

But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end; they are NEW every morning, great is Your faithfulness. 'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul, 'therefore I will hope in Him.' The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord." Lamentations 3:21-26

Speaking of God's faithfulness, take a few minutes to listen to a special group of young ladies, including our new summer youth intern Dannie Hoving along with her friends Brooklyn Priest and Channing Burney in this week's Women's Testimony: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pzf-QhRqI0c. Also be on the lookout for the Keister women sharing together later this week! You can find all of our wonderful women's testimonies in one place on our Women's Page (http://firstpres.com/women).

On that note we have a couple of exciting announcements for NEW things coming up:

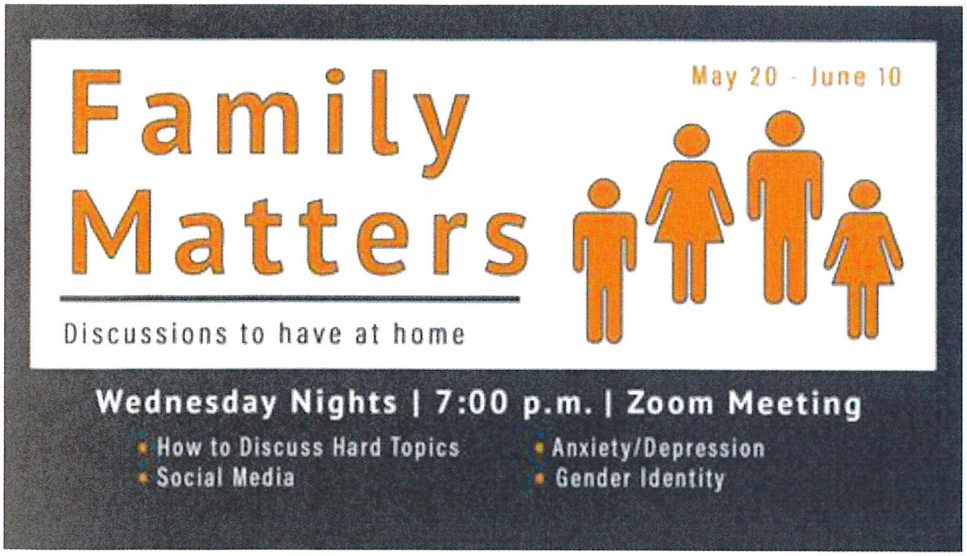
ANNOUNCEMENTS:

First Pres Online Summer Book Club/Bible Study on Jennie Allen's latest book *Get Out of Your Head* – Choose one of two weekly Zoom options:

Monday, June 1 at 5:30 p.m. OR Wednesday, June 3, at 10 a.m.
(https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2880130600?pwd=endHc2JrdE1jS0hML21SbUpuN0dKQT09, Meeting ID: 288 013 0600, Password: firstpres)

I will be leading this online book study group, and we are offering two different times to accommodate our working women and moms. You can order the book at this link ahead or First Pres can order for you, and you can download the free book club kit PDF when you click on this link and scroll down – https://www.jennieallen.com/gooyh. You can also subscribe to the Made for This podcast by Jennie Allen. Please let me know if you have questions or want to be involved. We have a great group of women already committed! And go to http://firstpres.com/women for more online women's Bible study options.

And starting tomorrow night:



This is something you will want to be a part of!

You are invited to join the **Family Matters** series**, 5/20-6/10 at 7 p.m.** on ZOOM. Facilitator Kim Talley will lead the group through lessons from AXIS.org and help parents navigate conversations on valuable topics, such as social media or anxiety and depression. Download ZOOM on your smart phone or computer, then click this link to join in: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89388095742 Please pass this email along to invite your family and friends with kids of all ages. The First Pres Family Ministry Team invites anyone to be a part.

Please email Debbie, Michal-ann or Kim with questions about the series and/or topics.

With summer coming up, we will shift back to monthly women's emails, but I will be in touch when we have news to share, and as always, I would love to hear from you and pray with you anytime you want to reach out!

May we wait with expectancy for the NEW things you are doing, Lord,

Emily Wood
First Pres Director of Women's Ministry
I'm working from home right now. I'd still love to hear from you!
Phone: 418-0404
Email: emilyw@firstpres.com

P.S. The Beth Moore Living Proof Live event at the Civic Center Coliseum on July 24-25, 2020 is still on at this point! If a cancellation happens, we will notify you and provide refunds for tickets purchased.

Subject: An Invitation to Mature
Sent: 6-2-20, 3:28 p.m.

Hi ladies!
Happy Tuesday, everyone, and happy summer! I know we seem to go from one heavy thing to the next right now in our country, and we are all trying to figure out how to help. I want to share with you a few verses we read last night in our First Pres Zoom Book Club/Bible study meeting because I think we can find a lot of answers right here. I'll start with the Message version, which Dena Lopez beautifully read to us:

> *"So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what He wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed* ***maturity*** *in you."*

And here it is in the ESV version:

> *"I appeal to you therefore, [sisters], by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."* Romans 12:1-2

I bet you feel the same way I do as I read that – I want that kind of maturity! I want God to bring out the best in me, and I want to be transformed by the renewal of my mind so I can discern the will of God! May it be so in all of us, Lord. Please grow us this summer so we can respond well to the hurting world around us.

Speaking of spiritual maturity, LuLu Cowan is someone I have always looked up to so I'm thrilled to share with you her testimony from last week: https://youtu.be/zHhNabrlzJo. And don't forget you can find all of our wonderful women's testimonies in one place on our Women's Page (http://firstpres.com/women).

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

First Pres Online Summer Book Club/Bible Study on Jennie Allen's latest book *Get Out of Your Head* –

You get to choose one of two weekly Zoom options: **Monday (started yesterday but still not too late to join), June 1 at 5:30 p.m. OR Wednesday, June 3, at 10 a.m.** Just download Zoom to your smartphone or computer for free, and click on this link to join our meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2880130600?pwd=endHc2JrdE1jS0hML21SbUpuN0dKQT09, Meeting ID: 288 013 0600, Password: firstpres

- Monday and Wednesday studies are identical so you only need to attend one. Feel free to switch between from week to week depending on what works for your schedule, or you can jump in on Wednesday if you miss Monday!
- Please do NOT stress if you need to multi-task (like cooking dinner or watching your kiddos) while you take part – that is the beauty of Zoom! You can keep yourself muted and even turn off your video at any time. We are going to keep this casual, and we are all women – we understand.
- This study is 10 weeks, through the 1st week of August. Meetings should last one hour.
- You can order the book at this link ahead, and you can download the free book club kit PDF when you click on this link and scroll down – https://www.jennieallen.com/gooyh. You can also subscribe to the Made for This podcast by Jennie Allen.

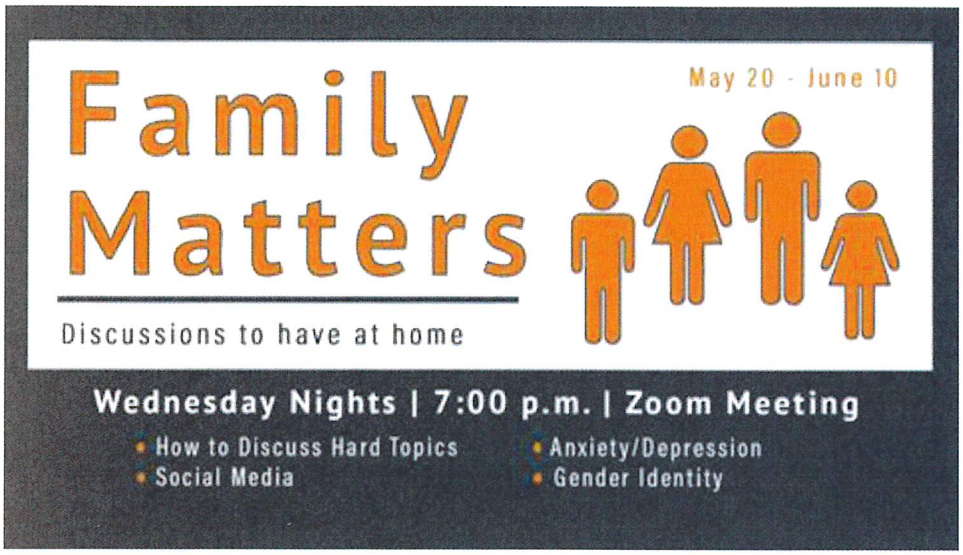
Another Bible Study options: Encounter with God

Mondays @ 5:30 p.m., Library Northwest branch

Led by Virginia Sicola, 353-6204 - ongoing study

This group is meeting via Zoom until the library opens - contact Virginia for info.

And tomorrow night we have another Family Matters Zoom meeting on Anxiety and Depression. I hope you will join us:



This is something you will want to be a part of!

You are invited to join the **Family Matters** series**, 5/20-6/10 at 7 p.m.** on ZOOM. Facilitator Kim Talley will lead the group through lessons from AXIS.org and help parents navigate conversations on valuable topics, such as social media or anxiety and depression. Download ZOOM on your smart phone or computer, then click this link to join in: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89388095742 Please pass this email along to invite your family and friends with kids of all ages. The First Pres Family Ministry Team invites anyone to be a part.

May we grow in our knowledge and love for the Lord this summer,

Emily Wood

First Pres Director of Women's Ministry

I'm working from home right now. I'd still love to hear from you!

Phone: 418-0404

Email: emilyw@firstpres.com

Subject: An Invitation to Kindness and Beth Moore Event Cancelled
Sent: 6-30-20, 2:32 pm

Hello!

Is anyone else excited 2020 is now halfway over?! I am only joking because Psalm 118:24 tells us "*This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it,*" and we also know God's mercies are new every morning (Lamentations 3:22-23). Even though it has been a hard season, many of us realize good comes when we must recognize what is truly important in life and when we have difficult but important conversations about race…but nonetheless it has been quite a year! As I've discussed this crazy time we are living in with several of you, a common topic has been sadness over the division in our country and our judgement of each other. In this season I am drawn deeply into God's kindness and encouraged greatly by the kindness of others. I bet you are too! Here are a few of my favorite verses on kindness:

"*Or do you show contempt for the riches of His **kindness**, forbearance, and patience, not realizing that God's **kindness** is intended to lead you to repentance*?" Romans 2:4

"*She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of **kindness** is on her tongue.*" Proverbs 31:26

"*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, **kindness**, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*" Colossians 3:12-14

Lord, help us to *shine as lights in the world* (Philippians 2:15) by showing kindness to others. Help believers come together in unity during this time of unrest in our country. May Your kindness lead us to repentance as well, Lord. Speaking of wisdom and kindness, have you heard our wonderful testimony for the month of June by Phyllis Fields? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7LEaVBxVZc And don't forget you can find all of our wonderful women's testimonies in one place on our Women's Page (http://firstpres.com/women).

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Women's Retreat Rescheduled for September 2021
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have rescheduled the September 2020 Women's Retreat in Santa Fe for the same weekend and location next fall – September 10-12, 2021. We are thrilled the Drury Plaza Hotel in Santa Fe can commit to the same great deal a year from September, and our speaker, Sharon Glasgow, has also committed to next year's retreat! Please join us in praying for the Women's Retreat 2021 to be a great success!

CANCELLED: Beth Moore "Living Proof - Live" in Amarillo July 24-25, 2020
Unfortunately, Beth Moore will no longer be coming to Amarillo in July. We expect to receive the refund for our First Pres block of tickets soon, and we will make arrangements for refunds to each of our ticket holders ASAP.

Please let me know if you need prayer, would like to join a small group, or if you need specific help of any kind. Our church is here for you!

May our kindness draw others to Jesus today,

Emily Wood
First Pres Director of Women's Ministry
I'm working from home right now. I'd still love to hear from you!
Phone: 418-0404
Email: emilyw@firstpres.com

Subject: An Invitation to Testing – and Training Opportunities
Sent: 7-28-20, 5:09 p.m.

Hi ladies!

Testing – this is not the invitation any of us wanted, is it? Yet all of us have been required to attend, and the party is lasting so much longer than we thought it would, don't you think? (: I know this season of testing with COVID-19 and unrest in our country isn't funny at all, but sometimes humor helps! And funny or not, we need to dig into what God says to us about seasons of testing.

> *"Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So, don't try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work, so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way. If you don't know what you're doing, pray to the Father. He loves to help."* James 1:2-5 MSG

And here it is in the ESV Version:

> *"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him."* James 1:2-5

Did you catch that line in the Message version "*So don't try to get out of anything prematurely*"? Eek. If you are anything like me, a desire for life to get "back to normal" is a pretty common emotion! But we don't want to miss what God is working in and through all of us. Lord help us to embrace this season of testing that You have allowed in our lives in this season. Will you develop faith, maturity, and wisdom in us?

Speaking of wisdom, faith, and maturity, have you heard our wonderful testimony for the month of July by Sarah Griffin (our senior pastor's wife)? Click here to view: https://youtu.be/qKINDnkBMxU. And don't forget you can find all of our wonderful women's testimonies in one place on our Women's Page (http://firstpres.com/women).

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. I'm exploring hosting an IF:Lead watch party on Saturday, August 15 for interested women. For more detail, click here: https://www.ifgathering.com/iflead2020/. If this is something you are interested in, please let me know. It will be awesome!
2. Our church is hosting the Global Leadership Summit next week – August 6-7. For more detail, click here: https://youtu.be/PJMBYCfm9VI. This is a Livestream event Thurs. 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. and Friday 8:30 am – 3:30 p.m. Please let Anita know if you can come anitag@firstpres.com or (806)350-5202 since seats are limited. Lunch will be served both days.
3. We are in planning mode for fall study and small group opportunities! If you have a need or desire for small group studies or discipleship, please reply and let me know!
4. We are looking at creating some small groups/triads who can meet in the evenings for working women. Please let me know if you are interested in an evening option!

God is good! I'm thankful for each of you lovely ladies and your faithfulness in times of trial and testing. It will produce good fruit in us! Please let me know if you need prayer, would like to join a small group, or if you need specific help of any kind. Our church is here for you!

May our testing refine us to become mature and complete women of God,

Emily Wood
First Pres Director of Women's Ministry
I'm working from home right now. I'd still love to hear from you!
Phone: 418-0404
Email: emilyw@firstpres.com

Subject: An Invitation to Peace
Sent: August 25, 2020 5:07 pm

Hi ladies!
Isn't peace a beautiful word? Just saying it out loud calms me down. I learned some powerful things about peace at the IF:Lead conference a couple of weekends ago, and I want to share these with you:

> "*Finally, [sisters], whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things*." Philippians 4:8

The Six Stepping Stones on the Pathway to Peace

- True – Use wisdom when deciding who to listen to and always start with the Bible. Anxiety is greedy and always wants more information.
- Honorable/Honest – Avoiding feelings doesn't help. Before you pray, watch – see Matthew 26:41 – spirit is willing, but flesh is weak. Jesus watched and prayed in the garden, but the disciples were sleeping for sorrow.
- Just – Choose compassion – it is the opposite of judgement.
- Pure – Don't give any good ground to the enemy. Don't retreat!
- Lovely – Surround yourself with and cultivate lovely things and lovely people.
- Good report – Talk about good stuff. Pay attention to the good!

Speaking of peace, loveliness, and wisdom, have you heard our wonderful testimony for the month of August by Nancy Turner? Click here to view: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ReU7--f9nEE. And don't forget you can find all of our wonderful women's testimonies in one place on our Women's Page (http://firstpres.com/women).

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. **Women's Fall Bible Studies –** We are so excited about all the wonderful Bible study and small group options available to First Pres women this fall! We will mail out a brochure detailing all these options around the first week of September. We will also share this list by email. New studies will begin the week of September 13. Please be on the lookout and reach out to me if you have questions or need more information at emilyw@firstpres.com or 418-0404.
2. **Triads –** We are creating more small groups/triads that can meet in the early mornings (7 a.m.) and evenings for working women. Please let me know if you are interested in an early morning or evening option!
3. **Yearbooks –** Are you interested in a 2020 yearbook/directory? We are taking orders and will be selling these at the Welcome Center soon!
4. **First Pres Fall Schedule –** Wednesday night programming begins September 9, and we are offering home groups meeting throughout the city. I'm hosting one with my husband here in Wolflin! Please let me know if you are interested in learning more. All three services and Sunday school will start back up on September 13.

God is at work in the world even when we don't see it. Give us peace as we trust in You today, Jesus! Please let me know if you need prayer, would like to join a small group, or if you need specific help of any kind. Our church is here for you!

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him,

Emily Wood
First Pres Director of Women's Ministry
I'm working from home right now. I'd still love to hear from you!
Phone: 418-0404 Email: emilyw@firstpres.com