

Faith Speaks

Life is not a picnic. I think I first learned that when I moved out on my own and realized I actually had to pay someone to pick up my trash. Life was “stinky” for those first few weeks. The truth is life is difficult, filled with obstacles, struggle, loss, and trial and error. And that’s just the things we can see. Consider the Apostle Paul’s words in Ephesians. “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12)

While we may think that the hardest struggles in life are paying bills, fights with friends, or stinky garbage, in actuality, our greatest struggles are with things we don’t see. Satan, the ruler of this world, is described as the “prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2). The course of this world - the schemes, ploys, infatuations, and agendas of this world are set by evil cosmic forces, the Apostle Paul says. We live in a world that is bent toward darkness, towards destruction. We live in a culture of death and blindness.

In other words, according to God’s word, life is a spiritual BATTLE, not a picnic. And since we find ourselves in such a battle, the scriptures implore us to dress ourselves for war. In Ephesians 6:10-18 Paul famously tells us to put on the whole armor of God so that we might stand against the schemes of the devil. Now, Paul did write Ephesians while being chained to a Roman guard. Because of

this, most commentators have said that the different pieces of armor Paul describes probably corresponded to the armor of the soldiers he saw all day. However, it’s better to say that the armor of the soldiers he saw all day REMINDED him of a different armor mentioned in the Old Testament.

In Isaiah 11:5, the “Belt of Truth” is a belt of faithfulness that the root of Jesse, the Messiah - Jesus, wears. (Faithfulness is translated as “truth” in the Greek Old Testament). In Isaiah 59:17, the “Breastplate of Righteousness” and the “Helmet of Salvation” are worn by the Lord himself because he can find no man to do justice and bring salvation. In Isaiah 52:7, we have that famous passage: “How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news.” This is obviously what Paul has in mind when he says, “As shoes for your feet put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.”

In multiple places in the Old Testament, the Lord himself is described as a shield for those who take refuge in him (Gen. 15:1; Prov. 30:5; Psalm 91:4-5; Psalm 5:12). Finally, there is the sword of the Spirit, which Paul says is the Word of God. He says that because in Isaiah 49:2, the prophet says that God has put his own words in him and that he has made his

mouth sharp like a sword.

So, the armor of God for Paul is more accurately God’s own armor. It’s the armor the Lord wears in the Old Testament. What does that mean? It means that when Paul tells us to PUT ON this armor, he’s not telling us to just BE righteous, or BE truthful, or BE faithful. Really, what Paul is imploring of us is to put on God himself - HIS righteousness, HIS truthfulness, HIS faithfulness, HIS salvation! Romans 13:14: “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.” In other words, how do we defend ourselves against Satan, against the cosmic spiritual darkness of this world? We don’t fight in that battle by doing the fighting ourselves. No, we fight in that battle like Israel fought in the battle against Goliath. How did Israel defeat Goliath and stand victorious on the battlefield? They trusted in their David, their valiant warrior who fought the fight for them. Beloved, Christ is our David. And Christ fights for us. If we want to be victorious in the true struggles of this life, we need to learn to trust in him for all things because life is no picnic; it’s a battle. But, it’s a battle that the LORD will surely win.

Pastor John



Church Staff

Pastor

Rev. John Cleveland

Church Administrator

Melinda Hawkins

Music Director

Nancy Lowry

Financial Secretary

Brooke Echols

Treasurer

Ronnie Burch

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2023

Session Members

John Cleveland
Gregg Coniglio
Keith Lovern
Dan Patterson
Mark Watts

Deacons

Jimmy Brock
Alan Dennis
Cameron Dennis
Zohrab Najarian

Pray that the Lord will bless the preaching and teaching ministry of the church to gather and build up the saints, that God's word will grow and multiply, and that our witness, love, and holiness will increase by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Ask the Lord to strengthen us with the Holy Spirit for counsel, wisdom, understanding, and the fear of the Lord, that we may share in our Savior's life and grace.

For the following, pray for health, comfort and fellowship with God during a period of sickness, that the Lord will give them faith, patience, joy and submission to his will.

- ◆ **Myra Echols:** cancer
- ◆ **Miles Pass:** 5y/o with leukemia
- ◆ **Jordan Israel**
- ◆ **Kay Horvath:** Alzheimer's
- ◆ **Donna Criger:** Corticobasal Degeneration
- ◆ **Karen Ivester:** Hip Replacement Surgery
- ◆ **Zohrab Najarian:** Employment
- ◆ **Paula Patterson:** recovery from fractured pelvis
- ◆ **Ricky Dow:** Cancer
- ◆ **Wilson Station EPC in Tennessee**
- ◆ **Children in Foster Care**
- ◆ **Our Shut-Ins**
- ◆ **The Lost**
- ◆ **Our Elders and Deacons**
- ◆ **President Biden and Congress**
- ◆ **Supreme Court**
- ◆ **Persons serving in our Military**
- ◆ **Law Enforcement Officers**
- ◆ **Emergency Responders**
- ◆ **Our Nation**

Please pray for our missionaries:

- ◆ **Phil and Diane Thrash**
- ◆ **Gary and Jackie Burnett**
- ◆ **Santosh John**
- ◆ **Keith and Rachel Keller**
- ◆ **Jeff & Veronique Kim**
- ◆ **Jenny Coon**
- ◆ **Mike Rasmussen**

But let us who live in the light be clearheaded, protected by the **ARMOR OF FAITH AND LOVE** and wearing as our helmet the **CONFIDENCE OF OUR SALVATION.**

1 THESSALONIANS 5:8 NLT

If you have a prayer request or a praise report that you would like to have included in the next newsletter, please email them to:
faithepcrus@gmail.com
by Friday, June 30th.

This would include any **NEW** or **OLD** requests that you would like to have included. This section is renewed monthly.

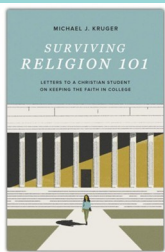
**THE
WORD OF GOD
IS ALIVE
AND ACTIVE,
SHARPER
THAN ANY
DOUBLE-EDGED
SWORD!**
-HEBREWS 4:12-

When the apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesian Christians [Eph. 6], he was not suggesting that they view their conflict with the powers of darkness as a battle whose outcome still hung in the balance. He was telling them they needed to “be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might” to “stand firm”; to use the spiritual armor – truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, and God’s Word – to resist the schemes of the devil. They were to fight from a position of victory, not out of fear that Satan might make them toast.

John MacArthur

Reference: Spiritual Warfare: Who's After Whom? from Our Sufficiency in Christ, 1991, Crossway Books, a division of Good News Publishers, Wheaton Illinois 60187, www.crosswaybooks.org. p. 215.

From the Pastor's Shelf...



“Surviving Religion 101: Letters to a Christian Student On Keeping the Faith in College” by Michael J. Kruger.

Before I went to Bible College, I spent one semester in 2003 at Pasco-Hernando Community College. It was my only real experience in secular higher education. But, in those few short months, I was surprised at how much anti-Christian, anti-Bible information was thrown my way. Since then, I have heard from many students that go off to study at major universities. They have all told me that, at some point, they have had their faith tested and their Christian convictions mocked. College is a difficult place for young adults to love God with all their minds. This new book from Michael Kruger is written as a series of letters to a student going off to college to help them answer some of the biggest questions they might encounter. Questions such as: “There are a lot of different views here. How can we say that Christianity is the only right religion?” And “My professors keep pointing out contradictions in the Gospels. Can I still trust them?” I highly recommend this book if you have children or grandchildren that are on their way to college. Copies available in our bookstore.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;
2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Youth HANGOUT

Are you a 4th to 12th grader?
You don't want to miss out on the fun and excitement of our hangouts!
Our next hangouts are **June 3rd and June 17th at 6:00 pm**
Bring a friend!

Fellowship News

Girlfriends in Faith
We are breaking for the Summer. We will begin meeting again in the Fall! We hope that you will join us then!

Men's Book Study
Our Men's Bible Study meets on Thursday's at 7:00 pm. We are studying 1 Corinthians. This is a wonderful opportunity to gather with other men around God's Word, fellowship, and prayer. Contact Mark Watts for more information.

Ladies Bible Study
Our Ladies Bible study is studying the book of Galatians. We meet on Tuesdays at 6:30 pm. Contact Sara Cleveland if you have any questions. Jump in and join us!

BOOK NOOK

Check out the bookshelf in the Narthex.
We have excellent books available for your Christian growth.

The May Session Meeting was held at the church on Thursday, May 4th. The Session discussed the new book reading assignment to begin in June. The current reading of the entire New Testament ends in June. John Cleveland gave a report on the upcoming General Assembly meeting scheduled in June in Colorado.

The Session made final plans for the delivery and construction of the new playground.

The Sunday morning pew attendance records were reviewed. The annual Homecoming service was discussed, and the date was set for Sunday, August 6th, with a covered dish luncheon.

The Session reviewed the congregation's care needs and prayed for each need.

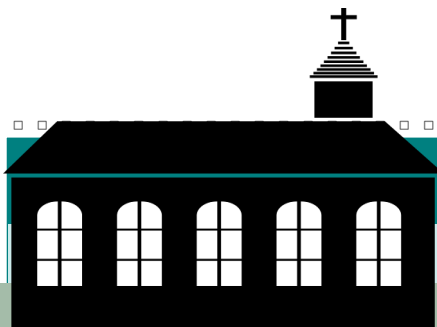
Summer Saturday's game and movie night ideas were discussed, and the new kitchen committee was established.

Small groups were discussed with Home fellowship teams to include the Martin, Skelton, Watts, Cleveland, and Billings families.

The Session had an Active Shooter discussion, with the training session set for Saturday, June 3rd, from 10 AM to 2 PM.

The next Session meeting will be June 8th at 5:30 PM.

John Cleveland, Moderator
Dan Patterson, Clerk
Gregg Coniglio
Keith Lovern
Mark Watts



Calendar

- ♦ June 1 Men's Bible Study
- ♦ June 3 Youth Hangout
- ♦ June 4 The Lord's Day
- ♦ June 4 Communion
- ♦ June 6 Ladies Bible Study
- ♦ June 8 Men's Bible Study
- ♦ June 11 The Lord's Day
- ♦ June 13 Ladies Bible Study
- ♦ June 15 Men's Bible Study
- ♦ June 17 Youth Hangout
- ♦ June 18 The Lord's Day
- ♦ June 19-23 VBS
- ♦ June 25 The Lord's Day
- ♦ June 27 Ladies Bible Study
- ♦ June 29 Men's Bible Study



June 2023 Financial News

Donations:

\$26,375.77

Expenses:

\$26,086.02

P.O.P. Fund:

\$1,200.00

Mortgage Principal:

\$800,565.04

Satan's number-one objective is to destroy our joy of faith. We have one offensive weapon: the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God (Eph. 6:17).

But what many Christians fail to realize is that we can't draw the sword from someone else's scabbard.

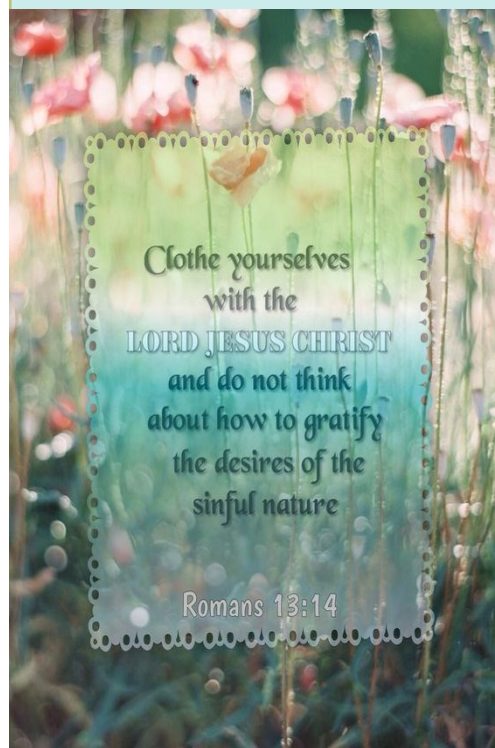
If we don't wear it, we can't wield it. If the Word of God does not abide in us (Jn. 15:7), we will reach for it in vain when the enemy strikes. But if we do wear it, if it lives within us, what mighty warriors we can be!

John Piper

Reference: Desiring God, 1996, p. 129,

Used by Permission,

www.desiringGod.org



Outreach News

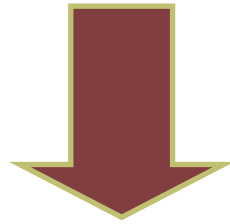
If you have a need that arises, or know of anyone that is in need, please reach out to our Deacons for assistance. They have the ability to reach out to the congregation on your behalf as well as physically meet your needs, or they can point you in the right direction for help.

Deacons of Faith

Jimmy Brock
Alan Dennis
Cameron Dennis
Zohrab Najarian



Vacation Bible School
June 19 - 23
9:00 - 12:00
Ages 4-12
Register at
FaithMcDonough.com
Invite your Friends!



June **Mission of the Month**

Helping In His Name Food Pantry

helpinginhisname.org

Needs

boxed cereal,
breakfast items,
canned ravioli,
spaghetti-o's,
ramen noodles,
vienna sausage,
canned meat,
peanut butter, jelly,
canned soups,
crackers

*Please place your items in the
mission box in the back
of the sanctuary.*

*Thank you for always giving so
generously to those in need!*

Children's Sunday School

We have Sunday School
classes for all ages!

We are in need of
teachers!

Contact Susan Jones
if you are interested
in serving!



Volunteers Needed For Fellowship Time!

If you would like to
provide refreshments,
there is a sign-up sheet on
the bulletin board by the
kitchen.

Speak to a Deacon if you
have any questions!

UPDATE FROM JENNY COON

Marhaba!

I was walking up the hill to go to a church service last night and to my surprise, I saw a patient of mine with her granddaughter struggling up the same hill in front of me. I had invited her to church a month ago, but I knew that it was still nearly impossible due to her mobility level. She told me ever since then, she tries every week to get just a little bit farther up the hill and one day, she will make it! This patient is not yet a believer, and we have had many very challenging conversations, so I was very encouraged to see her make this very physical effort to find answers for what her heart is seeking.

Thank you for your prayers for Balassan Clinic with our staffing shortages and the extra work that I have taken on. After a few "trial and errors" we have restructured a little and hopefully found the right combination with one and possibly two new hires. I appreciate your prayers for this transition time for us and for unity for our staff as well as the director and myself. At Balassan, we have expanded our partnership with one of the organizations that work with migrant/domestic workers and one of their patients recently messaged us how thankful she was for how our staff prayed with her, calmed her when she received a difficult diagnosis for her son, coordinated with the surgeon and hospital, and how she saw love and faith in every interaction. At my second clinic, Shaffi, our visiting ministry has expanded to include a speech therapist that has helped us with a couple of patients. We have had some very difficult cases with our visiting ministry this past month (attempted suicide, newly diagnosed ALS patient, etc) so I appreciate your prayers for wisdom in how best to minister to them.

This weekend my church sent a team for the third time to Syr (the same original two ladies and now a third one) to minister to a church we have been partnering with in one of the earthquake-hit regions. I will share some of the pictures below. Thank you for those who have given and prayed for this work. It is encouraging for me to pray with them before/after they go, and hear the stories of how God is multiplying their "mustard seed" of faith to strengthen their walks with Christ. It is a unique position where I feel I am both "sent" and now a "sender" at the same time.

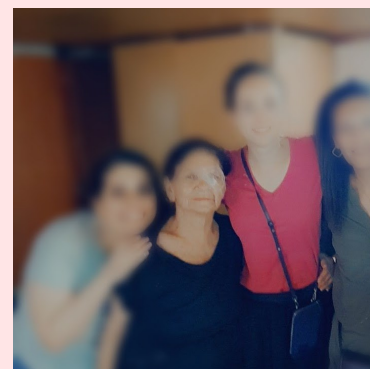
The big news in my life is that I have moved into a new apartment! I can not express enough how thankful I am for how God has blessed me with this new space. It is close enough to my old neighborhood that I am still close proximity to the people I do ministry with and does not really change my routine, however far enough away that I can feel "safer."

Thank you for your prayers and encouragement and for all those who reached out after my last letter.

With gratitude,
Jenny



Doing a home visit for a lady in our community who fell and broke her hip. Her house is on the steps of a very steep hill so it is very difficult for her to get out.



Thanks to your donations for the relief funds, we were able to sponsor this dear grandmother's eye surgery that saved her sight. She has led 2 of her 4 children to faith and has the sweetest heart.



Aid
distribution in
Syr



The view
from my
new
balcony



My annual "birthday hike"



To the glory of God,
Faith Presbyterian Church
has been called together to
faithfully proclaim the
Gospel, to make and equip
disciples for Christ, and to
advance God's Kingdom
in our families, community,
and world.



Faith Presbyterian Church is a
congregation of the
Evangelical Presbyterian Church
(www.epc.org)
and the Presbytery of the Southeast
(www.epcsoutheast.org).

Our Church Website:
www.FaithMcDonough.com

Church Email:
faithepcrus@gmail.com

Church Phone Number:
770-648-5288

Mailing Address:
Faith Presbyterian Church EPC
1185 East Lake Road
McDonough, GA 30252



*Finally, be strong in the Lord and
in the strength of his might.
Put on the whole armor of God, that
you may be able to stand against the
schemes of the devil. For we do not
wrestle against flesh and blood,
but against the rulers, against the
authorities, against the cosmic
powers over this present darkness,
against the spiritual forces of evil in
the heavenly places. Therefore take up
the whole armor of God, that you may
be able to withstand in the evil day,
and having done all, to stand
firm. Stand therefore, having
fastened on the belt of truth, and
having put on the breastplate of
righteousness, and, as shoes for your
feet, having put on the readiness
given by the gospel of peace. In all
circumstances take up the shield of
faith, with which you can extinguish
all the flaming darts of the evil
one; and take the helmet of salvation,
and the sword of the Spirit, which is
the word of God, praying at all
times in the Spirit, with all prayer and
supplication.
Ephesians 6:10-18*

CHOIR NEWS

If you would like to join
our choir, contact Nancy Lowry!
We would love for you to join us!

If you are interested in joining Faith Presbyterian Church (EPC), you may do so
by a profession of your faith in Jesus Christ, by a re-affirmation of your faith,
or by a transfer of your membership from another church.
Please speak with the an Elder concerning your desire.

HAPPY JUNE BIRTHDAYS!



Nate Echols	6/02
Peggy Fowler	6/03
Jane Ashmore	6/06
Mark Watts	6/08
Casady Billings	6/10
Wyatt Hawkins	6/10
Buddy Ashmore	6/14
Allison Hawkins	6/18
Nancy Lowry	6/20
Kayla Hunt	6/26
Noah Skelton	6/26
Paula Patterson	6/26
Caylee Dennis	6/28
Kristin Burch	6/30



CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

June 2023

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

				1 7:00 Men's Bible Study	2	3 Youth Hangout 6:00 pm
4 Communion 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 Worship	5	6 6:30 Ladies Bible Study	7	8 7:00 Men's Bible Study	9	10
11 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 Worship	12	13 6:30 Ladies Bible Study	14	15 7:00 Men's Bible Study	16	17 Youth Hangout 6:00 pm
18 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 Worship	19 VBS 9:00 -12:00	20 VBS 9:00 -12:00	21 VBS 9:00 -12:00	22 VBS 9:00 -12:00	23 VBS 9:00 -12:00	24
25 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 Worship	26	27 6:30 Ladies Bible Study	28	29 7:00 Men's Bible Study	30	