Archibald McLeish said that “Religion is at its best when it makes us ask hard questions of ourselves. It is at worst when it deludes us into thinking we have all the answers for everybody else.”

Asking hard questions of ourselves is something our faith should always be prompting us to do. Our faith compels us to ask not just hard questions but questions that don’t always have an easy answer. We face questions of our meaning and purpose; questions of who we are and whether our deepest values are those of Christ and do they really drive our daily decisions and actions.

Jesus challenged people he encountered with these kinds of questions and more. “Am I the person I ought to be?” “Do I treat people with kindness and compassion?” “Does my faith show up in who I am as a person?” “Do I act more like a Pharisee than a person of grace?” “Am I able to forgive people who have harmed me or hurt me or do I carry unforgiveness and grudges around in my heart?” “Am I really my brother’s keeper?”

These hard questions of faith are always challenging for a number of reasons. In the first place, faith is at its best when it requires us to see the log in our own eye instead of the speck in our neighbor’s eye. These are hard questions but they are only the tip of the iceberg of the kinds of questions that our faith requires us to ask. And we ask them of ourselves, not our neighbors. Too often we are better at asking others these questions than we are asking them of ourselves.

The questions of faith are also difficult because they aren’t always easy questions to ask, let alone answer. Our answers require humility and forgiveness of ourselves when we know we haven’t been the person we should be…and none of us is the person we should be, at least not fully. Difficult questions require difficult reflection. We don’t always have an easy answer to these difficult questions and, if we do, perhaps our answers aren’t as deep or faithful as they should be. Oh, there are plenty of easy answers, stock answers, book answers, and quoting the Bible answers but the real challenge of faith’s hard questions requires going into deep water and not shallow streams.

A third difficulty with the hard questions of faith is that we are called upon to apply the answers in our own lives, not tell everyone else what their answer must be. It’s too easy to stand on a soap box and tell everyone else the “right” answers to hard questions where life intersects faith. A better approach is to apply the answers to our own lives and change ourselves before we try to change everyone else. Faith does ask hard questions. Easy answers seldom work. Telling everyone else what their answer should be doesn’t do much better.

I believe my faith has been at its best when it has moved me to look in the mirror and ask myself the hard questions. I haven’t always had the right answers, and I’ve learned to live with ambiguity. At my best I lead others to ask themselves the hard questions and I don’t presume to have the right answers for them.

Dr Chance
NEWS AMONG OUR CHURCH FAMILY

PRAYER LIST

Please let us know if you know of someone who is sick or is a shut-in. Thank you.

Becky Brooks
Marguerite Wise
Virginia Sullivan
Michael Lastre
June Jordan
Rich MacDowell
Carol Knott

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

2   Eleanor Peebles
    Zachary Owen
3   John Small
5   Roberto Lopez
6   Norm & Pat Laine
10  Linda Vincent
16  Gorretti Mugatha
18  Mason Chance
20  Alexandra Konzmann
21  Christopher Lastre
27  Jane Small
31  Michael Lynn

PRAYER BREAKFAST
March 7th
9:00 A.M.

Guest Speaker is: Rev. Dave Caldwell. This event is sponsored by the Elders & Deacons. Sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall.

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.” - Colossians 3:12 NIV
Highlights from the February Board Meeting…

The Board met in the Conference Room on February 5, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

- Reports were received Ministry Chairs, Group Leaders, Treasurer, Financial Secretary and Pastor.
- The previous month’s programs were reviewed in an After-Action format examining what went well, what didn’t go well and what we need to note (if anything) for future programs.
- Coming events and programs were discussed and reviewed.
- The calendar was reviewed, and upcoming programs and ministries were discussed.
- The Board approved the Plan of Procedure (By-Laws) for 2020 with no changes from 2019.
- The Board discussed the challenges of the search process for a new secretary and empowered Dr. Chance to proceed with the search with online resources, an employment agency and whatever else it takes.
- The Stewardship Ministry informed the Board that Mulch Sale for 2020 is not going to be a possibility.
- The Pastor gave his report and the fact that there is simply too much on him at this time with looking for a new secretary, the many Lent and Easter Services and programs, a large number of pastoral needs of members and friends and all the other stresses of the ministry. The Board understands and will keep Dr. Chance in their prayers.
- The Leaders’ Retreat was a huge success and well received and evaluations were positive from nearly all of the participants. Several of the topics of discussion in the retreat were discussed in the meeting.
- Jane Small has agreed to Chair the Strategic Plan Committee and will work closely with Dr. Chance in writing and presenting for action a new Strategic Plan for the next 5-7 years.
FELLOWSHIP…Amy Buckingham/Mary Chance

SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER,
Tuesday, February 25th…6:00 p.m.

OUTREACH…Connie Spoon
Thank you to all who contributed to our Week Of Compassion Special Offering. Thank you, Eric & John, for speaking at worship on the 16th and 23rd.

The Souper Bowl was fun and brought in a lot of SOUP. We collected 640 cans of soup that Jeff Price delivered to Manna. AND the TEAM that won is the RED & BLUE TEAM.....Thank you to both teams. Fantastic Job...looking forward to next year! Thank you.

We sent our 1st of 4 “Local Outreach” checks to Manna Food. We have 4 local organizations that we help support with our donations. Thank you for making this possible through your pledges.

WORSHIP…Gwen Mott
We are coming into a very important season for Christians. The Lenten season begins on Wednesday February 26 with Ash Wednesday. Tuesday February 25 is the date of our Pancake Supper where our minister explains how the pancake supper began. Our Lenten devotional booklets will be available, Sunday, February 23rd. Please take one per family and enjoy the daily devotionals. They are very special as they are written by our members!

During the Sundays of Lent, beginning March 1 ending April 5, which is Palm Sunday, we will have our Lenten Banner program with our children excitedly participating.

We are also looking ahead to our special Maundy Thursday service, April 9, at 7:30 p.m. Plan to be at church for all of these services so that you can experience the full meaning of the Easter season.
PROPERTY…Jeff Price

Greetings from the Property Ministry, I want to thank those who signed up to help with the building and grounds in the coming year. It is not too late to volunteer; please see me at Church Sunday if interested. Have a blessed March.

STEWARDSHIP…John Small

Our church programs are supported not only by your faithful commitment to annual giving but also by special fundraising and giving campaigns throughout the year.

Coming soon – information on our Spring Hot Button Campaign. Please watch for announcements and plan to participate in these important Stewardship activities.

In addition, the Board discussed the Spring mulch sale at our last meeting, and it was decided that we will not have a mulch sale this year. If you have been getting your mulch from the church, you will need to make other arrangements. We are looking for additional fund-raising opportunities and will keep you all informed.

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EASTER FLOWERS
WE are now taking orders for Easter Lilies, Daffodils and Azelas. Deadline for ordering is March 22nd. Get your orders in early! Call the church office.
Aspen Hill Christian Church makes me live -

Whatever this world has given to me AHCC has been part of, marriage, births, baptisms, promotions, demotions, good times and bad times.
AHCC is like my best friend that I have been with for a long time… I was baptized by Dr. Chance in 1978 and I believe our family joined in 1972.
I've wandered 'round but I came back…. I left to go to college and came back, moved out of the area for a few years, came back only to leave again, and then return in 1996.
Our church has been with me through rain or shine, Our Church has stood by me always.

Yes, this Church is my best friend
Whenever I feel the world is cruel to me I come here to help me forgive or to be forgiven which is often the case.
When things are going bad, Dr. Chance and the Church are first ones to know…. I'll never be lonely; this is a place to turn to for comfort and support.
When things are going well, I come here to give thanks; frankly I should give God more of the glory than I probably do. I am blessed.
I love the things that all of you provide, and that our Church provides - forgiveness, tolerance, empathy, encouragement, common values and a togetherness in Christ.
Yes you're my best friend and you make me live.

Proverbs 17:17 A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.
Proverbs 18:24 One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.
Dear God,
I am in a big fit with my family right now. I did not sign up for this. I feel misunderstood and mistreated. I feel like _____ and _____ have bonded and I am out in the cold. Please help me.

Love,
Pam

Dear Pam,
You are my beloved child in whom I am well pleased. I see you working hard to be with me eternally. I’ve got your back.

My promises for you will renew your mind and make you strong. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.” Isaiah 40:31

You shall be redeemed, my beloved. I have counted every hair on your head. No one has the right to judge you but me. I will hold you in the palm of my hand.

My precious child, you mean more to me than you will ever know. My love for you has no bounds. Rest and abide in me. Have faith and trust in me. I will always see you through. I will supply you with wisdom and guidance. Stay close to me. I am your father, your mother, your friend, your beloved. I am always there for you. I will take your part, be assured of this. No one has the right to judge you but me and I judge righteous judgment. I see things that they do not see.

“Do not worry. Do not be afraid. Everything passes but God. God alone is sufficient.” Author Unknown

“Thy grace is my sufficiency.”

“By Your grace I am who I am and Your faith in me has not been wasted.”

Love, God