

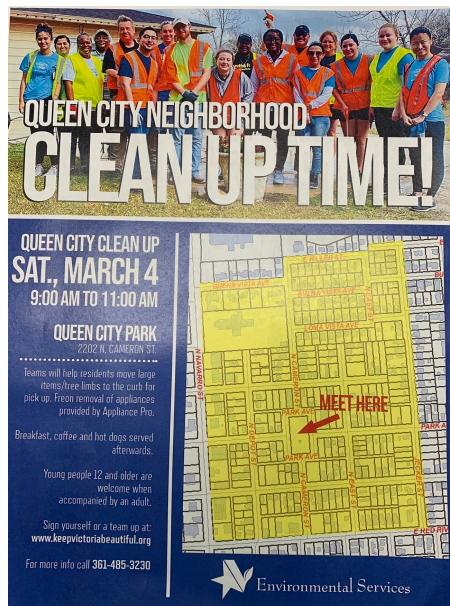


**JOIN US FOR WORSHIP
THIS SUNDAY,
MARCH 5, 2023, 10:30 A.M.**

Please join us for our worship service this Sunday, March 5, 2023, the Second Sunday in Lent. Our Scripture readings are Psalm 121 and John 3:1-21 (Nicodemus's late-night visit with Jesus). The title of the sermon is "Nicodemus Christians," and a copy of the Bulletin for this service can be found here: <https://fpcovictoria.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2023-3-5-PDF.pdf>.

Have you noticed, by the way, that we have been blessed recently with a pleasant number of visitors? Have you been spreading the word that FPC is a warm and friendly place to worship? Have you been telling everyone about the magnificent music that we enjoy every Sunday? Having you been inviting friends and neighbors to worship with you? Whatever you are doing, please keep up the good work!

Our Mission & Outreach Committee is working hard to consider how we might contact and invite more folks in our community to worship with us. Hopefully, we will soon be able to be more intentional about inviting guests to our church. Meanwhile, keep up your informal, but no less important, efforts to let people know that we love our church, we love each other, and we love to share the Gospel with our neighbors!



**LOCAL SERVICE PROJECT,
SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 2023,
9:00 -11:00 A.M.**

And speaking of neighbors, this Saturday morning, the Keep Victoria Beautiful Division of the Environmental Services Department of the City of Victoria is sponsoring a clean-up event in our own neighborhood. Keep Victoria Beautiful's mission is "is to enhance the livability of Victoria by beautification through a sense of pride and ownership"-- a worthy goal which we can all

support!

Volunteers will gather at Queen City Park for a two-hour event to spruce up the Queen City neighborhood. Queen City Park is located adjacent to Mount Nebo Missionary Baptist Church and Christ's Kitchen.

The sponsors ask that all volunteers arrive no later than **8:45 a.m.** Wear close-toed shoes, a long sleeve shirt (even a light one for protection), and pants (not shorts) are preferred. Bring gloves if you have some. Parking areas will be located at Christ's Kitchen, Mount Nebo, and our own First Presbyterian Church. There will also be signs to direct volunteers.

Please check in at the registration desk when you arrive. Tell them you are on the "First Presbyterian Church team!" Following the clean-up, please plan to stay for refreshments. For further information, you can go to the FPC website, <https://fpcovictoria.org/> (click on the "Ministries" tab, and look for "Community Serve").

If your pastor did not have to be in San Antonio on Saturday for a meeting of Mission Presbytery, he would be right in middle of this great project. I hope you are equally enthusiastic about this opportunity to meet and serve our neighbors who live almost literally in the shadow of our church. This is a great chance to get to know our neighbors better and to show them that we are a caring congregation who serves the Lord!



With the Lenten Season upon us, a Lenten Devotional is a meaningful way to broaden and deepen our relationship with God and one another. One of the traditions of many congregations is the practice of sharing a simple supper of soup.

The *Vital Congregation Initiative* of the Presbyterian Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has published an inspiring Lenten Devotional which the Mission & Outreach Committee of our church would like to share with the congregation. It combines weekly readings with wonderful soup recipes, and the idea is to study the weekly readings and if so desired, prepare and enjoy a soup that others using this devotional might also be preparing. In a sense, we will be breaking bread and sharing a meal from afar as we journey through Lent together.

The complete Devotional can be found here:
<https://fpcovictoria.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2023-Lent-Devotional.pdf>,
and we would like to encourage members to examine the document online. In addition to complete Lenten essays, the Devotional contains some fun recipes and information to consider during Lent.

Meanwhile, we will publish successive excerpts from the Devotional in each our Newsletters that you will receive during Lent. Below is the reflection for the Second Sunday in Lent. We hope that you are comforted and inspired by these words on your Lenten journey.

Intentional Authentic Evangelism
Rev. Katie Day
Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church
Duluth, Georgia

Acts 8:26-40 (NIV):

As for Philip, an angel of the Lord said to him, "Go south down the desert road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza." So he started out, and he met the treasurer of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under the Kandake, the queen of Ethiopia. The eunuch had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and he was now returning. Seated in his carriage, he was reading aloud from the book of the prophet Isaiah. The Holy Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and walk along beside the carriage." Philip ran over and heard the man reading from the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" The

man replied, "How can I, unless someone instructs me?" And he urged Philip to come up into the carriage and sit with him. The passage of Scripture he had been reading was this:

*"He was led like a sheep to the slaughter.
And as a lamb is silent before the shearers,
he did not open his mouth.
He was humiliated and received no justice.
Who can speak of his descendants?
For his life was taken from the earth."*

The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, was the prophet talking about himself or someone else?" So beginning with this same Scripture, Philip told him the Good News about Jesus. As they rode along, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Look! There's some water! Why can't I be baptized?" He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away. The eunuch never saw him again but went on his way rejoicing. Meanwhile, Philip found himself farther north at the town of Azotus. He preached the Good News there and in every town along the way until he came to Caesarea.

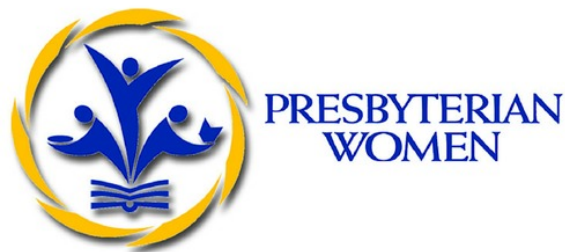
When I think of evangelism, I think of Philip. Philip of Acts 8, of the wilderness road. Philip, who rode in a chariot with an open-hearted court official from Ethiopia.

As I imagine that story playing out, Philip was a reluctant apostle, resentful that he had been sent by the Spirit to a wilderness road after all his success in Samaria, where he had preached and healed and did miracles, and led the whole city to faith. And when prompted by the Spirit to approach an unlikely chariot on that road, I imagine him frustrated, even petulant, muttering under his breath his only quotation in all of scripture, perhaps the very essence of how many Presbyterians practice evangelism, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

Intentional, authentic evangelism isn't just about what we do, but also what is done for and to and through and despite us. It's Philip the brilliant apostle flung by the Spirit to the margins and into an encounter with someone who has no future (literally and figuratively) who discipled him by inviting Philip to witness and participate in a remarkable journey of faith.

In *Transforming Mission*, David Bosch writes, "God is a fountain of sending love," inviting us "to participate in the movement of God's love toward people." Intentional, authentic evangelism is our (re)discovery that living and sharing the good news is always an uncovering of an already-present, already-sovereign "I-Will-Be-There-Howsoever-I-Will-Be-There" God. God loves us and sends us out and invites us into what God is already doing.

- Have you ever intentionally shared the good news of God's love with someone? What was it like?
- Has someone unexpected ever shared God's good news with you? How did you receive it?
- Tell someone in your life what you believe is so good about God.



Presbyterian Women Coordinating Meeting March 7, 2023 at 12:00 PM

Adele Carsner Young Circle Meeting March 9, 2023 at 9:30 AM

Presbyterian Women Mary & Martha Circle Meeting, March 13, 2023 at 2:00 PM

Presbyterian Women Mission Focus

March 2023

The Salvation Army of Victoria

P W can assist The Salvation Army by providing:

- ***Men's Deodorant** (not aerosol)
- *Toothbrushes
- *Toothpaste

- *Body Wash
- *Plastic spoons
- *Individually packaged snacks

All (above listed) items are needed, and will be used and appreciated by the Salvation Army, but the organization's biggest need at this time is deodorant.



Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these". Matt 19:14

**OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL
FOR AGES 5-12
IS ATTRACTING VISITORS!**

A report from Leila Galvan:

We had a fun time learning about Day 4 - the sun, moon, and stars – as we continued our journey through God's Creation (Genesis 1:1-2:3) at Kingdom Kids! And we welcomed two more friends to our group!

Come by and experience our multi-sensory lesson about Day 5 of God's creation - the creation of the animals in the sky and in the sea! Children ages 5-12 are welcome on Sunday mornings from 9:45 am – 10:15 am. Contact Leila Galvan at 956-367-2234 if you have questions or would like to participate. All are welcome!



Psalm 25:4: *Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths.*

**REVITALIZATION
OF OUR
CHURCH LIBRARY!**

A church library make-over is in the works!

If you have any religious books you would like to donate, please drop them off at the church office.

Stay tuned for updates on how it's going!



30 WERE FROZEN; NONE WERE CHOZEN

*And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes,
and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.*

Luke 2:7

Recently Christ the Victor Lutheran Church (212 Stanly) opened a Warming Center for the Homeless. During our recent winter storm, it was equipped and prepared, but not enough volunteers were available to staff the Warming Center. The result: it was not opened; the homeless were turned away; the Frozen remained Frozen.

Winter is not over, and the need for volunteers will arise in the future.

The Victoria Area Homeless Coalition (<https://www.facebook.com/vahctx/>) is able to provide leadership at the Christ the Victor Warming Center, but they need volunteers to help receive and care for the Homeless who seek shelter. Christ the Victor is a small congregation whose members are often unable to help because of their own and family needs. But it has showers, and this makes it uniquely qualified to host a Warming Center.

Are you able to help the Christ the Victor achieve its mission of being a warm refuge when future winter storms blow through the Crossroads Area? Would you be willing to be on a Call List? Being on the list does not mean that you would have to make yourself available on short notice, but it does mean that you would prayerfully consider your availability when you are called.

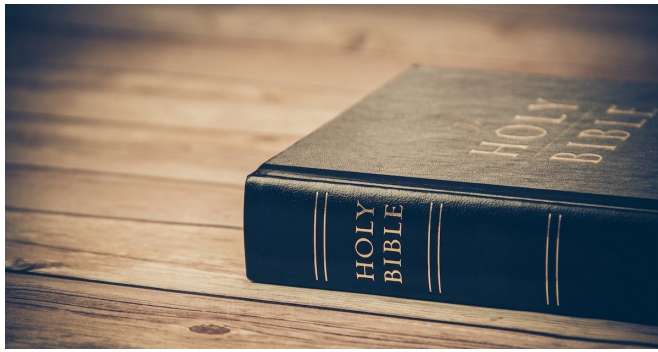
With the help of the members of First Presbyterian Church and Christ the Victor Lutheran Church, together with the members of other fine churches in Victoria, in the future the Frozen can be Chosen to experience God's love as expressed through our caring presence.

If you are able to be on the Call List, please email Pastor Cheryl Kester-Schmidt at pastorcher1084@outlook.com.



**TIME ONCE AGAIN FOR OUR
ONE GREAT HOUR OF CARING!**

Friday, March 3 @ 10am: Sanctuary
Friday, March 17 @ 10am: Office Areas & Parlor
Friday, March 31 @ 10am: Fellowship Hall & Kitchen



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CALENDAR

- Sunday, March 5, 2023, 9:30 – 10:00 a.m., in the Parlor: This Sunday, Dawn Neel will begin a Lenten Study using *Water & Spirit: Devotions for Lent 2023* to lead the class. These pamphlets will be provided without cost to class members for personal study and reflection. We all need companionship and reinforcement during our Lenten journeys, and there is no better place to find that than with the members of the Nellie Hudson Adult Sunday School Class.
- Kid's Kingdom: Sunday Morning starting at 9:45 am. Come by and experience our multi-sensory lesson about Day 5 of God's creation.



RENEWED EMPHASIS ON OUR CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT FOR VICTORIA CHRISTIAN AREA MINISTRIES (VCAM)

The Mission & Outreach of our church is making a concerted effort to re-invigorate our congregation's historically generous support for VCAM.

We have moved the "VCAM grocery cart" back against the wall by the church office, and we have spruced up our signs to remind everyone what it is for. As you will see from the VCAM monthly update which appears below, the needs of VCAM's "customers" are as great as ever.

So many members of this church have practiced the habit of buying an extra bag of groceries and personal hygiene products to bring to church and place in our VCAM grocery cart. It is a habit that provides immeasurable comfort, aid, and support to the less fortunate in our community, and it enhances VCAM's ability to serve collectively those whom FPC is unable to serve on its own. That nasty COVID, however, seems to have interrupted that worthy habit!

So, next time you are at HEB or your favorite grocery store, please add to your weekly routine the thought of picking up some additional items (again, see the list below) to serve the poor and the homeless for whom VCAM exists. Add this to your habit of coming to church regularly, so that you can drop off your purchases in our rejuvenated grocery cart on an equally regular basis!

Here is a copy of VCAM's Newsletter for January 2023:

*Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food,
or thirsty and gave you something to drink?*

- Matthew 25:37

Victoria Christian Assistance Ministry

MONTHLY UPDATE

February 2023

January Services

Total Households Served –	1156
Total Number in Households –	3081
Food Boxes –	954
Basic Needs -	2101
Home Delivery -	19
Financial Assistance –	41
# Homeless Served –	123
# Homeless Visits -	577
*1st time VCAM Clients Served –	70

Visit our website at: www.vcamvictoria.org or our Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/vcam.org/> for VCAM services or news.

The Lenten Season is the time that many of us “give up”: give up sodas, meats, candy, etc., as a means of sacrifice. It can also be the time to ***Give.***

The current needs at VCAM are:

Cereal

Canned Vegetables

Canned Fruit

Pastas

Boxed Stuffing or Instant Potatoes

Tomato Sauce

Rice

Beans (packaged)

Peace, grace, and mercy,

Pastor Jim

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