

The Lighthouse

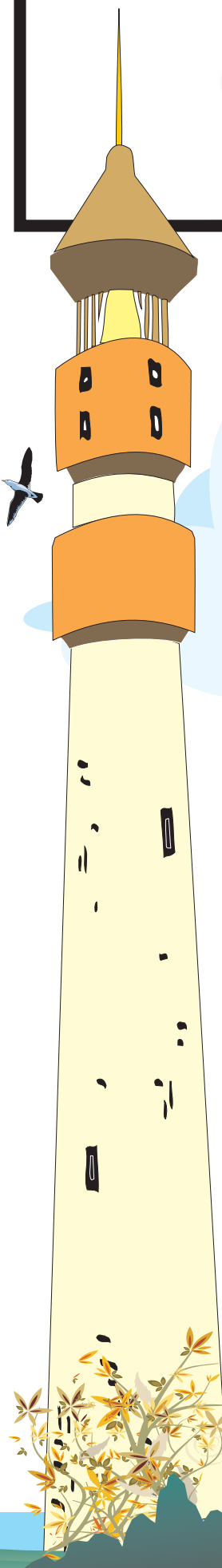
June 2023

Go, Ye Therefore (Matthew 28:19)

Rev. Shannon Philio, Assistant Pastor
(GATHER –GROW –GO)

Young eaglets sometimes need coaxing to leave the security, warmth, and comfort of their nests. Not leaving the nest and learning to fly puts the young eagles in grave and deadly peril from storms and predators. If eaglets never leave their nest, their wing muscles would never fully develop. Often a mother will build the base of her nest with thorns, rocks, and other sharp material, seemingly unsuited for a resting place. Over such discomfort, she lines the nest with soft padding of feathers, straw, and other comfortable material. When the eaglets refuse to leave, the mother will begin “tiring” up the nest, removing the soft lining to make the nest insufferably uncomfortable. Would the mother eagle not stir up her nest, the eaglets would not have the desire to fly and most likely would meet their deaths. Only about fifty percent of bald eagle chicks will survive their first year.

Deuteronomy 32:11-12 says concerning God and His children, “like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them aloft, the Lord alone led Israel.” God has not designed nor saved us to remain in our comfort zones. Sometimes Christians are like those young eaglets, refusing to leave the security, warmth, and comfort of the church nest. Just as Jesus called Peter out of the boat in Matthew 14:29, Jesus calls us out of our boats. When Peter became frightened because of the wind and the buffeting waves, he took his eyes off Christ and began to sink. Leaving our comfort zones can be scary, true. But God promises to go with us as He sends us out into the world and to catch us on His wings and to carry us when necessary. Unless we go, we too, like those eaglets, may never



fully develop. We may never fully develop spiritually into the believers the Lord would have us to be. We would never develop those faith muscles necessary to face life's storms and to protect us from the attacks of Satan, the world, and the flesh.

Matthew 5:16, "let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father Who is in Heaven." Isn't it time you stepped out of the boat in a step of faith? What is the Lord calling you to do? Where is the Lord asking you to go? Are your comfort zones preventing you from being fishers of men instead of cowards of men? Joshua 1:9 says, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." 2 Timothy 1:7 says, "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity but of power and love." Comfort zones can prevent us from going, but God uses our "rowing" to help us in our "rowing" spiritually. Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "Do something every day that scares you." Jesus left His comfort zone above to die on the cross for His elect who repent of their sins and place their faith and trust in Him as Lord and only Savior and so receive justification and eternal life. Now, will you leave your comfort zone to preserve and advance Christ's kingdom for His and the Father's glory? Matthew 28:18-20, "And Jesus came and said, 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'" Isaiah 40:31, "Those who hope and trust in the Lord will renew their strength and soar as on wings like eagles."

***And now, an update from
our missionaries to
Burkina Faso in West Africa,
Evan and Bonnie...***



Dear Friends and Family,

We want you all to know how extremely thankful we are for all the prayers and messages from our last prayer letter. Learning that my dad has pancreatic cancer was a shock to me and my family and we were so grateful to receive all the messages of encouragement. Dad has started chemo and the reports have been encouraging so far. Based on what we know now, it is highly unlikely that the cancer will be eradicated in whole, and we are constantly aware that time with my dad is limited and precious. However, we have reason to hope that the chemo will help prolong his life. Please continue to pray for his healing. I have been amazed to learn how many people care and are praying for my dad, and seeing God answer prayers. In mid-June we will have a second scan to truly see if the cancer has effectively decreased.

A second huge blessing has been seeing our national partners in Burkina Faso continue the work without us. Our entire team has been forced to leave the country this year for unexpected reasons, and we are thankful that our team members, Keith, and Debbie, are doing well and Debbie has continued to recover after her stroke. Even though all these things took us greatly by surprise, they obviously did not take our Lord by surprise, and He has provided for us all here in the states and for our church family in Burkina Faso. Jean

Baptiste has juggled multiple responsibilities that were previously shared between him and myself. The church has been working on outreach and they provided a meal for Easter and have continued with the pastor training courses. We were nervous about the sudden departure of our team, but God has answered our prayers of effective national leaders in Burkina Faso to keep the churches running and spreading the gospel without our presence.

The Foundation for Farming work in general has grown the most since our departure. Jean Baptiste has also run four training courses for close to 300 people in the last month. All of them have been run through local churches in the villages outside of Ouagadougou. He was even forced to turn down six other pastors who asked to go to their communities to run the training due to the approaching rainy season and lack of time. But it does mean that for next year we already have a significant group of people wanting our help. The explosive growth of these groups has been an exciting development!

Also, please pray for us as we prepare to return to Burkina Faso. With Dad's cancer seeming to be under control, it seems possible to head back. It will be hard to leave him and our whole family at this time, but God is in control of the situation, and we have much to do in the ministry now. Please pray that God will give us wisdom in making our decision to return.

Lastly, we would like to ask please consider giving our ministry fund. Flying back to America to be with family was a large, unexpected expense on our funds. We had enough money in our account, but any support would help as we look to refill our reserves. As always, we thank you for the support you have continued to show us, and we thank the Lord for your desire to share with us the work He's given us to do in Burkina Faso.



In the past month we have done four different trainings for Foundation for Farming in our community.





Our Church services have continued and grown despite our temporary absence

How Can You Give Financial Support

1. You can give online at www.MTW.org. To find us, put our account number 13727. You will not see our names mentioned because we are going to sensitive country, but any donations to that account number will go toward our ministry. To have the support automatically taken and applied to our support account you will need to make an account with MTW.
2. Send out a check to Mission to the World (in the memo line add: account 13727) and send the check to:

Mission to the World
P.O. Box 744165
Atlanta, GA 30374

BIRTHDAYS for JUNE

Eliana Smith 3rd

Diane Bowden 4th

Tim Horn 27th

Dates to Remember for June

June 3 Men's Breakfast at 8:00 am in the Fellowship Hall

June 4 Communion at the morning worship service

June 11 Monthly Luncheon after the worship service. Please bring a dish to share

June 14 Ladies Bible Study begins for the summer at 6:30 pm

June 18 Communion at the evening worship service

June 19 Deacons Meeting at 5:30 pm

June 26 Session Meeting at 6:00 pm

Please pray for General Assembly the week of June 12-16th in Memphis, TN. "50" years of the PCA.

Please mark your calendar for this upcoming event:

Blood Drive held here at the church in the Fellowship Hall, *Thursday, July 6th* from 10 am to 2 pm. Contact Kim in the church office to set up an appointment or contact American Red Cross at 1-800-733-2767/redcrossblood.org. Invite your friends!



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firstpresbiloxi.org

First Presbyterian Church of Biloxi is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America. To learn more about the PCA, log on to pcanet.org

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Church Musicians

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Melba Sipriano	Pianist/Organist	melba.sipriano@firstpresbiloxi.org

Church Secretary

Kim Clark	228-374-6880	info@firstpresbiloxi.org
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