

August 2021

Dear Beloved of God,

The blessing we have as Christians is a faith and Hope in God alone. Remembering is a foundational aspect of our faith. Remembering who and what Christ and His followers did in good times and in difficult times. Remembering who he was and by the extension of our belief in him, who we are can help us deepen our roots and faith as the winds of change blow about us. A beautiful practice for such remembering is presented by Bill Gutherie.

When you identify yourself in Jesus' place at his baptism, the heavens open to you and God's love floods down to you. This is the heart of prayer, according to Henri Nouwen. In Spiritual Direction, he defines prayer as listening to the voice of God that calls you the Beloved (p. 34).

What the Father says to Jesus at his baptism, **he says to you:** “*You are my beloved daughter/son and I delight in you.*” “*You are my beloved son and I am pleased with you.*” (Matt. 3:17 paraphrased). Jesus listened to his Father’s affirmation and he kept going back to it by praying in solitude (Luke 5:16). For instance, after being persecuted and threatened by a crowd, he withdrew to the site of his baptism at the Jordan river and re-immersed himself in his experience as the Beloved of the Father (John 10:40).

We need to keep going back to our First Love to wash away the judgments and shame that threaten us. We need to strengthen our core identity as coheirs with Christ Jesus. This is especially true for anyone who is in ministry leadership and service. *If we're not very careful our service for God will erode our intimacy with God.*

A healthy soul that can sustain a thriving ministry begins with listening to God in prayer. “*Every time you listen with great attentiveness to the voice that calls you the Beloved,*” Nouwen writes, “*you will discover within yourself a desire to hear that voice longer and more deeply. It is like discovering a well in the desert. Once you have touched fertile ground, you want to dig deeper. This digging and searching for an underground stream is the discipline of prayer*” (p. 34).

**Consider trying out The Beloved Prayer.
It helps us drink in the soul-nourishing waters of our baptism.**

- Jesus, you are the Beloved
- Jesus, I am the Beloved
- Jesus, we are the Beloved (p. 36)

Let's take a minute or two to pray now:

- Set your affections on Jesus as you praise him over and over, “Jesus, you are the Beloved...”
- Drink in God’s favor as you repeat, “Jesus, I am the Beloved...”
- Pray for people who come to mind, “Jesus, _____ is the Beloved...”

There is no intimacy with God or fruitful ministry to others without empathy. Spiritual Direction is available to give you the empathy, guidance, and prayer you need. If you would like more information, contact me at 832-922-7022 or at hope@stgeorgestc.org.

To your soul’s health,
Love,

Pastor Robin⁺

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Inserts includes:

Celebration of New Life
Prayer List, Birthdays, & Anniversaries
Texas Ready: Build Your Disaster Supply Kit

30 Day Hope Challenge

I invite you to take the 30 Day Hope Challenge for September. While there are many products and people who will say “they are worthy of your Hope,” in the end **God Alone is our Hope.** ***Nothing else can satisfy our souls longing for connection, belonging and meaning.***

These false gods seduce us with their empty promises only to make us feel worse, more alone and hungry. Many are despairing these days because of the news of the Covid-19 Delta variant spreading, the inhuman treatment of Afghani people, wildfires, and hurricanes. Despair is defined as assuming tomorrow will be just the same as today or worse. As people of faith in Jesus Christ, we have Hope even in the midst of tragedy because God is with us. God has made promises we can stand on and declare tenaciously as truth over and against our external circumstances. In Jesus Christ, we have Hope, so choose to focus on Hope this month.



Defiant or Tenacious Hope: **choosing hope in spite of how you feel.** Hope is our superpower. **NOT a feeling but a choice**—to focus on God as the master of our soul and the one who will see us through eternity.

The Neurobiology of Happiness and by extension Hope has been proven to change your physiology.

Do NOT fall for the temptation to Despair!

The news could certainly take you down emotionally, not to mention the hard life situations of loss and loneliness. Instead, ***Place your HOPE IN GOD Alone.*** -Rule of St. Benedict

God’s word does not return void. As such, when we declare God’s word with the authority given us by God, it opens a window to Hope. We are modeling our faith in God’s promises and affirming our Hope is in God Alone by posting Hope signs in our members’ yards or sharing them with a neighbor. May this be a reminder that God is with us and our Hope is in him. May it be a sign to our neighbors that Hope is still alive and be a sign of Hope for them.

We are sharing 30 Days of Promises and Scriptures on the Hope of God to help you stand in Hope. For those who want to go deeper, we have daily actions. This is an opportunity to practice Hope daily, not unlike a Gratitude practice. There is a calendar with daily prompts to reflect on. Or, you can simply commit to looking for where you see Hope in the world each day, name it, and share it with someone else and ask them where they saw Hope that day. The more we focus on something, the more it grows. Ironically, the more you choose to look for Hope, the more you see it in surprising places. And, the more Hope you have, these Hope sightings are like “god-winks,” reassuring us God is with us! He is the God of Hope transforming and bringing beauty even out of death and dark situations.

Celebration & Reflection of a Season Worshipping Elsewhere

From the formation of St. George's Episcopal Church, it has been on the move. St. George's was first formed to serve the military encampment of 1,000's of soldiers in the first Air Force. They first met in homes and later in a store front. The Methodist Church welcomed us when we had a flood from a Hurricane and before that when the fire consumed our sanctuary.

After the freeze, we were forced to hold worship elsewhere while we awaited new parts to be manufactured for the HVAC system. Our journey of worshipping in different spaces began with the wedding of Mr. and Mrs. Bryan Jennings. In working with the couple early on, I suggested the bride adopt a mantra when things went wrong as they tend to do. In this way, they could keep their peace and keep the focus on the main thing—the celebration of the Love of God and His grace-gift to them in finding love in one another!



Audrey chose the mantra: All Shall Be Well, All Manner of Things Shall be Well from Dame Julian of Norwich. Little did we know we would have to move the location of the wedding just weeks before their big day. Family and friends and even I marveled at Audrey's calm and composure with the news and flurry of searching for a new space for the wedding and reception. She had done the practice work of repeating the mantra to herself, so it was there when she really needed it. As God's grace would have it, the Santa Fe Pentecostal Church opened their doors to us and gave me and the altar guild free reign to make the space ready for the wedding. Thanks to Sharon and Susan and Audrey's grandmother, we made an altar and transformed the space to fit our theology. The wedding was a "love-fest" unlike any I have done. The Love of God was palpable as we had prayed it would be. The venue found by the maid of honor, far surpassed what

we had to offer. And best of all, friends and family all gathered to witness the miracle of God's love made manifest in this beautiful couple coming together. What a grace and encouragement to know God is with us and will provide! All Shall Be Well, All Manner of Things Shall be Well. *What's a scripture you might use as a constant prayer and anchor of your soul?*

Throughout this summer, we have been in and out of our building due to a variety of issues. True to our roots and God's grace we have received help and hospitality along the way. We give thanks to God for providing a place for us to gather for worship at St. Michael's Episcopal Church, First Christian Church, and the Kautz's home over this summer. We also give thanks for Raquel's gifts and willingness to keep on filming our worship services. This has enabled those unable to meet with us in person to gather with us in word and spirit on Facebook and Zoom.



While we still don't have a date for coming back to worship in our beautiful sanctuary, we can testify God provides and sustains us! In His grace, God has enabled us to keep on worshipping him together as a community and to make friends along the way!

Here are just a few of the places and spaces we have been able to worship during this time of being outside of our building!



Above: David Kautz Lay-Reading at the Kautz' house

Below: Beverly Ross Lay-Reading at First Christian



Above: Pastor Robin delivering her sermon from Clear Lake

Below: Pastor Robin delivering her sermon from her studio



30 Day Hope Challenge

5 Ways to seek, be or share Hope in September



1. Declare your Hope is in God alone.
2. Focus daily on God's word and hope by praying and pondering on the scripture.
3. Share a Hope Sign and prayer with someone in need of Hope as God leads you.
4. Dare to do the daily challenge or simply seek to notice who or what gives you hope each day and share it with a friend or on social media using #30DayHopeChallenge.
5. Follow and share our Facebook posts: St Georges Texas City

Building Issues

Original Issue and Timeline

February

HVAC System froze during the freeze.



March-April

We used household floor fans to cool sanctuary, parish hall, and offices.

May

We realized the coils in HVAC had burst.

- A new part had to be manufactured and was expected to be completed in 10 weeks.
- Temporary cooling units installed.

We left the building for three weeks because of a flea infestation.

June

We were back in the building for worship and meetings for a few weeks, but later discovered mildew (possibly mold) growing throughout the building.

- The Diocese recommended we discontinue services and use of building until mildew/mold was treated.

July

ServPro did a mold test throughout building. They determined it was mildew but would turn into mold if not treated due to the humidity.

- Books from the library and the door jams and prayer books from the Sanctuary were wiped down, removing the mildew. Mildew in the sanctuary and east wing of the building was worse than the west wing and parish hall.
- Installed 2 more cooling units in the hallways.
- We received bids for mildew/mold remediation. Final bid was \$47K.

We met at St. Michael's in La Marque for a few Sundays. Since July 25th, we've been holding our own service at First Christian at 9AM. We will continue to worship there for the foreseeable future.

August

HVAC delivered.

We discovered that the motor pump to the tower froze; it is now being repaired.

Mildew has grown back in the areas we cleaned and has increased in the Altar Guild area where it is now impacting the altar vestments; they have been removed for cleaning.

- We have borrowed dehumidifiers from 4B Disaster Response.
- We learned that insurance will only cover \$15K out of the \$47K for mildew remediation. We are seeking a new bid.

Stewardship and Financial Update

2021 Year to Date Actual (January – July 2021) VS. Annual Budget

Financials At-A-Glance: *Let's us know where we are and where we need to be by year end.*

Ordinary Income/Expense	January – July Actuals 2021	2021 Annual Budget
INCOME:		
Plate Offering	\$304	\$400
Pledge Payments	\$58,852	\$98,840
Non-Pledge	\$13,423	\$12,500
Total Other Operating Income	\$11,197	\$16,430
TOTAL CASH IN:	\$83,776	\$129,945
CASH OUT:		
Total Employee Costs	\$56,961	\$105,716
Total Diocesan Costs	\$5,901	\$9,731
Total Administrative Costs	\$33,585	\$47,275
Total Worship Costs	\$3,360	\$4,200
Total Outreach	\$823	\$2,111
Total Administrative Expense	\$3,204	\$6,925
Total Budget Cash Out	<u>\$103,834</u>	<u>\$175,958</u>
NET INCOME	<-\$20,058>	<-\$46,013>

2021—>35 Pledgers = \$98,840

We thank those who gave additional gifts.

Building Repair Expenses

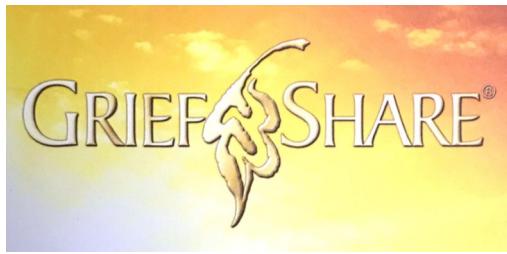
	Total Cost	Paid by Insurance
HVAC System	\$55,436.77	Yes
Temporary Cooling Towers	\$20,272.40	Yes
Chemicals to Pre-testing	~\$950.00	Yes
Bid for Mildew Clean-Up	Pending	\$15,000 Coverage

Blackmon Moore gave a bid of \$47,000. We are seeking other bids as this is excessive.

Overall Status of Facility & Repairs Needed in Next 5 Years

Below are expected major expenses and repairs needed.

1. **Water Heater** - used to heat the building with the HVAC Unit. 7 out of 9 elements working.
Cost to replace is \$21K.
2. **AC Units** - all units are 20+ years old. We've replaced 1 - 5 ton unit for \$7K.
 - 4 units (for the classrooms, library, altar guild, and parish hall) need replacement.
 - Cost to replace 4 units is \$28K.
 - Our current units are not being manufactured any more. They have to scavenge for parts for the older units we have.
3. **Flooring**
 - Entry, Hallways, and Library (*Vinyl Wood Look*).
 - Replacement needed more immediately due to flooding from the temporary cooling towers and bathroom.
 - Cost to replace entry and hallways is \$13K.
 - No estimate for library yet.
 - Kitchen and Parish Hall (*Vinyl Wood Look*).
 - Health Department has sited us for the flooring in the kitchen.
 - Replacement will help with hall rentals.
4. **Kitchen Stove** - Commercial Grade. We have a health department approved kitchen.
Cost to replace is \$15K. Electric is more expensive; due to past fire, we got rid of gas.
5. **Kitchen Cabinets** - due to moisture, they are coming apart.
Health Department has sited us for them.
6. **Large Window in Parish Hall** - structurally unstable due to rotting at the bottom.
Cost to replace is \$30K; this estimate was from 2+ years ago.
7. **Bathroom Upgrade** - new sinks, cabinets, stalls, and paint.
8. **Outside Signage** - sign on 13th Ave. N. is warped. Electronic sign is being priced for 6th St.
9. **Roof Eaves** - need replacement immediately. Cost to replace (lumber & installation) is \$2K - \$4K. Roof is in good shape currently. Cost to replace in 5+ years is \$65K.
10. **Carpet** - Sanctuary and Nave need replacement.



Support and encouragement for your grief journey.

Often, friends and family want to help you, but don't know how. That's the reason for GriefShare. Our group is led by caring people who have experienced grief and have successfully rebuilt their lives. We understand how you feel because we've been in the same place. We will walk with you on the long path through grief toward healing and hope for the future.

What to expect:

GriefShare is a support group that meets weekly for 13 weeks. You'll find it to be a warm, caring environment and will come to see your group as an "oasis" on your long journey through grief. There are three key parts to your GriefShare experience: Video Seminar, Support Group, and Workbook. Each session will consist of encouraging, information-packed videos, small group discussion, and personal study exercises. You can join our group at any point.

GriefShare will meet every Tuesday (for 13 weeks)

September 7th—November 30th

**It will be held at First Christian 2400 21st St N, Texas City, TX 77590
from 6:30-8 PM**

For more information, call Beverly Ross at (409) 392-1101

2021/2022 Directory

We plan on updating our directory this year and will be keeping the printed directory simple.

We plan on checking if we have your correct information starting in September. The calling tree will check with you about correct spellings of names, addressees, home and cell phone numbers, and emails. Even if you don't want to include all of your information in the directory, we want to have your contact information correct on our membership list.

The calling tree will also ask a few questions like in the event of a Hurricane or other natural disaster, do you have an evacuation plan? Who would be your emergency contact? This would help us to know another way to reach you and to let us know if you are safe.

Resources for Difficult and Lonely Times . . .

Be aware of others. Pass this along.

Sometimes we just need someone to listen. We feel overwhelmed, flooded by emotions. Know you are not alone. All of humanity is struggling with the rise in Covid cases due to the Delta variant, the situation in Afghanistan, Haiti's devastation, and so much more. We were not made to digest this much world news.

Ways to Cope:

- Talk to someone about your feelings
- Give the situation(s) to God
- Take a news break and go spend time in nature or with a loved one

1 in 5 adults experience mental illness

Don't ignore these signs:



Feeling down or withdrawing socially



Excessive fears or mood shifts



Confused thinking or low energy



Physical discomfort or suicidal thoughts

Most people who seek treatment feel significant improvement.

Feeling overwhelmed?

We hear you.



Call the Houston Hope Line today!

It is an outlet for the feelings and emotional distress we all face everyday.

The call is free.

And you might just feel that way too.

Center Hope and Healing Center & Institute at St. Martin's Episcopal Church. **Call for Free. 832-831-7337.**
Everyday 5-8 PM. <https://houstonhopeline.com/>

Pandemics aside, life can be tough enough for anybody. Although the stresses we all face may be different, the toll they take on us, our families and our communities are the same. That's why the Houston Hope Line is here – as an outlet for the feelings and emotional distress we all face everyday.

Veterans Crisis Line. Check out www.veteranscrisisline.net/, **call 1-800-273-8255 and press 1**, or text 838255. When you call, chat, or text the Veterans Crisis Line, one of our trained responders will help you through any personal crisis, even if it does not involve thoughts of suicide. You decide how much you want to share — we're here to listen and to help.

While all of us watch Afghanistan in horror, our service people are suffering a great deal. How can you help them? Pray. Listen without comment or judgment; Don't try to fix, just care. Tell them their work mattered for the Afghani people of that time and to us.

This free support is

Confidential

Available every day, 24/7

And serves

All Veterans

All Service members

National Guard and Reserve

Their family members and friends

Deacon's Joe & Carolann Share: We Grieve for Afghanistan—and We Also Pray

By: J. Lee Grady—Charisma Magazine

**What you can do
for Afghanistan**

The world watched in horror a few weekends ago as the United States hurriedly pulled its military out of Afghanistan. As U.S. planes took off from the airport in Kabul on Sunday, Aug. 15, Taliban fighters captured the capital city and occupied the abandoned government palace after conquering more than a dozen other cities.

Here are a few ways the Christian community can pray for this chaotic situation:

- 1. It's OK to grieve.** When I don't know how to pray, sometimes I just cry. The prophet Jeremiah wrote: "For the mountains I will take up a weeping and wailing ... because they are laid waste so that no one passes through" (Jer. 9:10). It's okay to weep over injustice or human pain. Cry for the people of Afghanistan who have lost loved ones, homes, businesses and hope of a better life. And weep for U.S. veterans who lost limbs or suffer from PTSD because of their service.
- 2. Pray for freedom to replace tyranny.** One of my favorite psalms is Psalm 37, which reminds us that wicked men will not prosper forever. "Yet a little while and the wicked man will be no more; and you will look carefully for his place and he will not be there" (Ps. 37:10). Terrorists and criminals may gain the upper hand at times, but they never stay in control. God will always uproot wickedness. Afghanistan is one of the biggest exporters of illegal drugs in the world. Pray that the Lord will deliver Afghanistan from evil and establish a peaceful government.
- 3. Pray for women and girls who are especially vulnerable.** When Afghanistan was under Taliban in the 1990s, girls were forbidden to attend school, and women were forced to wear burkas. Women were required to have male chaperones just to walk on a street. Makeup was forbidden; a woman caught wearing fingernail polish could be beaten; and women accused of adultery were executed publicly. Afghan women today fear a return to these harsh rules. Pray that God will raise up voices to defend human rights.
- 4. Pray for protection for followers of Jesus in Afghanistan.** It is illegal for a Muslim to convert to Christianity in Afghanistan, and that law will likely be harsher under Taliban rule. Nevertheless, the number of those who follow Jesus, and the number of churches, has been growing there. Reports are circulating that Taliban warriors have already begun targeting Jesus' followers and churches. Leaders are confirming that Taliban soldiers are going house to house to demand allegiance to Islam, and those who refuse are beaten or killed. Some church leaders have already been martyred. Pray that the suffering church will grow stronger in the face of martyrdom. And pray for angelic protection for these brave believers and that they feel Jesus' presence deeply.
- 5. Pray for a visitation of the Holy Spirit in Afghanistan.** All of the might of the United States military could not stop the Taliban from gaining the upper hand. But our trust is not in weapons or armies. We remember Psalm 20:7: "Some boast in chariots and some in horses, but we will boast in the name of the Lord our God." God can do what man could not do. Pray for a miracle of transformation! We must remember that in the year 1900, there were no Christians in South Korea. By 2010, 29% of the population identified as Christian. Pray for a similar miracle in Afghanistan. Pray that the gospel will spread through podcasts, videos, radio and other means. Pray for special boldness for those called to preach and plant churches in Afghanistan, even at the risk of their lives. And pray that the people (including Taliban soldiers) will encounter Jesus Christ in supernatural ways—through dreams, visions and miraculous encounters.

We pray together: Father, you don't want anyone to perish. We ask You to save and heal Afghanistan. Let the Afghan people know that You care for them. Let freedom replace dictatorship. Let kindness replace brutality. Let light replace darkness. Let the Afghan people know the joy, peace and love of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Read the whole article at <https://www.charismamag.com/blogs/fire-in-my-bones/49958-we-grieve-for-afghanistan-and-we-also-pray>

Why belong to a church?

- One place you can share a meal with people totally different than you
- Exchange the peace with people you don't agree with or even know
 - Find absolution for your sins
- Find belonging to something bigger than yourself—God's family
 - Acceptance no matter what you believe

Why do you belong to St. George's?

JOIN US for Worship!

Sunday Services

IN-PERSON 9 AM at First Christian Church w/masks
(we hold our own service there while our building is in maintenance)

ONLINE 9:30 AM via Facebook: St Georges Texas City and on Zoom

Find us Online!

Facebook Page: St Georges Texas City

Zoom Information: Meeting ID: 977 818 3721 | Passcode: 715836

YouTube Channel: St. George's Texas City

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IN A PANDEMIC



MAKE A PLAN



GET PREPARED



STAY INFORMED

**It's Hurricane Season,
Be Prepared!**

1. Assemble Disaster Supply Kit.
(See Insert)
2. Let the Church know if you are evacuating.