



Stephen Ministry

Pat Bartee – Leader

How does one love in action and in truth as John 3:18 asks of us?

Loving actions tell someone our concern for them is genuine. Cards and emails mean one made a concentrated effort (sympathy) but freshly-baked banana bread or an errand run means some time and thought were invested. A telephone call (empathy) actually creates a connection and interchange of thoughts and prayers and an avenue for listening. Even in a pandemic, we can do these small actions of love for one another. Do not underestimate the value of even the smallest effort of love. God will do the rest.

Loving in truth is harder, especially when we can't see each other's physical reactions and facial cues. We forget how much information we receive from just watching each other as we talk. This Covid Time is when listening takes center stage. Our questions come from context and from really hearing what our friend, spouse, child is saying. It means learning to be silent so we can hear and ask open-ended questions on the content that clarify and deepen the conversation, keeping the focus on another rather than adding our two bits or an experience of our own. Where did we get this notion that immediately sharing a similar experience really helps a hurting person? Just the act of laying out the fear, the loneliness, and the futility openly releases the burdening and becomes a burden now shared, and quite lighter to carry.

Pray for God to use you and love in any way you can.

Charlie Gray

Finance/Administration Elder

My Christian principle about investing and all aspects of life is, “God’s in charge”, meaning there is no reason to panic because no matter what happens, who is elected or whatever the circumstance, God knows how to guide us through uncertain times. Basically Romans 8:28 – And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

The End of the World – “Again” and Other Lessons from Investing in a COVID World

What a year this has been for all of us. On New Year’s Day 2020 none of us could imagine such a horrific virus such as COVID 19 was already beginning to sweep across our world. From an investment perspective, we had just finished one of the most successful years the markets had known in recent history. Based on January’s results it appeared we were in for more of the same this year. After all, unemployment was at record lows, interest rates for borrowing money were also low and people’s 401-K accounts were up and seemingly only going higher. Then in late February, there was a particularly bad day in the market that turned out to be the beginning of a dramatic downturn in the coming weeks. By the end of March some indexes were down anywhere from 25 to 35%.

Lesson I – “This time it’s different”

“This time it’s different” has been the four most expensive words in investing. For more than 40 years, I’ve witnessed events that at the time they occurred certainly felt like they were different from anything we had ever experienced before. Anyone recall October 19th, 1987? How about Y2K or the Internet Tech bubble bursting in March of 2000? Perhaps 9/11 and the fear that instilled in all of us? Maybe it was H1N1. Well, COVID 19 is certainly different, except as this year has proven once again, not when it comes to investments.

The massive selloff that occurred last March was followed by the single best quarter between April 1st and the end of June that we have seen in the past 20 years. The third quarter was also strong and as we approach year end, had you been asleep throughout the year, you would simply think we had another solid year in the market. The point is, it always feels different and so there is a feeling that if it is different then you better do something about it which leads to the second lesson.

(To be continued- Spring/Summer Issue May. 2021)





**Reading List for Learning about Race
and White Privilege in American Society**
Introduction by David Hill
Clerk of Session

My "Golden Rule:" Christ summed up the law in two simple rules we must follow; one is to love God with all my heart, the other to love my neighbor just as much as I love myself. Imagine what a wonderful world if we all would strive to follow these rules in every interaction we have with others. This would make God visible to the world through our actions. What a wonderful way to witness to the world!

Addressing the issues of race and white privilege is uncomfortable. Years ago, as a native white Southerner born and raised in Atlanta, I had the opportunity to “grow-up” with Atlanta. I saw and experienced issues of race and white privilege. I was a teenager during the 60s and began my career as an educator in the 70s at a time of rapid social change. At that time, we all thought the changes then would “fix” the problems we saw – the inequality, injustice, and brokenness of Southern society and issues regarding race in America. Today we all realize those changes only scratched the surface; we have a long

way to go to address racism that is deeply embedded in our society. We cannot resolve the myriad issues surrounding racism overnight, but we can start. The recent marches and other demonstrations that have focused on the deaths of black Americans at the hands of law enforcement suggest we may be at a crossroads on the race issue – a good time, maybe the only time we can make a difference on a broad scale. There is a sense of urgency for action. If substantive action does not come, America may find this single issue is enough to break what we all believe to be the greatest democracy in history.

(To be continued- Spring/Summer Issue May, 2021)

**Summer 2020 MVPC Quarterly PW
Moderator Report – Ann Williams**

<http://www.atlpcusa.org/pw.html>

PW Moderator Report for Winter 2021 Issue

- Mount Vernon Presbyterian Women Day Circle, Book Circle and Sunday Circle continue to meet virtually via Zoom
- At our October Day Circle meeting, we awarded Sarah Chalpan and Sylvia McAdam the Presbyterian Women Honorary Life Membership Award. We surprised everyone by inviting the family members of both recipients at our Zoom presentation.
- At our November meeting, our newly installed Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt, Associate Pastor of Faith Formation spoke to our Day Circle.
- We continue to provide meals to shut-in and grieving families of our congregation.
- Our Christmas Program, Home for Christmas, was held on Tuesday, December 8 via Zoom. 28 participants enjoyed our members sharing special Christmas stories, along with scripture reading and music.

WINTER ISSUE 2021

**THE MVPC MEMBERS’
GIFT OF WISDOM**



“Let us love in truth and action”*
***By Applying our Christian Principles
In Changing Times”***

****1 John 3:18b***

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