

January 24, 2021

The Sunday View

"Sir, we wish to see Jesus." — John 12:21

Special Edition: State of Church 2021

MESSAGES FROM THE ELDERS START ON PAGE 2

Welcome Visitors!

You are our honored guests and we are pleased that you have chosen to visit us today. Our goal is to do everything according to God's word, including respecting its silence. This is a church of Christ; we are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church and we have no earthly "headquarters." The six elders oversee this work and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily aimed at our own members, as we examine Scripture and seek to be built up in our faith in Christ. If you don't understand something, please do not hesitate to ask one of the elders. We welcome and appreciate your comments and questions on any issue and especially if you see or hear anything that you feel does not correspond to God's word. We are here to serve; please help us do that.

Please fill out a visitor's card and put it in the collection plate at the entrance. Thank You

Schedule

The Lord's Day Assemblies

Three assembly opportunities,
outside under the tent:

9:30 AM / 10:30 AM / 11:30 AM

Livestream at 10:30 at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLEmwy2iYxrl7ZUgTiZTVqA>

Speaking today: David Posey
State of the Church: The View from Jesus

Young People's Classes Today

High School & Up: 4 PM (Outside)
Contact David Posey for information at
(530) 558-5057

Middle School: 5 PM

Contact Dan Stegall for information
(818) 209-9810

Weekly Online Classes

Tuesday 10 AM ("Conformed to Christ")

Check with David Posey at dpaulposey@mac.com
or text @ 530-558-5057

Wednesday 7 PM (Faith: Hebrews 11)

Check with Jack Horak: jshorak98@gmail.com

Saturday AM Men's Breakfast

7 AM, second Saturday of the month
Contact Tyler Wade @ tyler@ppldev.com

Additional Online Classes

There are some other small online classes.
If you are interested in participating in one of them,
please contact David Posey.

Information

Website & Online Presence

Visit our website at www.folsomchurch.com for updates and material on current and past classes, and recorded sermons and classes. You will also find a directory of churches on page one. If you are a member of the church here at Folsom, see one of the deacons or elders to inquire about access to the password-protected members section. Find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/folsomchurch>

Classes & Home Studies (Temporarily Suspended)

We have classes for children from 18 months and up. Please see the map in the hallway or ask any of the members which room is appropriate for you and/or your child. There are several Bible studies in progress on Sunday afternoon and evening. Check with David Posey if you have questions.

Restrooms (Enter through side door; limit 2 at a time)

There are two sets of restrooms: one off the first hallway to the right of the lobby and another at the end of the first hallway to the left. Ask anyone and they'll be happy to point you in the right direction.

For Small Children (Temporarily Closed)

There is a special room for nursing mothers and a separate "cry room" at the rear of the auditorium. You enter them from the first hallway to the right, across from the restrooms.

View & Junior View (Let us know if you don't get a copy)

Be sure to pick up a copy of the View and Junior View; both are sent out weekly to our member list and hard copies are printed on Sundays and available in the foyer.

Prayer Requests & News Items

Send to David Posey at dpaulposey@mac.com or text at 530-558-5057

The State of the Folsom church of Christ, 2021

MESSAGES FROM THE ELDERS

Dennis Reagan

It seems redundant to say 2020 was a year that is unparalleled in my lifetime and I am sure in all of yours. There have been many that have suffered in so many ways as a result of Covid-19. Many people became ill, and continue to do so, and many people died and will continue to die as the medical community endeavors to gain some control over this virus. Jobs have been lost and many lives have been turned upside down.

On top of the coronavirus, we had to witness a troubling year in our country with disunity, strife and conflict seemingly everywhere around us.

I can't help but think that 2020 more than any other year was an opportunity for us more fully understand ourselves and our commitment as Christians. For one thing, it showed us that where coming together and assembling to worship God is not only his will for his people, it is incredibly important for the group and is sorely missed when we cannot, but it is not what defines our Christianity.

2020 was often discouraging, disquieting, disappointing and to some degree, disillusioning, but as negative as it was, it could not dislodge us from our faith and understanding that we are part of God's kingdom and we serve a Sovereign who is all knowing, all loving and all sacrificing, "far above all rule and authority and dominion, and above every name that is named" (Ephesians 1:20-21).

When the virus first appeared in earnest, I remember thinking at the time that this is not going away until a vaccine is developed, and it is going to kill a lot of people. I also became fascinated by the topic of pandemics and I read articles and watched several documentaries on various plagues including the 1918 flu. One thing that was clear, and repeated by several imminent epidemiologists and researchers, is that throughout recorded history it has never been a question whether a pandemic will hit, but only when. They are inevitable.

That drew me to thinking about God's creation. The fact that a virus, which is a submicroscopic infectious agent that cannot live on its own but only in the living cells of an organism, can cause so much damage in virtually every aspect of our lives from health to economics. Viruses infect all forms of life including animals and plants and microorganisms such as bacteria. They are not only a threat to public health but also essential to life on earth.

The tiniest of elements in our world can bring nations and economies to their knees. One could argue that death, destruction and economic loss brought on by viruses is equal to or greater than impacts of wars throughout history — all part of God's creation, "For by him all things were created,

in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible" Col. 1:16.

Where man can study, and perhaps ultimately develop vaccines to mitigate the effects of viruses on our health, the virus, as God designed it, can mutate to confound the scientists again and again.

I guess the point is, for me, that no matter how far humans come in their understanding and knowledge of ways to control the nature of God's creation, it is clearer now than ever, that God will always have the last word.

Regarding the Christians that meet at Folsom, for the leadership, it has been a challenging year. We were all focused on doing what shepherds are supposed to do, lead, serve, feed and strengthen the flock during a time that threw us many curves. There were often times when we scratched our heads and wondered aloud what we should be doing to ensure we keep our commitment to God and to the members here. We did not always agree, but in the end, would come to the same conclusions. Did we always make the right decisions? In my mind, the jury is still out on that.

I will say that I heard of many acts of kindness and service from our members during the last year that was enormously encouraging to me. I am sure many of us can say "we could have done more"; I know I say that. This pandemic will continue to be with us for a while, so we all still have a chance to serve and honor one another, "Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves" (Rom. 12:9-13). Let's remember that there are members here that are lonely and struggling, both emotionally and spiritually and we can help them.

I love Jesus Christ and I love his church here in Folsom and I look forward to us all working together in 2021 to continue to serve our Lord and to serve one another.

Randy Clark on Finances:

Our financial status is very positive again, even though 2020 created some very unusual conditions. Our contributions for 2020 exceeded our expenditures even though they were less than they were in 2019. This is the first year in at least 26 years that our contributions were less than the prior year's. COVID is the reason, but our expenses were also down so there was a modest net gain.

We will be erecting a monument sign in the near future. It will be located near the East Natoma entrance/exit. The total cost is expected to be around \$30K, which we have already paid half. The balance will come out of our general fund and won't be a line item on our 2021 budget. We owe a big thanks of gratitude to Matthew Deschler. He has been working for almost a year on this project, with the aid and supervision of two of our deacons, Bryan Byrd and Ben Woodside. This was something we wanted to do when we first moved to this location, but we didn't have the funds. Once it is completed please take a moment to thank all three of these men for their extra work and diligence.

There are no significant changes to any of our line items for the 2021 budget. We are pretty much staying with what we have. Our weekly budget is the same as 2020's, \$12,000 per week. Please ask any of the elders for more detail or information if you have questions.

Russ Canup

It's hard to believe that I was put in as an elder in September, 2019. I am very humbled to serve here at the Folsom church. As a member I observed the saints, deacons, and elders and saw an energetic church that loved God.

I was impressed with the saints here for many reasons. One is the love you show for one another. It was clear to me that you all really enjoy each other. You talked to each other before, between, and after services. Members would give warm embraces and I would hear conversations of genuine concern. The number of Bible classes held was unbelievable as well as the number of willing and capable teachers. Lastly, I was impressed with your kindness, deep understanding of the scriptures, and how you strived to know more about God's Word.

The deacons keep the machine running smoothly. I was amazed at all the work they do! They assign Bible class teachers, set safety protocols, conduct operations of our assemblies, plan work parties, and much more. The deacons are always ready and willing to assist in whatever the elders ask of them. Most recently, they have seamlessly coordinated our under the tent services and everything it takes to make three services run smoothly. This allows the elders to focus on spiritual things.

I have a deep admiration and respect for my fellow elders. It is obvious to me that they consistently lead, console when needed, love deeply, and encourage constantly. This last year has been extremely challenging for us with many emails, texts, and meetings. We have discussed the aspects of COVID until we are weary of it, and this will more than likely continue.

Finally, as we all continue to live through these "unprecedented times" let us continue to put Christ first in our lives love each other and let our lights shine to a lost and dying world.

Forrest Brown

We have all seen changes in our lifetime. Last year presented changes and challenges none of us could really understand. We can't look back at our past and say, "oh I remember this from years ago and we can do this, and it will work and get good results." One of the biggest changes and challenges we have seen is how we meet together both socially and, more importantly, for worship. As Christians we struggle with keeping God's command to worship, and obey our authority's edicts at the same time. We may not agree with everything the authorities have set forth but we are instructed to obey and be subject to our authorities (1 Pet. 2:13-17; Rom. 13:1-7) but at the same time, follow Heb. 10:23-25 which says, *"let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."*

We know from other scriptures that Christians came together on the first day of the week to partake of the Lord's supper and worship together. Christians today follow

the example that Christ and the early church set for us. With technology, we are able to provide a worship type service through livestreaming; however we do not want this to become a permanent way of life. We are far stronger when we can meet together in one place as one body.

There is one thing as Christians we must do throughout this ordeal: stay focused on God and his will. We want God's word to shine through us and we should be an example to the world. We have to do everything possible to be a positive influence to those around us. We should keep in mind that "this too will pass." We want the world to look at us and ask how we made it through this ordeal, how we stay positive, and how it doesn't matter what life throws at us. We want them to know that we have God and the knowledge that "this world is not our home, we are just a passin' through." Let us continue to be strong and search for ways we can be a positive influence.

Terry Raposa

A Time for Endurance

The beginning of the year is normally the time the elders provide a state of the church address and provide reports on the spiritual and the financial aspects of the church. It also the time the Bible class curriculum for the year ahead is outlined. Like the last twelve months, it is going to be different this year. Every day is different, plans are made, and plans are thwarted, but we press on. There has been an unquantifiable physical and spiritual cost to the church due to the pandemic. The thought is very heavy and difficult to bear until we think of endurance.

Thankfully, it appears with the vaccine things are about to get better. It may be a virus, but it is still a formidable enemy that is causing tremendous hardship on the church. It brings both a trial and an opportunity to demonstrate to the Lord that we can patiently endure with His help.

It is a great blessing to be able to work as one of the elders with such a dedicated congregation of the Lord's people. The Folsom church has demonstrated that they recognize that a tremendous amount of endurance has been needed. And you are doing the work of the Lord.

The Hebrew writer indicates that endurance is needed to receive the promise (10:36). Though it is not enough to know that endurance is important. You have shown that you know when more of it is needed and that this is one of those times.

The word endurance as it is used in the Bible means constancy, patience, steadfastness, and perseverance under suffering in faith and duty (ESV Strong's 5281). The last twelve months required endurance and the days ahead will also require it.

Recognizing the tremendous amount of endurance that the trials of the pandemic require will help us to continue to run the race mentioned in Hebrews 12:1-2. We can look to all those mentioned in Hebrews chapter 11 who persevered and were commended for it. Though it requires running with patient endurance.

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There are many examples in scripture where endurance is mentioned. Apostle John was in the tribulation, the kingdom and the patient endurance with those in Jesus (Rev. 1:9). The Lord commended the patient endurance of the church at Ephesus, (Rev. 2:2-3), the church at Thyatira (Rev. 2:19), and the church at Philadelphia (Rev. 3:10). There are two calls for the patient endurance of the saints (Rev. 13:10,14:12).

Of these examples, the warning in Rev. 2:4-5 is most striking to me: “but I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place, unless you repent”. To me this is striking because it indicates that a church can patiently endure and still fail. We are not of those who fail at our faith, endurance and love.

The virus can take a lot from us; countless have lost their lives, and we recognize we are in a microbial war, but the encouragement from the Lord and His word will enable us to patiently endure. He gives us strength. If God is for us, who can be against us (Rom. 8:31)?

The words of Apostle Paul in Romans 8:37-39 are very encouraging: “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord”.

It is a time to patiently endure, and also to do what we can to help each other, our families, the church, as many as we can who are suffering because of the pandemic and demonstrate our love to each other by good works. It is a time to look not at our own suffering, but to the example the Lord left for us,

What a wonderful blessing we have to look forward to our Hope in the resurrection of Jesus Christ for the year 2021 and beyond, all the many or few days the Lord gives us!

Yours in Christ our Lord, and in His service.

David Posey

I’m going to keep this short. First, because I heartily endorse everything you’ve read so far by my fellow elders and, second, you’ve heard plenty from me, especially since March 20 when I launched the *Daily View*. I did that because I felt a compulsion to stay in touch some how, some way, and I tend to default to writing (sometimes, to the elders’ chagrin since they have to put up with my long emails, especially on Mondays). In any case, I appreciate your kind forbearance with that effort during the last ten months.

As for the state of the church you, the members are great, my fellow elders are great and, most importantly, of course, Christ is great; he is the reason we are what we are. The only thing that is not so great (and it’s been mentioned already) is the inability to meet in person for assemblies and classes. All of that came to a sudden halt in March. It pains me that we have not been able to maximize edification in the manner to which we have become accustomed, with several classes per week, in person, at the building and in homes. But there was nothing we could legally do about that.

There are some positive things we can point to that soften the blow of being unable to meet together.

1. Our attendance on Sundays — in the building or under the tent — has been excellent. When combined with our livestream audience, we have averaged 300 or more on most Sundays. The elders are encouraged with those numbers and they bode extremely well for the future, when we are able to get back into the building.
2. We have learned how to use Zoom as a substitute for the the loss of in-person class time. It is not our preferred way of meeting, by any means, but many have been able to participate and have been edified through classes offered via Zoom, something we couldn’t have done ten years ago.
3. The young peoples’ class, with a few exceptions, has kept on going every Sunday, although not in the way we would like. Christie and I love having all of the young people to our house every Sunday night but we’ve had to curtail that for the time being. We’ve still been able to get together in person, outside. One of the highlights at Folsom has always been the quality and faith of our young people. Nothing has changed, except that uplifting sight of them sitting on the first few rows of pews in the front in the building. We can’t wait to see that again.
4. And, I feel confident in saying that through all of this, we have not “abandoned the love we had at first” (Revelation 2:4). From observation and anecdotal evidence, I’m certain we have done our best to stay connected with each other. Even at our assemblies, under the tent, outside in the cold, the deacons have been forced to gently “shoo” the previous group away so we can start the next service.

I want to thank the deacons for their work during this pandemic. The elders have kept them hopping with all the changes and they have responded. As one of them told me, “give us your vision and we’ll make it happen.” That’s exactly what they have done.

I love this church; I love your consistent faith, your unflappable hope and your good works done in love — even through this odd, sad, first-in-our-lifetime experience. I have every reason to believe you will continue to do that in the future, in both good times and bad.