

# COURAGE

I once heard a quote from the late actor John Wayne. When asked what real courage was, he replied, “*Courage is being scared to death – but saddling up anyway.*” Many people think that a courageous person has no fear, but that’s not so. Courageous people have fear, but they go in anyway. They have fear, but they don’t stop. They have fear, but they press on.

As we look at our news reports and learn about this dangerous world we live in, I want you to know that the Presbyterian denomination will be asking you to show courage. I realize it won’t be easy. I know it won’t be what you want. But as we look at our world, we must understand that church is not only a place where we can come to *feel good* – about where we are, about what we do, or even about how we do good stuff. It’s also a place of sanctuary. As a denomination, and also as a Henderson church within the Presbyterian denomination, we must be known as a place for healing, peace, and reconciliation in a culture of violence.

Your Session members have voted to financially support a Presbyterian partner, trained to help those who have experienced violence – particularly gender-based violence, sexual violence, or gun violence. You think it doesn’t happen here in East Texas? I’m sorry, it does. You think it doesn’t happen here in Henderson? I’m sorry, it does. You think it doesn’t happen here at FPC? Yep. Having professional help available, through the work and the gifts of this church, allows survivors to realize that God cares, that they are not alone, and that the church is a safe place to seek help.

So, look around you – but look with both eyes wide open. This isn’t a magical place. It’s a place where evil resides. It’s a place where safety isn’t guaranteed. It’s a place where folks you see, and folks you know are in trouble – just like in the newspapers. And we’ve decided that we won’t condone silence about it any longer.

Thank you for being a part of a church and a denomination that intends to leave this world a better place than we found it.

*Candice*

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it. – Jonah 3:10