

## PASTOR'S CORNER

“2021”

I never thought typing next year's date would feel so 'good'.

If you haven't noticed, the year 2020 was one for the books.

For some, the world-wide pandemic made gathering together a political statement instead of a public health decision. Face masks became the line in the sand that some could not or would not cross.

We here at First Presbyterian were fortunate enough to have a Session that decisively followed our goal of 'loving our neighbor' instead of worrying about individual freedoms. They decided the best course to follow was one of 'unselfishness'.

They are to be commended for their leadership during these trying times. That doesn't mean that meeting online was without challenges.

Some of us do not have the necessary hardware to enjoy a service over Facebook Live, or a meeting over Zoom.

*(I do not remember many enjoyable Zoom meetings.)*

Some could listen via a phone call, others could not. That is a limitation that I would like to overcome this year.

All of us missed the hugs, warm greetings, smiles, or simple presence of our extended church family.

But nevertheless we were CHURCH! We praised God together. We confessed our shortcomings together.

We read and studied scripture together. We prayed together.

We were in God's presence together.

We never forgot that we are Christ's hands and feet here on earth.

2021 will also be different.

With the help of the vaccines that are now being distributed, we will meet together in person sometime this year.

Each of you are precious in God's sight.

God's love for us will lead us through this difficult time.

But we will continue to err on the side of caution.

Thank you for the privilege of serving as your pastor.

Pastor Ray Lantz

Group

1st Thursday of Month: Noon to 1-Chamber of Commerce

Friday: By appointment

**Weekly Scheduled Appointments:**

Tuesday: Noon-1pm—Lions Club (when in session)

Wednesday: 9:45-10:15 Head Start Reading (when in Session)

Thursday: 8-9:30-GC Pastor's

## PRESBYTIDINGS JANUARY 2021

Pastor Ray Lantz

Worship: 10:30 a.m.

This Newsletter is a publication of First Presbyterian Church of Gibson City IL.

Website: [www.firstpresbygibson.org](http://www.firstpresbygibson.org)

Meladee Ferguson: Administrative Assistant

Mary Clow: Ministry Coordinator

### QUARANTINE:

The Latin root of the word "quarantine" is "forty". So what does the Bible say about 40?

The flood lasted 40 days. 40 years Moses fled Egypt. 40 days Moses stayed on Mount Sinai to receive the Commandments. Exodus lasted 40 years. Jesus fasted for 40 days. Lent is 40 days. 40 days for a woman to rest after giving birth.

A group of theologians thinks the number 40 represents "change". It is the time of preparing a person, or people, to make a fundamental change.

Something will happen after these 40 days. Just believe and pray. Remember, whenever the number 40 appears in the Bible, there is a "change".

Please know that during this "quarantine" rivers are cleaning up, vegetation is growing, the air is becoming cleaner because of less pollution, there is less theft and murder, healing is happening, and most importantly, people are turning to Christ. The Earth is at rest for the first time in many years and hearts are truly transforming.

So, during this time, enjoy it with your loved ones and return to the family altar together. Family prayer is a great blessing. Through prayer you will see the changes God can work in you and in your home.

Christ promises us that everything works together for the good for those who love God: Romans 8:28!

Remember we are in the year 2020, and  $20 + 20 = 40$ .

Also, 2020 is the year of the United States Census. Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, was born during a census.

Lastly, 2020 is perfect vision. May our sight focus on the Lord and living according to His perfect vision for us knowing He holds us in the palm of His hand.

May these days of "quarantine" bring spiritual liberation to our souls, our nation, and our world.

The best is yet to come. Trust in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!



### Pastor's Office Hours:

Monday: Out all day

Tuesday: 9am to Noon  
1pm to 3pm

Wednesday: 9am to Noon  
1pm to 3pm

Thursday: 10am to Noon  
pm by appointment

Friday: By appointment

**Weekly Scheduled Appointments:**

Tuesday: Noon-1pm—Lions Club (when in session)

Wednesday: 9:45-10:15 Head Start Reading (when in Session)

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# January 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 <i>Recycle</i>
3 10:30 a.m. Worship  <b>John 1:1-18</b>	4	5	6	7	8 <i>Life Line Screening</i>	9
10 10:30 a.m. Worship <i>Communion</i>  <i>McCormick Tutoring</i>  <b>Mark 1:4-11</b>	11	12	13	14	15	16 <i>Recycle</i>
17 10:30 a.m. Worship  <b>John 1:43-51</b>	18	19	20	21 <i>5:30 Session</i>	22	23
24 10:30 a.m. Worship <b>Mark 1:14-20</b>  31 10:30 a.m. Worship <b>Mark 1:21-28</b>	25	26	27	28	29	30

Pastor Ray will be preaching on the scripture listed in bold on each Sunday.

## NEWS FROM OUR CHURCH...

**Please note:** The previous week's sermon will broadcast at 7:45 a.m. every Sunday morning on WGCY.

**Please note:** Online Live Sunday Services will be available on our Facebook Page noted below:

First Presbyterian Church of Gibson City

[https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=142499619134911&ref=br\\_rs](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=142499619134911&ref=br_rs)

**Correction:** In December's article about Barb Williams, some errors were created either through editing or through misunderstanding what was submitted. Deadlines meant the usual proofing process with the member did not occur. First, the 4-H co-leader was Mrs. Raymond Green (not Mrs. Herbert Green) and the Mrs. Schrock who played the piano was not Mrs. Merle Schrock. Second, information about Barb's horses was misunderstood. Stormy was her pleasure riding horse, and it was implied he was a hackney; however, that breed is only put under harness and not ridden. Supreme (not Stormy) was the name of the county fair prize-winner. Finally, Bard has only been out of Illinois (not Gibson City), a total of six times. Staff apologizes for the

need to make these corrections and clarifications.

**Christmas presents for the Head Start students:** Jean Williams in consultation with the Session has suggested that Christmas presents for the students of the Head Start Program be postponed as the students are not in session yet. Jean suggested that once the students return, the congregation can buy "Welcome Back" presents and books.

**McCormick Tutoring Program Update:** We are happy to announce the McCormick Tutoring Program will be starting up in January. On December 22nd Pastor Lantz, Clerk of Session Mary Clow and McCormick Tutoring Liaison Sharla Williams met with GCMS Superintendent Jeremy Darnell to finalize the details. Staff members in each building will be designated interventionists to help work with students who have been forced into quarantine or affected by Covid. There will be 4 elementary teachers, 2 middle school teachers and 2 high school teachers each working 4 hours per week for 16 weeks. Superintendent Darnell commented this is great timing and will add value to the students to provide some additional support.

**Meladee's new working hours:** Meladee will be in the church office from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Please make note of these new church office working hours. Pastor Ray's hours will remain the same.



**Ceiling Tile Work:** Ron and Mary Clow spent an afternoon in the fellowship hall replacing all the ceiling tile that were damaged by previous water damage. In addition, light fixture covers that were old and yellow were replaced with newer covers that have vastly improved the lighting from the new cost efficient bulbs recently installed as a part of the Ameren Energy Reduction Program for small businesses. Thank you Ron & Mary.

## BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

January	February
02: David Stolz	03: Addison Kerchenfaut
06: Rick and Aizza Kerchenfaut	11: Karen Mott
13: Danny and Vonna Heustis	15: Charles & Cheryl Schultz
15: Ramie Lantz	16: Jean Williams
23: Edith Kaufman	19: Anneliese Kerchenfaut
	23: Ruthie Lantz Dripps

K. P. Duty	
Jan: Carla Ashmore	Jan 10: Rick & Anneliese Kerchenfaut
Feb: Danny and Vonna H.	Feb 21: Danny & Vonna Heustis
<i>Second Sunday Offering</i>	<i>Communion Set-Up</i>
Jan. 10: McCormick Tutoring	Jan 10: Carla Ashmore
Feb 14: Food Pantry/ Shepherd's Closet	Feb 21: Janice Swanson
	<i>Flower Vases to CM</i>
	Jan: Carla Ashmore
	Feb: Janice Swanson
<i>Ushers</i>	
Jan: Rick & Aizza Kerchenfaut	
Feb: Danny and Vonna Heustis	
<i>Communion Servers</i>	



**KNOW YOUR MEMBER  
SHARLA WILLIAMS**



I was born in Gibson Area Hospital March 18, 1955. Dr. Paul Sunderland delivered me and Jean Arends was his nurse. My parents are Gene and Virginia Williams. I was extremely fortunate to have a loving and caring family. My mom was amazing and always put her family first. Dad loved his family, was a hard worker and never knew a stranger. My brother, Lance, continues to always be there for me and I for him. After my dad died I planned to live at home and get an apartment in Gibson City. It did not take long to realize that I did not want an apartment. I just wanted to live at home with my best friend, my mom. I had the best mom ever. She was a beautiful lady, inside and out. I'm blessed to have my thoughtful and caring aunts: Barbara, Carolyn, and Jean live close to me.

I also have cousins, Susie, Teri, and Rob in the area. I get to keep in touch easily with my relatives in Florida: Rance, Dart, and Kane through Facebook. My mom, dad, grandparents, Howard and Edna Carter, Lloyd and Naomi Williams, and uncles Bob, Don, and Larry and cousin, Gary, are with God.

My mom taught remedial reading and math in the Gibson City school. My father was a partner with his father and brothers in a general contracting business, L.R. Williams and Sons, Inc. My brother, Lance,

and his wife, Sylvia, live in Mesa, Arizona. Lance is employed by Southwest Airlines.

I graduated from Gibson High School in 1973. I then went to Illinois State University and majored in Elementary Education. I had always wanted to be a teacher. My grandmother, aunt, and mom were also teachers; respectfully, Edna Carter, Barb Williams, and Virginia Williams. I graduated with a major in Elementary Education in 1976 from Illinois State University.

Mr. Charles Crowley led me to my first teaching position in 1976. I began teaching for the Ford County Regional Office of Education in Paxton. As the program grew I also taught GED preparation and English as a second language in Paxton, Rantoul, Gibson City and Mansfield. I had many students receive their GED certificates over the years. There were many who chose to further their education. I had one student who was married and had children receive her GED diploma and go on to Illinois State University and competed the Master's Degree Program in Social Work. I am so very proud of my students!

My next teaching assignment, through the Regional Office of Education, took me to Chanute Air Force Base in Rantoul. I instructed men and women enlisted in all branches of service. I worked with Air Force, Army, Marines, and Navy enlistees. I taught reading, math, and typing skills. This was a training base and some needed extra support in these areas.

My first day teaching at Chanute was quite memorable. I was in my classroom and in the blink of an eye the room was filled with service men carrying weapons. They were positioned at each window and spread throughout the classroom. It was a day of War Games! (I was not informed of any of these types of activities.) The Base Commander had been kidnapped in this "War Game." I learned a great deal while teaching at Chanute Air

Force Base and hope the students did as well! I really did enjoy working there, and, yes, there were a lot more War Games over the years!

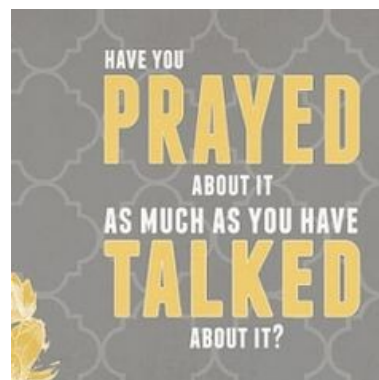
I also had a part time position while I was working at Chanute. I was the site coordinator for Governors State University. Years passed and my program was shut down—Air Force wide. Not long after Chanute closed for good.

I was soon ready to move back to Gibson City. The day I was packed and ready to move home my dad suddenly passed away. I was devastated That was February 26, 1987. My wonderful mom passed May 6, 2013.

My next chapter of teaching takes me to where I am today. I am employed by the Iroquois Special Education Association in Gilman and I teach in Thawville. I love it! I have served as a Trustee and a Deacon at our church.

I am very excited to work with the McCormick Tutoring Program offered through our church. I will be the Liaison between the GCMS School District and our church. This is a wonderful program that will help many students!

I joined this church over 50 years ago. While joining we were asked questions by the Elders. Jan Francis Noble Culbertson asked me, "What is the chief end of man?" I replied with a smile on my face, (because I knew the answer to that one!) "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever."



**KNOW YOUR MEMBER**



**THEODORE SWANSON JR.**

I was born Theodore Quentin Swanson Jr. in West Suburban Hospital in Oak Park IL on September 26, 1935 to two wonderful parents: Dr. T.Q. Swanson and Ruth May Brown Swanson. My mom tells the story of how proud they were to push me in the buggy and show me off. Dad graduated from Illinois Optometry School in Chicago. When I was one we moved to Gibson City, dad's birth place, where he was the eye doctor for many years. I am the first of five children; two wonderful brothers, John and Gus, and two great sisters Nan Potts and Mary Heffley. We always took a family vacation over Christmas break to Marco Island Florida where Grandpa and Grandma Brown had a trailer. What a wonderful break from winter.

I lived at the Gibson City swimming pool growing up and worked as the clean up boy and rented in-tertubes. Years later I ran the concession stand. I followed in my dad's footsteps as President of the Pool Board.

I graduated from Gibson City High School in 1954 and spent two years in the Army as a medic, eighteen months in France working in a nursery and even delivered a baby one night.

I married my high school sweet

heart, Mary Joanne Jordan on June 2, 1957. We had almost 54 wonderful years together. We raised three great children, Trudy Jo (Ray Lantz), Timothy Jordan (Janice Foster) and Sara Ruth (Ken Musson). We have seven grandchildren: Ramie, Ruthie, Noah, Jesse and Emma still live in the area. Ben and Rachel live in Colorado. Rachel has gone to school to be an optometrist like her great grandfather and is setting up shop in Denver. We have always enjoyed spending time with the grandchildren.

Jo babysat all the grandkids until they were in school. She also managed the Montgomery Ward Catalog store until they closed all their catalog stores. I lost Jo March 17, 2011 and I miss her everyday.

I grew up in the Methodist Church and tell my Methodist friends I got promoted across the tracks in the 50's. Dr. Chandler worked with me to become a member of the Session and Reverend Sunkel worked with Jo and I to become Stephen Ministers. I was on a committee of three when we built the fellowship hall.

I worked for my uncle Lawrence Swanson as a well driller for several years and sold Equitable Life Insurance during that time to supplement my income. After that I worked for 36 years at the Gibson City Post Office working 60 hours a week with no overtime. I worked my way up to Acting Postmaster.

In 1971 I had a friend play basketball for the University of Illinois and I wanted to watch him play. I could not afford a ticket so I volunteered one weekend at the Assembly Hall and the next week I was on the payroll. I also worked as a football usher and eventually was head usher working with 30 plus supervisors and over 300 plus ushers. Years later I gave that job up so I could sit and watch the Illini loose. I now have a group of 13 or so that help with security at the stadium the day before a football game. I am in charge of parking for all

sporting events except football and basketball.

I had wonderful Gibson City people to work with me as we started a Share Food Program, where you could get fresh food at a very reasonable price, until they shut down.

Shortly after our hospital opened my mother and several ladies met and started "Meals on Wheels." At that time most mothers stayed home and would load up the kids in the car and deliver the meals. I remember helping my mom and I still deliver "Meals on Wheels" today. I also started the "Smile" program at the hospital which is still strong. I learned a long, long time ago that when you help others it makes you feel good.

I was honored to be on the Gibson Area Hospital Board for 13 years. The people of Gibson City have been very good to me with awards like: Lion of the Year in 2002, Citizen of the Year, and Sunderland Society in 2017.

After I lost Jo, I started a travel group of friends and family that had also lost their spouses. We traveled to Florida and Arizona several winters for four to eight weeks. It was good for all of us. Now I enjoy going to Florida with sister Nan to visit and stay with sister Mary in her new home.

Family and friends make life wonderful!





**Congratulations to Anneliese Kerchenfaut!** Anneliese Kerchenfaut was recently inducted into the National Honor Society at GCMS High School. She was one of four juniors inducted with the rest being seniors. She is pictured here with Payton Leo

nard, Zander Weir and Payton Kean. What an awesome achievement and our church family is proud of her! Anneliese is the daughter of Rick and Aizza Kerchenfaut.



**Congratulations to Emma Swanson** who was inducted into the National Honor Society at GCMS High School. She is a senior and plans to

go to Park-land College after she graduates. Emma is the daughter of Tim and Janice Swanson.

## THANK YOU!

**Attached to** a pledge card was a note from Beverly Swanstrom indicating that she missed her friends and life in Gibson City and especially at the First Presbyterian Church. (We miss you too!) She extended her wishes for a blessed holiday and a happy and healthy 2021.

**To Members of the Church:** Thank you for your annual contribution to Gibson Area Music Foundation. I recently received a check from the First Presbyterian Church for \$500 that showed \$210 was contributed by members and \$290 was given by the church itself as part of the Giving Sunday Offering.

Because the pandemic interfered with our traditional December performance of Handel's *Messiah*, we did not have a formal fundraising campaign this year. However, the regular support from your congregation is a testament to your love of music and support of worthy causes. From the founding of the music foundation by Dr. Paul Sunderland to the service and continuing support of founding board member Val Hunt, we salute the members of the First Presbyterian Church of Gibson City.

As I said when speaking to the congregation, we continue to move forward with multiple scholarship offerings and additional opportunities to present music, either by our organization or in support of others.

Thank you again for your local support, and we'll be back to performing next year!

Sincerely, Jean Noellsch, Treasurer

**Kemmerer Village:** On behalf of the children and staff of Kemmerer Village, we would like to express our sincere appreciation for your recent gift of \$100 on November 30, 2020. We continue to be grateful for your interest and support of our community.

Sincerely, Autumn Warren, Director of Development and Fundraising.



**Charlie and Cheryl Schultz** get First Prize in the Presbyterian Christmas contest!!

It took several days to get it all up and Charlie commented on the things you do when you have grandchildren.

Their little grandson Sebastian really liked how it turned out.

Well done Schultz's.

Christmas 2020

**Mission Committee:** We are happy to announce that Session has approved the withdrawal of funds on a yearly basis from the Farlin investment account for the next five years to increase spending towards local missions. Therefore, the creation of a Mission Committee was approved at the December 17th Session meeting. Mary Clow and Charlie Schultz have volunteered to lead the committee and will work in partnership with Session and will seek suggestions from church members. Any member of the church interested in joining the Mission Commission should contact Mary. Please watch for future correspondence outlining the vision, estimated budget, and procedures that will be used to award support to specific missions. A survey will also be sent out to church members asking for suggestions and the committee will be working with various organizations so as to gain knowledge as to where the greatest needs are in the community. We ask that you pray for all involved as we embark on this new project.

**7 PRAYERS FOR January**  
Wishing you peace, love, joy and new energy every day.

- MAY YOUR FINANCES MULTIPLY.
- MAY YOUR HEALTH IMPROVE.
- MAY YOUR FAMILY BE LOVED.
- MAY YOUR FRIENDS BE BLESSED.
- MAY YOUR PAINS LESSEN.
- MAY YOUR WORRIES DISAPPEAR.
- MAY GOD BLESS YOU,

and hold you in the palm of his hand today & always.  
Amen



**JOHN DILL**

**Financial Advisor Choice:** As noted in the last two monthly newsletters, Session sent out a “Request for Proposal” seeking bids for a Financial Advisor to assist with investing the proceeds from the Farlin Farm sale. Five proposals were received on November 17th and two finalists were chosen to meet with Session on December 10, 2020 so the Elders could meet each of them and to answer additional questions from each member. On December 17th after a review of all of the facts, fees and answers to our questions and following discussion regarding our future goals and strategies, **John Dill from Northwestern Mutual** was chosen to be our Financial Advisor by a unanimous vote. Pastor Lantz and Clerk of Session Mary Clow will be working with Mr. Dill to set up an account and negotiate a contract. Pastor Lantz and Investment Director Rick Kerchenfaut will have authority to approve any investment suggestions and/or issues. Session will approve any withdrawals from these investments going forward.

**Session Members:** Thank you so very much for remembering me at Christmas. I truly appreciate the gift and will certainly have fun spending it.

Your Secretary,  
Meladee Ferguson

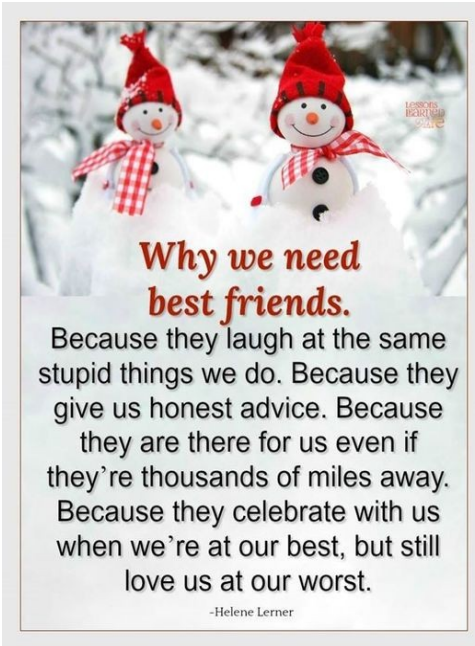


**GIBSON AREA FOOD PANTRY @THE HOSPITAL**  
**Emergency Food Program**

Starting December 22, 2020 the pantry is offering emergency boxes of food at Moyer Library in Gibson City in addition to The Gibson City Police Station. Moyer Library hours are Monday-Thursday 10:00 am to 8:00 pm., Friday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm and Saturday 10:00 am to 3:00 pm, subject to change.

Emergency food boxes are still available at the Gibson City Police Station 24/7. For pickup at the Police Station please call 784-8666.

**Scammers:** This has been a busy year for scam e-mails that look real but are fraudulent. If you get an email that looks suspicious, be sure to match the sender’s e-mail with what you already have and look closely at the language. Scammers are now using gmail addresses that may sound plausible from church leadership such as “pastorfred@gmail.com” and are targeting members of churches. Please note that no one from the Blackhawk Presbytery or other pastors will ever ask for money, a vague “favor” or gift cards. It if seems odd, it is very likely a scam.



**HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM YOUR CHURCH STAFF:**

- Ray Lantz: Pastor**
- Meladee Ferguson: Administrative Assistant**
- Mary Clow: Ministry Coordinator**
- Phil Noellsch: Treasurer**
- Beverly Nagle: Organist**



One small positive thought in the morning can change your whole day

**Resolve to Be Led by Christ**  
By Mike Hastings

At old year’s end, we often tend  
To look back in sad reflection  
Another year gone, time moves on  
But we’re unsure of its direction

We oft reflect, on our neglect  
Of family, friends and God  
Internal voices mock our choices  
Of the paths we chose to trod

We often vow to change right now  
To make this New Year best  
But deep inside, despite our pride  
We know we’ll fail that test

We know resolutions aren’t solutions  
Because they’ve not worked before  
Kept for awhile, we walk life’s miles  
And our resolve walks out the door

Save for a few, we just don’t do  
What we have resolved

**Our problems last and fill our past**  
Lying there, again unsolved

Well there’s a solution, to find absolution  
And change our everyday lives  
Turn to the Lord, oh what a reward  
Awaits in Jesus Christ

Past, present and future, He’s there to nurture  
Us each and everyday  
If we talk with Him and walk with Him  
He’ll show us all the way

So give Him your past, and then friend at last  
Just give your future to Him  
You’ll find it so pleasant, to live in the present  
As He deals with all of them

Yes, I’m here to tell you, Jesus won’t fail you  
So here’s my New Year’s advice  
Make one resolution, for your problem’s solutions  
Resolve to be led by Christ



I found this on Facebook and thought perhaps many of us could relate to it. We all could use a good laugh!

1. The dumbest thing I ever bought was a 2020 planner.
2. I was so bored I called Jake from State Farm just to talk to someone. He asked me what I was wearing.
3. 2019: Stay away from negative people. 2020: Stay away from positive people.
4. The world has turned upside down. Old folks are sneaking out of the house and their kids are yelling at them to stay indoors.
5. This morning I saw a neighbor talking to her dog. It was obvious she thought her dog understood her. I came into my house and told my cat. We laughed a lot.
6. Every few days try your jeans on just to make sure they fit. Pajamas will have you believe all is well in the kingdom.
7. Does anyone know if we can take showers yet or should we just keep washing our hands?
8. This virus has done what no woman has been able to do.
9. I never thought the comment, “I wouldn’t touch him/her with a six foot pole” would become a national policy, but here we are!
10. I need to practice social-distancing from the refrigerator.
11. I hope the weather is good tomorrow for my trip to the backyard. I’m getting tired of the living room.
12. Never in a million years could I have imagined I would go up to a bank teller wearing a mask and ask for money.