

Council

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Only four city council members were present for the Sept. 2 meeting: Dallas Scothorn, J.J. Jasper, Thomas Tschantz and Sharon Hall. Council members Jerilyn Curtiss and Lewis Lenard were absent.

During public comments, Paul Abendroth thanked water department Superintendent Danny Hawkins and water department employees for responding so quickly and repairing a water leak across the street from his home.

Mayor Luke informed the council that District Judge Taylor Wine and County Attorney Wade Bowie II met with Parks Superintendent Kevin Boyce at Kelley Park to look at Kelley Hall and the 4-H Building to be used as possible jury trial sites. The district courts have been tasked with submitting a plan to the Kansas Supreme Court for re-summing jury trials.

The council voted unanimously to allow the Fourth Judicial District Court in Coffey County to use Kelley Hall and the 4-H Building during COVID-19 at no cost.

Boyce said during winter-time, parks department employees could clean the buildings; however, once outdoor maintenance resumes in the spring, they probably will not have the time to dedicate to cleaning.

Department Reports

Electric: Superintendent Alan Schneider said employees have been straightening and changing some power poles, trimming trees, and performing truck maintenance. Some trees that were beyond reach of the bucket truck were trimmed by Trenary Tree Service. Schneider said a large tree on North Second Street fell on a customer's service, due to a storm that passed through on Aug. 29.

The council approved moving Cody Goracke from third-year to fourth-year apprentice lineman at \$23.12 per hour,

effective Sept. 5. Schneider said Goracke did very well on his final test and he is doing a great job in the field.

Mayor Luke plans to sign a proclamation provided by Kansas Power Pool, which observes October as Public Power Month.

Water and Wastewater: Superintendent Danny Hawkins reported upsizing a meter at 16th and Housatonic streets, cleaning sewers and repairing a water leak. Chlorinator work has been completed at the water plant, which is producing an average of 615,000 gallons per day.

Hawkins told the council Kewley has been a "great cornerstone" for everyone in the city. "She has been my mentor personally," Hawkins said. "You are losing a great person and I want you to know that." He wished Kewley good luck in her retirement.

Streets: Superintendent Mark Davidson said crews started crack sealing the downtown area. They may have to work on a Saturday or Sunday to complete work

in the downtown area. Crews also installed culverts and performed work in some alleys.

Police: Police Chief Doug Jones said new handheld radios have been programmed and given to officers. The next municipal court will be held Thursday, Sept. 10. Officers investigated a theft call and were able to get a confession from a suspect. Jones said a man living in an illegal trailer at Drake Park was told he couldn't park the trailer at Drake Park. The man hired a local tow company to move the trailer to Manhattan.

Parks: Superintendent Kevin Boyce said they have been hauling dirt to low-lying areas and areas that have washed out on city-owned property. They are getting ready for grass seeding. Boyce said fogging for mosquitoes will likely continue through the end of September. The hazard trees were cut by Trenary Tree Service on Aug. 31. The bid opening for the city dam project will be Sept. 15.

Planning and Zoning:

Zoning Clerk Jimmy Hugunin said permit applications are picking up. All the shelves have been painted and installed in the storeroom.

The council approved Thrive to be the grant administrator for the CDBG grant program, for the low bid of \$5,500. Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Committee was the only other bidder.

The City of Burlington submitted a request for \$45,317.76 for COVID-related expenses and purchases through the coronavirus relief funds being distributed through the county. The CRF committee will meet Sept. 15 to further discuss distributions.

Legal: City Attorney Philip Wright met with Mayor Luke and Water and Wastewater Superintendent Hawkins regarding plumbing issues.

City Hall: City Clerk Regina Kewley said \$571.81 will be sent to the Kansas Set-off Program for collection. The new level pay contracts were sent to utility customers. Kewley reviewed the 2019 audit draft, which will be presented to the

council at a future date. The monthly reports indicate city sales tax collections continue to increase.

The council also approved: **Claims Ordinance No. 2020-16** in the amount of \$124,923.62 and Payroll Ordinance No. 2020-18 in the amount of \$89,478.72.

Ordinance No. 868, adopting Uniform Public Offense Code for Kansas Cities, Edition 2020.

The next regular meeting of the Burlington City Council will be 6 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 16, at Burlington City Hall, 1013 N. Fourth Street.

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My rights or others' needs

Pastor Doug Crawshaw
First Baptist Church, Waverly



Pastor Doug Crawshaw

At this point, it seems like this COVID-19 pandemic has been going on forever, even though we first heard about it less than a year ago, and started being affected by it here in the United States even less than that. And there seems to be little signs of it abating, at least not on its own. One of the prime reasons this pandemic has held on for so long here, we are told, is due to nothing more than the many people's stubborn refusal to do the most basic of things to slow the spread: hand washing, maintaining social distances, and yes, the wearing of masks.

It seems so logical when you think about it, how a face covering of some kind can slow the dispersion of the droplets which we expel all the time. But, in the midst of all the divisions we have here in our country, the simple act of wearing a mask has itself become a divisive issue of major proportions among some, both politically and socially. I submit to you that there is a spiritual dimension to this as well. And it has to do with our perceived rights and when it is appropriate, and when it is not, to insist upon those rights.

The writer of Ecclesiastes, in chapter three, pens those well-known words: "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot" (NIV) and the list goes on. I would add one more that I believe is supported by Scripture, "A time to defend our rights, and a time to defer our rights."

There is a lot of talk going on right now pertaining to the wearing of masks and one's perceived individual rights. Many believe that government has no authority in mandating the wearing of masks and that the individual should be free to

wear, or not wear, one. We Americans are an independent lot, by and large, and any restriction by a governing body toward an individual's perceived rights is met with stiff resistance. For example, remember if you're old enough to, the outcry which came about by the mandate for wearing seatbelts. That was as big a deal back then just as the wearing of masks is now. But for all the hullabaloo, we rode that one out eventually, just as we can with the masks, if we view the wearing of them through a different lens.

And that different lens is one, as I suggest above, that we, through compassion and maturity, view the wearing of masks as a temporary deferment of our perceived rights because we are, as God tried to impress upon Cain, our brothers' (and sisters') keeper.

Jesus' parable of the sheep and goats in Matthew 25 is a prime example. There, Jesus says, "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left."

And the criteria for this separation? As the King in the parable explains, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was

thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

The righteous are perplexed that they had indeed done these things for the King, to which the King replies, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

The lesson here is clear: the separation of the sheep/righteous from the goats/unrighteous is based solely upon how one in life met the needs of someone who was in a difficult situation and needed help. To refuse to help was tantamount to ignoring the needs of the one in crisis for the sake of my own desires, and ultimately, placing my perceived rights ahead of what someone else needed.

You may feel you do not need a mask for your own personal protection. You may even feel that it is your right not to wear one. But as people of faith, it is our responsibility to consider the needs of others ahead of our own perceived rights.

Will not wearing a mask keep you out of heaven? Not likely. But what will our Lord say to us on that day, in the middle of a world-wide pandemic, we put our 'rights' above others 'needs'?

From the Bible
It is more blessed to give than to receive.

— Acts 20:35

Showing grace

The word grace in Scripture is used in many different ways. In the Old Testament, it is often included with "grace-words" when the writer is speaking of God's loyalty or forgiveness, His steadfast love or loving-kindness. It is also used in association with relationships, such as the relationship of a superior to an inferior. And this is noteworthy: An inferior cannot show a superior grace. In other words, we cannot show God grace. Everything flows from His grace and there is nothing we have that did not come from Him.

In the New Testament, the word for grace is charis — a word used when speaking of forgiveness. From it comes our word "charity" — giving something to someone when they do not deserve "it" or cannot get "it" themselves. It also implies being "gracious" — that is, grace in action.

Showing God's grace is what Chris-

tians are to do after they accept God's grace. And unless we show it, we might question whether or not we really have it.

For example, when we are saved by grace, we are to become gracious and act differently. Cruelty is to be replaced with kindness, anger with acceptance, rejection with reconciliation and giving instead of always getting.

Grace is certainly a comprehensive word. It is as wide as the world. Remember what Jesus said: "God loved the world so much that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes on Him shall be saved."

Our indebtedness to God for His grace is beyond us. Our indebtedness to show His grace to others is not optional.

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