

"The Grapevine"

July 2020



"HOW TO JOIN WORSHIP BY PHONE"

CUT ALONG THE DOTTED LINES & PUT ON YOUR FRIDGE FOR EASY ACCESS

1. Call 669-900 9128 from any phone
2. Enter meeting code 737-271-6366 when prompted
3. Enter passcode 209-232-5310 when prompted



*Happy
Birthday*



- 1- Paul McCormick
- 2- Andrew Rusch
Katherine Dubie
- 9- Gina Debartoli
- 11 Don Burnett
- 12- Tomara Schreiner
- 17 - Lynda McCormick
- 18- Arvilla Reich
- 21- Jeanne Weisenberger
- 25- John Borges
- 26- Sylvia Cross
- 28- David Weisenberger
- 30- Colleen Colenso
- 31- Elizabeth Dubie

Happy Anniversary:



- 2- Paul & Lynda McCormick
- 24- Mike & Marietta McLellan
- 31- Phil & Ellen DiFilippo

Treasurer's Report - JUNE 2020

GENERAL FUND:

	<u>MONTHLY</u>	<u>TO DATE</u>	<u>BALANCE</u>
Bal. Fwd:		\$36,028.17	
Income	\$16,547.57	46,925.03	
Expenses	11,990.61	<u>61,616.88</u>	
Balance			\$ 21,336.32

Special Fund:

\$ 25,864.24

In/ Out Fund:

\$ 6,757.60

Memorial Fund:

Undesignated:	\$ 5,350.00	
Designated:	<u>\$ 12,319.80</u>	
Balance:		\$ 17,669.80

New Site Fund:

Balance:		\$ 150.16
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Synod Savings Account

Youth Reserve	\$1,076.66	
Manse Fund	61.90	
Julia Sturtevant Fund	<u>\$ 26,831.84</u>	
Balance:		\$27,970.40

Wishing you all a safe & fun Independence Day! The Church Office will be closed Monday, July 6 in observance of the holiday.

"PD's Pickings"

My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing. ~James 1:2-4

"July 1st, 2020. Day 108 of my captivity:

"My captors continue to taunt me with bizarre dangling objects. They dine lavishly on fresh meat, while the other inmates and I are fed some sort of tasteless dry nuggets. Nevertheless, I must eat something. I need to keep up my strength. The only thing that keeps me going is plotting my escape. I was placed in solitary confinement last night. I overheard that my confinement was due to the power of 'allergies.' I must learn what these 'allergies' are, and how to use them to my advantage. However, it may also be because today I was almost successful in assassinating one of my tormentors by weaving between his feet whilst walking. Next time I'll try it at the top of the stairs.

"I am convinced that the two other prisoners here are collaborators, willingly or unwillingly. One is regularly released, yet he eagerly returns—what missions he is sent on I have yet to discern. Another is undoubtedly an informant. Though small, she has a high, piercing vocalization and excellent vantage point from her cell. I am certain that she reports my every move. Although she is out of reach for now, I am working on a way to reach the lofty heights from which her cell hangs and "interrogate" her myself.

"I do miss you horribly, my dear Thomas, but be patient. When I escape we shall run away together and be free of these absurdities forever. All My Love, Mittens." 🐱🐾

Do you relate to this cat's plight more than you'd like to? We're all feeling the strain, and it is not the same strain we felt 3 months ago. This has worn on so long, and we increasingly feel the weight of accepting it will wear on for a *lot* longer. Three months ago we may or may not have accepted in our minds what epidemiologists told us: a pandemic doesn't come and go in a matter of weeks. But now we are coming to truly *know* it in the Hebrew sense of "yada:" not just rationally, but viscerally, experientially.

The ongoing strain of disconnection is real, even despite our best efforts to bridge it through phone calls, zoom calls, or online worship and devotions. We just aren't built for this. It is unnatural. It's not the way things are supposed to be.

So first, allow me to encourage you with another thing we already know rationally but may need to know experientially: give yourself GRACE. After all, God sure does... and who are we to be harder on ourselves than God? As we do so, we will also find it easier to give others grace too, whether it's a housemate we're quarantined with, a grocery store cashier, or a constituency crying out for justice. When we know —*yada*— God's grace toward us, it is much easier to extend understanding to ourselves and others, both of whom we are able to see more clearly.

Secondly, I want to assure you that your leadership is thinking and working hard on so many fronts as we adapt and re-adapt to our present reality. Your Deacons have been marvelous and tireless in calling,

and are continuing to think about more ways we can creatively connect. Likewise your Session has been working hard not just on keeping things running, but modeling and projecting for the future, planning ahead for contingencies, educating themselves, continuing to pursue ministry, pursuing new worship solutions, and planning reopening strategies. Your worship committee is now meeting every week, while many other teams have all also been continuing and adapting their work. And of course, let's not forget our staff, each finding creative ways to exercise their ministries and concern for our church as they are able.

We've had to give up a number of things as a church that we look forward to every week and every year. I was so looking forward to my first ever Family Camp at Zephyr Point with you all. I miss our time together in (physically!) gathered worship. But no pandemic can stop the Church of Jesus Christ from its mission.

One of the most exciting examples of that is that your Session recently voted in 7 new adult members, and we baptized one of them! There are 4 more Inquirers yet to join, as soon as we can arrange another opportunity for Session to interview them. All of them, whether known to us a long time or relatively new, have expressed to me how they feel a part of our family. They each bring new gifts, skills, ministries, resources, passions, competencies, energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.

None of us are having the summer we expected. All of us are all having tough(er) days, pastor included. It may be due to the pandemic and social changes we're living through, and/or other travails of life we would face anyway like health scares, or the departures of loved ones, whether to the Church Triumphant or to a new earthly locale. Regardless, the Reign of God has not ceased. God is faithful. God will sustain us through it... together.

Rest assured that when it's time to reopen, we will be eager and ready. Meanwhile, my "office door" is always open—209-232-5310—and your Session, Deacons, and I are....

...in it with you, and praying for you.

Pastor Doug