

# First Presbyterian Church

## “THE GRAPEVINE”

### JULY 2021



### CHURCH CALENDAR:

#### Independence Day

Sunday, July 4  
(Church Office Closed - Monday, July 5)

#### Zephyr Point Family Camp

Sunday, July 11 – Friday, July 16

#### Newsletter Deadline (August)

Thursday, July 15

#### Congregational Meeting

Sunday, July 25  
(After Worship Service)

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### HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

- 1- Paul McCormick
- 2- Katherine Dubie  
Andrew Rusch
- 9- Gina Debartoli
- 11- Don Burnett
- 12- Tomara Schreiner
- 13- Isabella Burnell
- 17 - Lynda McCormick
- 21- Jeanne Weisenberger
- 25- John Borges
- 28- David Weisenberger
- 30- Colleen Colenso
- 31- Elizabeth Dubie



### HAPPY ANNIVERSARY:

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



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### SAVE THE DATES:

August 2 - 6

Vacation Bible School (VBS)

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### Pastor Doug's Office Hours:

Tuesday & Thursday:

9:30am – 11:30am

Wednesday & Friday:

1:30pm – 3:30pm

## “PD’s Pickings”

As we approach the celebration of Independence Day once again, I, like each of you, find myself grateful to live in this nation for many reasons. Anyone who knows me knows I’m not without concerns for our government, country and our culture, nor do I believe all of our history to be spotless. We are like every other empire that has arisen in this: full of promise, innovation, and gifts to the world, yet also full of injustice, violence, and corruption. What’s unique about our own nation, though, is its founding virtue: the principle of “liberty and justice for all,” a principle of equity and inclusion that assumes diversity, one central to a biblical worldview and constantly evident in Jesus’ life and ministry.

The best among us continue to model and call us to that ideal, however we may disagree on how to get there. We have managed to protect, preserve and grow toward that ideal our entire history, even if imperfectly, painfully, and slowly. We have much for which to be thankful—especially those who have given so much to keep us free and increase the reach of freedom, whether domestically or abroad, whether serving on military battlefields or battlefields of the heart and mind, whether hiding the oppressed, confronting their oppressors, or confronting oppressive social structures. We still have many wrongs to right, much work still to do, and simultaneously much to be thankful for and proud of. Neither truth need diminish or overshadow the other.

As we celebrate the birth of our nation, we have a challenge put before us in scripture. The authors of our scriptures, their original audiences, and myriad audiences since, all lived in nations like ours in many ways: full of opportunities and perils, hope and inequity, justice and injustice, whether economic, social, or spiritual. And each had its stories of greatness to tell and allegiance to demand. In the Roman Empire, citizens and slaves alike were expected to worship Caesar as a god. Before we are too quick to say “I’d never do that!” we must consider that Caesar’s authority and power was near god-like to the average citizens, subjects, conscripts, and slaves that made up the vast majority of the empire. Nor was this unusual in world history: it was par for the course. Even today, though we consider ourselves far more enlightened, are still quite prone to “worship” an ideology or would-be political savior, although we would not call it that.

It is in such contexts as Babylon, Rome, even Ancient Israel, that men of God like Jeremiah, Daniel and Paul publicly proclaimed a message that was, simply put, seditious, and faced ultimate tests for it. Jeremiah proclaimed the end of the nation of Israel, spoke out against Israel’s kings, and was publicly abused for it many times (then witnessed the horrors he warned about come to pass). Daniel prayed in defiance of a royal edict as a conscript in exile, and was thrown in a lion’s den. His companions Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, facing execution by blazing furnace for refusing to bow to the king, said this to his face:

O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. *But even if he does not*, we want you to know, O king that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.” (Dan 3:16-18, NIV, emphasis mine).

Did you notice that? Their allegiance to God was such that they didn’t care whether God actually rescued them or not. (!) They were not loyal to God because they expected God to come through for them,

although they were convinced God could. They were loyal because God alone is worthy of worship. Period.

In the same manor, when Paul says that saying “Jesus is Lord” is evidence of a true believer (Rom 10:19), that’s because it’s no small thing in his time. In Paul’s context, it could get you jailed or killed. Only the word “Caesar” was supposed to be the subject of that sentence. Putting in any other subject was sedition. And you could be confident that your neighbors would turn you in if they heard you.

These and many, many others throughout history understood that their highest allegiance was to God alone, not to any earthly power, no matter how beloved, feared, or mighty. As citizens first of the Nation of God, our values too must reflect the Jesus Way above any other. God’s values may, or may not, accord with those of our own nation and culture, or of a particular movement or political alignment. But if we follow Jesus, always they must trump any other competing value system.

So the question is, if the values of the Nation of God contradict with those of the United States of America, or of our particular political persuasion, or leaders or pundits we follow, which do we choose? Before we’re too quick to say “Jesus is Lord,” have we tested whether or not we reflect Jesus’ way of living? As Jesus himself taught us... “You will know them by their fruit...” Thanks be to God we have the Holy Spirit to help us and form us. But it’s not automatic. Following Jesus means we choose Jesus’ Way each day.

The name “Jesus,” actually somewhat common in his time, is a variant of “Joshua.” There is another famous Joshua that foreshadows Jesus, Joshua son of Nun, Moses’ successor who lead Israel across the Jordan. He is famous for saying this, even as the undisputed, charismatic and successful leader of his beloved nation: “Choose this day whom you will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” This Independence Day, as we celebrate our earthly nation, let us each test ourselves, and see whether we can say same.

Shalom,

*Paster Doug*



## A Message from Your Session:



As a result of our review of our provisional annual budget and current financial trends, the Session is pleased to announce that we are restoring the hours and salaries of our Church Administrator, Church Custodian, and Music Director starting August 1 to their 2020 levels. The Treasurer position has been restructured and will not need to have hours or pay increased.

The Payroll Protection Loan and the additional giving we received since January has allowed us to reinstate these hours and salaries. We are trusting in God and in our congregation that giving will continue at this level for the rest of the year.

We still will be financially challenged in 2022, as we have used a substantial portion of our reserves in 2021, but feel this is the will of the Congregation and that the increased giving enables it.

We give thanks to God for his provision, and are so very grateful for your sacrifices that have helped make this possible. Please continue to pray for us as we discern God's leading and navigate the challenges of our future in ministry together.

Warmly in Christ,

~The Session

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## *A Message from the Fellowship Committee*

It was great to see those who attended our Fellowship time after church on Sunday, June 20.

Thanks to those who brought items to share. It was all very yummy!

Starting Sunday, July 4, the Fellowship Committee is requesting help from the Congregation with bringing in goodies for Fellowship time and cleaning up afterwards. Remember you can be creative and bring any type of item to share.

If your last name begins with **A-C**, bring a contribution on the **first Sunday** of the month,

If your last name begins with **D-J**, bring a contribution on the **second Sunday** of the month,

If your last name begins with **K-P**, bring a contribution on the **third Sunday** of the month.

If your last name begins with **R-Z**, bring a contribution on the **fourth Sunday** of the month.

Those on the **Fellowship Committee** will supply the goodies when there is a **5<sup>th</sup> Sunday** of the month.

If you forget to bring something on your designated Sunday, you are welcome to help with clean-up. Volunteers for clean-up are always appreciated. Many hands make light work for all.

To minimize our paper and plastic waste and keep costs to a minimum we will be using the church's plates, silverware and glasses. Loading them into the dishwasher is a breeze. And if you would like to join the Fellowship Committee, just let us know.

Thank you for your support.

The Fellowship Committee;

Pat Brandes (co-chair), Kathleen Buffleben (co-chair), Terry Donaldson, Ina Danforth, Dale Brandes

## TREASURER'S REPORTS:

<b>MAY RECONCILIATION</b>		<b>SYNOD SAVINGS</b>	
MATCHING FUND	\$ 49,725.04		
BALANCE FORWARD	\$ 14,541.23		
INCOME	\$ 70,835.64	YOUTH RESERVE FUND	\$1,090.04
EXPENSES	\$ 50,553.35	DEMAND ACCOUNT	\$ 62.63
<b>GENERAL FUND BALANCE</b>	<b>\$ 84,548.56</b>	JULIA STURTEVANT FUND	\$5,465.30
SPECIAL FUND BALANCE	\$ 21,653.03		
IN-AND-OUT FUND BALANCE	\$ 13,143.60		
<b>AVAILABLE CHECKING ACCT. BALANCE</b>	<b>\$ 119,345.19</b>	<b>TOTAL SAVINGS</b>	<b>\$6,617.97</b>

<b>APRIL RECONCILIATION ( REVISED)</b>		<b>SYNOD SAVINGS</b>	
MATCHING FUND	\$ 49,725.04		
BALANCE FORWARD	\$ 14,541.23		
INCOME	\$ 63,302.79	YOUTH RESERVE FUND	\$1,089.10
EXPENSES	\$ 46,616.72	DEMAND ACCOUNT	\$ 62.58
<b>GENERAL FUND BALANCE</b>	<b>\$ 80,952.34</b>	JULIA STURTEVANT FUND	\$5,460.60
SPECIAL FUND BALANCE	\$ 22,068.58		
IN-AND-OUT FUND BALANCE	\$ 19,243.27		
<b>AVAILABLE CHECKING ACCT. BALANCE</b>	<b>\$ 122,264.19</b>	<b>TOTAL SAVINGS</b>	<b>\$6,612.28</b>

<b>MARCH RECONCILIATION (REVISED)</b>		<b>SYNOD SAVINGS</b>	
MATCHING FUND	\$ 49,725.04		
BALANCE FORWARD	\$ 14,541.23		
INCOME	\$ 45,111.79	YOUTH RESERVE FUND	\$ 1,088.19
EXPENSES	\$ 43,056.29	DEMAND ACCOUNT	\$ 62.53
<b>GENERAL FUND BALANCE</b>	<b>\$ 66,321.77</b>	JULIA STURTEVANT FUND	\$ 5,456.05
SPECIAL FUND BALANCE	\$ 21,883.19		
IN-AND-OUT FUND BALANCE	\$ 24,286.81		
<b>AVAILABLE CHECKING ACCT. BALANCE</b>	<b>\$ 112,491.77</b>	<b>TOTAL SAVINGS</b>	<b>\$6,606.77</b>

