

First Presbyterian Church
418 West Coolidge
Borger, TX 79007
~July 2017~

First Presbyterian Church
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Pianist: Marilyn Pearce

“The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be.” ~Ralph Waldo Emerson

First Presbyterian Church Newsletter

July

Borger, Texas

2017

My favorite patriotic song is “America the Beautiful”. It is a one of the few of our patriotic songs that is well-suited for use in worship. While the song praises aspects of our country, each verse also contains a prayer. Since I will be traveling on July 2nd and not in worship where we can sing it as a hymn, I have been playing my favorite version of “American the Beautiful” at home. Sung by blues singer Keb Mo, it is a version that highlights certain aspects of this prayer that are often overlooked:

*“O, beautiful for spacious skies For amber waves of grain
For purple mountains majesty Above the fruited plain
America, America God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood From sea to shining sea*

*O, beautiful for heroes proved In liberating strife
Who more than self their country loved And mercy more than life
America, America May God thy gold refine
And may all success be nobleness And every gain divine...”*

In the midst of another year of such divisive politics and social strife, I cling to the prayer that all success in our nation might be defined by “nobleness” and that patriots might indeed love mercy.

The words of Thomas Jefferson also speak to us across the centuries. Jefferson, who did not consider himself a Christian at all but rather a philosopher and a Deist, was pleased to work with educated persons across the religious and political spectrum of his time. He wrote during a time of divisiveness: *“I never considered a difference of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy, as cause for withdrawing from a friend.”*

It is very dangerous for us to confuse our faith with either patriotism or our politics. They are definitely not one and the same. Our love for God must always be first and foremost; our faithfulness comes before our duty to country. And yet, our faith can be, indeed ought to be, lived out in how we deal with issues in our national life. Indeed, as John writes ***“If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.”*** (1John 4:20)

May we strive this month to find ways to live out true love for those with different political views. May we celebrate our nation’s birth with people across all religious, cultural, and ethnic barriers. As followers of Jesus Christ may we reach out as brothers and sisters to all kinds of people in the weeks ahead and seek common purpose to make lives better.

In gratitude for God’s blessings, Janell

Stay anchored



Hold fast to the Bible as the [main] anchor of your liberties; write its precepts on your hearts and practice them in your lives. To the influence of this book we are indebted for all the progress made in true civilization, and to this we must look as our guide in the future.

—Ulysses S. Grant

Independence Day lessons for church life

- **Return to the basics** — On July 4 we commemorate the origins of our country. In terms of faith, we also periodically need to hear again the foundational stories of Creation, the Israelites and, of course, Jesus.
- **Honor the gift of freedom** — “For freedom Christ has set us free ... do not submit again to a yoke of slavery” (Galatians 5:1, ESV). We strive as citizens to preserve and live out our national freedom. Likewise, as citizens of God’s kingdom we live gladly in the freedom of salvation and share that gift with others.
- **Enjoy community** — July 4 is known for picnics, parades and other community gatherings. Similarly, the church is nourished by coming together for worship, meals and other special events.
- **Be light in the darkness** — As fireworks brighten the sky with light and color, the church is called to display the Gospel’s unique light in a dark world. Our word *dynamite* and the Greek word for *power* — as in, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you” (Acts 1:8) — share a root. Through God’s power in us, we share Jesus — dynamically! — with others.

—Heidi Mann



July Birthdays:

2 – Katey Kasch

5 – Debbie Winegar

15 – John Edgington

Anniversaries

1 – Paul and Sandra White

27 – Larry and Nena Larson

Special dates

- Canada Day, *July 1, 2017*
 - U.S. Independence Day, *July 4, 2017*
-

The pastor is in

Every Tuesday morning on New York City’s Upper East Side, Gregory Fryer sits in a *Peanuts*-style booth offering prayer and a listening ear to passersby. Initially the pastor wanted to draw attention to his church, but instead he ended up noticing all the “hungry hearts” in the neighborhood. Fryer has been pleasantly surprised by all the people who open up to him. “I think they like the idea of a pastor being on the sidewalk,” he says.

Although a sign on the booth reads “Spiritual advice 5¢,” the pastor keeps a plate of nickels handy if people want to put one in his jar. Some people donate much more — and some even pray for Fryer.

The pastor says he was inspired by *Peanuts* character Lucy van Pelt, who has the “audacity, the courage to brazenly sit there out in public and offer to deal with important matters.”

Stop, look and listen



Literature, painting, music — the most basic lesson that all art teaches us is to stop, look and listen to life on this planet, including our own lives, as a vastly richer, deeper, more mysterious business than most of the time it ever occurs to us to suspect as we bumble along from day to day on automatic pilot. ...

When Jesus [says] that the greatest command of all is to love God and to love our neighbor, he too is asking us to pay attention. If we are to love God, we must first stop, look and listen for him in what is happening around us and inside us. If we are to love our neighbors, before doing anything else we must see our neighbors. With our imagination as well as our eyes, that is to say like artists, we must see not just their faces but the life behind and within their faces. Here it is love that is the frame we see them in.

—Frederick Buechner, *Whistling in the Dark*

Our good God

For the love of God is broader
than the measure of man's mind;
and the heart of the Eternal
is most wonderfully kind.
If our love were but more faithful,
we should take him at his word;
and our life would be thanksgiving
for the goodness of the Lord.

—Frederick W. Faber

One or the other

Either we trust in God, and in that case we neither trust in ourselves, nor in our fellow-men, nor in circumstances, nor in anything besides; or we do trust in one or more of these, and in that case do not trust in God.

—George Müller

+Christian Symbol+



Sparrow

Birds in general symbolize God's presence. Sparrows represent God's concern and care even for those thought insignificant. In Jesus' words, "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. ... So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows" (Matthew 10:29, 31, NIV).

The perks of alone time

"Only those who learn to live with loneliness can come to know themselves and life," said poet Carl Sandburg. He described walking in nature, listening to the "sounds of loneliness" and wondering, "Who are you, Sandburg? Where have you been, and where are you going?"

Jesus also valued alone time with God in nature. He often withdrew to pray after being with crowds of people and his disciples. Spending one-on-one time with God helps us find and focus on his mission for our lives. He also uses it to strengthen us for carrying out his important work.

Your ticket is stamped

On a train trip, a pastor struck up a conversation with a seatmate who thought character and good works led to salvation. The pastor wasn't making progress but had a realization when the conductor collected tickets, quickly checking the date before stamping each one.

After the conductor passed by, the pastor told his fellow passenger: "All the conductor looked at was your ticket. He did not inquire about your character. He didn't care who you were — whether you were a good or moral man or a criminal. So it is with salvation. You need only God's 'ticket to heaven' stamped by the blood of Jesus Christ."

The Treasurer reported the following figures for February and March, 2017:

Total Income	\$ 8,728.03
Total Expenses	<u>\$ 18,798.33</u>
Total	\$ (10,070.30)

Year to Date

Total Income	\$ 17,251.02
Total Expenses	<u>\$ 24,779.91</u>
Total	\$ (7,528.89)



Why Grandma gave

One Sunday as she was getting ready for church, a grandmother received a call from her daughter. "Can you watch the kids while we're out of town next week?" the daughter asked.

Grandma was so thrilled she put an extra \$5 into the offering plate that morning.

The next Sunday, after her three young grandchildren had returned home, she put in an extra \$20.



Care of Members and Friends

Malnor Arthur

Teddy Buckland

First Presbyterian Church of
Dumas, our prayer partner.

DUTY ELDER FOR JULY

MARGARET EDGINGTON

SESSION MEETING

July 23, 2017



Session Connection:

Julia Kasch
Sue Hooten
Don Thompson
Margaret Edgington

Clerk Of Session/Administration/Christian Ed.
Fellowship
Property
Worship



HI-PLAINS HELPING HAND DONATION:

First Presbyterian Church has recently increased its financial donation to the agency and will no longer gather food or hygiene products.



Pastor Janell will be attending Synod Youth workshop in Tulsa from July 8 – 15.
Pulpit Supply will be as follows: July 2 – Bill Quarles, July 9 – David Kemp.



Brown bag Luncheon, July 18, 2017, First Presbyterian Church at noon.



June 26 – July 2, 2017, Pastor Blair on study leave.





July 2017 Revised Common Lectionary for Sundays and Festivals Year A

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 8)—July 2

Semicontinuous Complementary

Genesis 22:1–14

Psalms 13

Romans 6:12–23

Matthew 10:40–42

Jeremiah 28:5–9

Psalms 89:1–4, 15–18

Romans 6:12–23

Matthew 10:40–42

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 9)—July 9

Semicontinuous Complementary

Genesis 24:34–38, 42–49, 58–67

Psalms 45:10–17

Romans 7:15–25a

Matthew 11:16–19, 25–30

Zechariah 9:9–12

Psalms 145:8–14 *or* Song of Solomon 2:8–13

Romans 7:15–25a

Matthew 11:16–19, 25–30

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 10)—July 16

Semicontinuous Complementary

Genesis 25:19–34

Psalms 119:105–112

Romans 8:1–11

Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23

Isaiah 55:10–13

Psalms 65:[1–8] 9–13

Romans 8:1–11

Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 11)—July 23

Semicontinuous Complementary

Genesis 28:10–19a

Psalms 139:1–12, 23–24

Romans 8:12–25

Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43

Wisdom of Solomon 12:13, 16–19 *or* Isaiah 44:6–8

Psalms 86:11–17

Romans 8:12–25

Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 12)—July 30

Semicontinuous Complementary

Genesis 29:15–28 1

Psalms 105:1–11, 45b *or* Psalm 128

Romans 8:26–39

Matthew 13:31–33, 44–52

Kings 3:5–12

Psalms 119:129–136

Romans 8:26–39

Matthew 13:31–33, 44–52

Office of Theology and Worship, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

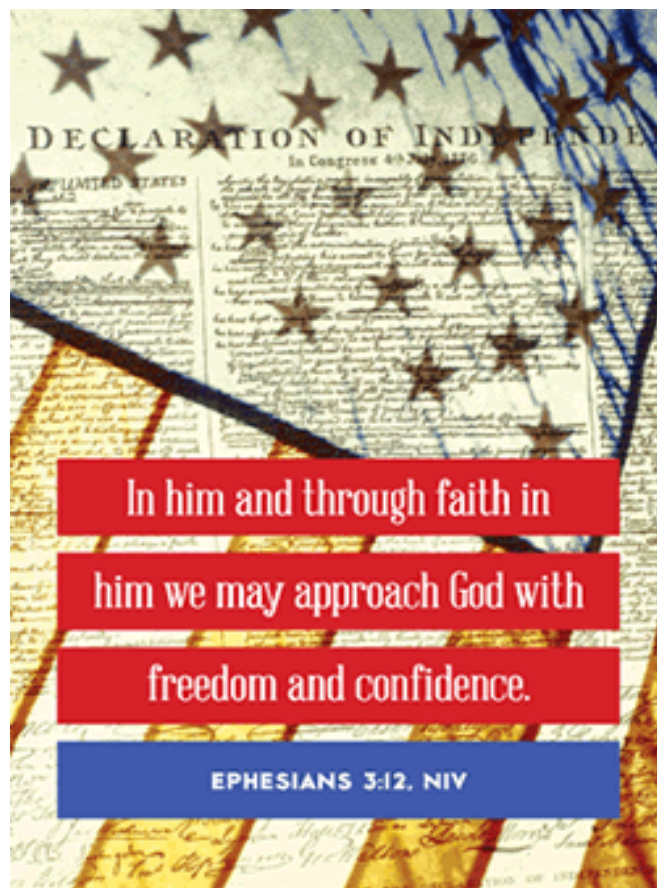


A pilgrim's progress

In *A Million Steps*, Kurt Koontz describes his month-long pilgrimage along the Camino de Santiago (“Way of St. James”), a 490-mile route from southern France through northern Spain. Since the ninth century, millions have undertaken this challenging trek.

As Koontz hiked downhill one morning, he was awed by a gorgeous sunrise. “The path was so steep,” he writes, “that I could descend a bit and relive the sunrise over and over. I took a gazillion photos and must have looked back at least 40 times.” Yet the experience made Koontz realize that “going forward is difficult when you are always looking backward.” We can’t dwell on the past so completely that our progress and growth are impeded.

Jesus says, “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62, NRSV). As we walk the path of faith, may we give thanks for God’s past gifts while focusing on Jesus, who leads us ever forward.





“It is impossible
to rightly govern
a nation without
God and the
Bible.”

- George Washington

Happy 4th of July!

crosscards.com



