



FIRST WORD



July & August 2020

Anniversaries



07/01 Gene & Berdean Suprenant
 07/29 Larry & Jane Stickwood
 08/05 Ron & Linda Bergstrom
 08/06 Nick & Wilma Klak
 08/08 Bob & Barbara Crum

08/12 Tim & Mardell Franke
 08/12 John & Joan Knowles
 08/15 Guy & Charlene Brown
 08/20 Mark & Debbie Edwards
 08/20 Don & Maxine Stevens
 08/20 Jim & Mary Margaret Trice

08/23 Carson & Tracy Linderman
 08/25 David & Pat Reifsteck
 08/27 Lee & Suzann Parrish
 08/27 John & Chris Wilcher
 08/31 Robert & Jeanne Hague



Birthdays

07/02 Janet Godheim
 07/04 Barbara Campbell
 07/05 Donna Brooking
 07/06 Nora Walsh
 07/07 Rebecca Rognas
 07/07 Mary Stanford
 07/14 Sarah Dorgan
 07/15 Mary McGaw
 07/21 Mardell Franke

07/27 Marcia Stearns
 07/27 Becky Todd
 08/01 David Reifsteck
 08/02 John Knowles
 08/06 Gordon Lord
 08/08 Mary Andersen
 08/12 Kim Edwards
 08/12 Suzann Parrish

08/16 Herb Preston
 08/16 Barb Rodgers
 08/16 Lea Torrey
 08/17 Harriett Pettola
 08/19 Berdean Suprenant
 08/19 Gene Suprenant
 08/25 Rhonda Register
 08/28 Phoebe Kay Haas
 08/30 Martha Wilson



Prayer List



Clarence Adams
 Mary Andersen
 John Britton
 Barbara Campbell
 Ray Chambers
 Alan Crowe
 Barbara Crum
 Marty Drabek
 Yvonne Daume
 Mardell Franke

Tim Franke
 Roger Gravengood
 Carol Hazlett
 Demetra Jones
 Paul Kneuss
 Carson Linderman
 Lela MacLeod
 Diane Maddox
 Christy Miller
 Jeff Neil

Brian Oles
 Suzann Parrish
 David Petryna
 Dave Reifsteck
 Don Sipple
 Bill Sisunik
 Sue Steiert
 Walt Steiert
 Larry Stickwood
 Sam Tillett

**Prayers for the family of John Knowles on the passing of his brother,
 Gary Rohm of Columbus, Ohio, on July 4th**

Pray for those in the Armed Force

Sr. Airman J. Haas
 Corporal A. Lawson, USMC
 L. Cpl. N. Schneider, USMC

LSC (SS) M. E. Edwards
 Capt. C. McCubrey, USMC

L. Brooking, USAF
 D. Henderson, USAF
 M. Swanson, USAF



STEPHEN MINISTRY



We are celebrating the 4th of July this year in the middle of a growing pandemic. People are out of work, out of money, out of food and feeling out of luck, feeling anxious about what tomorrow might bring. First Presbyterian's Stephen Ministers are available for anyone who finds themselves apprehensive about how this all is affecting their lives. These concerns or any other life problem can be discussed in total confidentiality with a Stephen Minister. Stephen Ministry is a Christ-based ministry, so a Stephen Minister will listen with compassion, and offer prayer if desired. If you or anyone you know might want a Stephen Minister, please call Patty Joyce at (813) 528-8565, Roy Marks at (352) 206-0464 or the church at (813) 782-7412 to speak with Pastor Denise.

WHEN WILL WE GATHER TOGETHER AGAIN?

Dear Friends –

Our Re-Opening Task Force continues to plan and prepare for our re-opening for in-person worship. At this time, we are waiting to see if the current spike in new cases of COVID-19 will continue or abate. During the time in which our services are available online, we continue to work to improve and enhance the Sunday worship experience. Your feedback is always appreciated. Once we re-open for in-person worship, we hope that you will feel that it is alright to continue to worship online at home if that works best for you. Some things to keep in mind when the sanctuary re-opens:

- Social distancing will be in place as you enter and leave
- Seating arrangements will allow for a safe distance between worshipers
- Hymnals, pens, attendance pads, etc. will be removed from the pews
- We will ask that you wear a mask and use hand sanitizer
- For a period of time, we will eliminate greeting and coffee fellowship
- Singing and liturgy may “look” different at first
- We ask that you please stay home if you are sick or not feeling well.



Once the decision is made to open the sanctuary for Sunday worship, we will continue to offer a strong online presence, since not everyone will be ready to attend in person. We will also delay the re-start of other activities until we are able to assess and plan for the safety of all. Thank you for your patience during this time that has been challenging for all of us!

BOLT V.B.S. — JULY 15th, 22nd & 29th

We are excited to join with First United Methodist Church, Awake Wesleyan Church and First Church of the Nazarene to present Virtual Bible School! Students can pick up a V.B.S. kit at our church beginning on July 6th. The kit contains instructions and supplies to participate in Bolt V.B.S. New online episodes will be released July 15th, 22nd and 29th. Using the kits, students can participate in the online and interactive activities each week. A new kit is available each week. Pick up times for the V.B.S. kits are: Monday, Wednesday & Friday between 4:00 and 5:00 PM, or Tuesday and Thursday between 9:00 AM and 1:00 PM.



Dear Friends –



We have entered the “Dog Days of Summer!” Does that expression bring to mind the image of a day so hot that even the dogs have to lay around panting? Here in Florida, it’s so hot even the fake plants are wilting. It’s so hot that chickens are laying boiled eggs. It’s so hot that my thermometer reads, “you’ve got to be kidding me!” It’s so hot that by the time you get a loaf of bread home, it’s toast. It’s so hot... you get the idea. We call these hot, sultry days of summer “Dog Days” even though the Farmer’s Almanac tells us this term refers to the timing of the rising of the Dog Star, Sirius, which doesn’t actually affect the weather. Nonetheless, during the months of July and August we may be inclined to spend more time indoors in the air conditioning. This year especially, that seems like a good plan with the resurgence of the coronavirus. It is almost as though we are starting over with social distancing, partial isolation and so on. Let me encourage you to be safe and to make the most of this time. But more importantly, let me encourage you to not lose hope! In March, I preached a sermon founded in Romans 5:1-5. This is a good passage to read and re-read as it offers us strength and hope that “does not disappoint” (5:5). Renowned Christian author and theologian Lewis Smedes says, “our souls need hope the way our lungs need oxygen.” We are always moving into an unknown future, not just now, but always and hope keeps us moving forward. As Christians, the ultimate ground on which our hope rests is the steadfast love of God – proven to us through Christ. The reason our hope will never let us down is that God will never let us down. His love will never give us up. Of this you can be certain. It is proven on the cross. This hope we have in Christ does not disappoint. In this we can boast, in this we can endure, in this we can have courage, in this we can do far more than endure. For at just the right time, even while we were still weak – Christ died for us.

Let’s talk about this suffering business for just a minute more. In Romans 5, we come up against Paul’s words – we boast in our hope, but we also boast in our sufferings. Isn’t it true that sometimes suffering wears us down? Maybe you are even feeling worn down right now. Paul says here, that we are to boast in our suffering for we know that “suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us” (5:3-5). Those are challenging words. Sometimes, we feel as though hope is far away, that God is far away. But Christ is with us always and we can rest in the assurance that we never have to face anything alone.

So during these “Dog Days of Summer,” when a renewal of hope can feel like a welcome, cool breeze, let me suggest a few things you can do to focus on the hope that is ours. ,These are as important today as they were in March:

- Follow the guidelines being asked of us right now. ,Wear a mask; social distance.
- Practice Gratitude – it is easy to look at what is *not* right and miss all the things we have to be grateful for. ,Take time each day to offer some words of gratitude.
- Pray – prayer is the essential of the believer’s life. Now more than ever, we need to be on our knees in prayer. Prayer changes things and it changes us. I challenge you – I know you’re out their binge watching tv and movies – turn it off for even ½ hour each day and use that time to call out to God. Talk to God about your worries, seek guidance and wisdom and then simply sit quietly in God’s presence, listening, refocusing and renewing.
- Read the Word – look for the truth in God’s word and it will set you free. Over and over, scriptures speaks of God’s faithful presence, of God’s promises, of God’s power and of God’s love. Over and over, in the Old and New Testament, God says, “do not be afraid, for I am with you.” Be reminded that you are never alone.
- Connect with other Christians and with others who may need to hear from you. We need each other and you don’t have to be face to face with someone to connect. Call on the phone, Skype, Facetime, or even write a letter. Do you have grandchildren, nieces or nephews – write a note to them to let them know you are thinking of them.
- Appreciate creation –Take a little time each day to appreciate the outdoors, sit outside for a little while, if you can. Go out and look at the stars, observe some growing thing, breathe fresh air into your lungs. Look for God’s creative fingerprint on the world and on you. Let’s face the “Dog Days of Summer” with hope!

May the Peace of Christ be with you,

Denise



OUR CHURCH IS SERVING WITH ARMS OPEN WIDE!

Wow! It is amazing to see how God has opened our church to serve the hungry people of our community during the pandemic. We have served well-over 3,000 take-out meals and handed out nearly 1,000 bags of groceries, snack kits, fresh produce bags, pastries, bread, and much, much more! Meals and food bags are served Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Food Pantry is also open each Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The more we step out in faith, the more doors God opens! Volunteers and donors have contributed so graciously of their time and money and we are thankful! Include this undertaking in your prayers as we continue to follow God’s call to serve.

**The First Presbyterian
Church of Zephyrhills**
5510 19th Street
Zephyrhills, FL 33542
(813) 782-7412



July/August 2020

*First
Word*

“Together We Serve”

Office Closed Except by Appointment
Office: (813) 782-7412 E-mail: Firstpcz@verizon.net
Sunday Worship Service at 10:00 AM at: Firstpcz.org

Church Staff:

Rev. Denise Lay, Pastor
Cheryl Heath, Office Administrator
Debbie Edwards, Director of Music
Jason Edwards, Choir Director
Tracy Clemmer, Nursery Attendant

Deacons

Joyce McDonagh,
Moderator

Class of 2020

Maggie Andersen
Ron Bergstrom

Class of 2021

Catherine Coffey
Bob Crum
Donna VanTassel

Class of 2022

Mike Heath
Audrell Howard
Joyce McDonagh

Session

Barbara Crum, Clerk
of Session
Bob Crum, Treasurer

Class of 2020

Doug Dorgan
Mardell Franke
Rhonda Register

Class of 2021

Mary Margaret Trice
Roy Marks

Class of 2022

Barbara Crum
Tracy Linderman