



# The Newsletter

First Presbyterian Church  
Tullahoma, Tennessee

June/July 2026  
Volume 54, Issue 5

## **Monroe Harding Offering will be received on Father's Day**

On Father's Day (June 21) we will collect a special offering for Monroe Harding. Since they began in 1893 as an orphanage for displaced youth, Monroe Harding evolved and continually adapted to meet the needs of children and young adults who are in or transitioning out of state custody. They ensure that foster care youth and other vulnerable young people build a solid foundation of strengths, positioning them for success in adulthood. They provide children, young adults, and families with resources in the areas of Homes, Healing, and Opportunities through Engagement. They also advocate for service recipients and empower young people to advocate for themselves.

Monroe Harding is the only agency in Middle Tennessee providing a comprehensive continuum of services for current and former foster youth from birth to 26, as well as serving other vulnerable young adults. They fulfill their mission through four programs: Foster Care, Supportive Housing, Clinical Emotional and Mental Health Support, and a Youth Connections Resource Center.

Please consider giving to this special offering so that Monroe Harding can continue aiding at-risk youth.

## **FPC's 2026 Rummage Sale is on Saturday, July 11**

The Mission Committee has started planning for the Rummage Sale this July. The sale is a huge project for our church, and the proceeds go to local charities, Christmas hams, Christmas baskets, winter shelter supplies, local disaster relief, and our transportation and utilities assistance program. Here are some important details that will help you make plans to donate and volunteer:

**Sale Date and Time: Saturday, July 11: 7:00am-1:00pm**

**Donation Drop-Off: Sunday, July 5 after the Worship service until 12:30pm**

**Monday, July 6 – Wednesday, July 8: 9:00am-11:00am and 4:30pm-7:00pm**

**Thursday, July 9 (last day to donate): 9:00am-11:00am**

**Important: Please don't bring donations after 11:00am on Thursday, July 9.**

### **Ways that you can help:**

1. Donate early as this will make sorting and pricing easier.
2. Volunteer before the sale by accepting and unpacking donations, placing donations in designated areas, and pricing donated items.
3. Volunteer on the day of the sale as an observer, helper, bagger, holding-area worker, or cashier.
4. Volunteer to pick up and transport large items to and from the church if you have a truck.
5. Start saving boxes (small enough to be carried to a vehicle) that can be used by shoppers on the day of the sale. Bring these boxes to church during the donation drop-off hours above.

***Volunteer sign-up sheets will be available soon. We need your help for a successful event!***

***In this Issue: p. 2-Groups, Joys/Concerns, Birthdays; p. 3-Pastor's Message; p. 4-Minute with Mike; p. 5-Offering from the Office; p. 6-Around and About FPC; p. 7-Session Committee Reports; Good Sam Report; p. 8-Back Page***

**Here's what's happening!**

**Presbyterian Women**

Women's Circle will meet in the Fellowship Hall on **Wednesday, June 10**, at 10:00 a.m.

Our Horizon Bible study *Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Jesus Christ* by Rhashell D. Hunter will focus on "When You Are Walking with Jesus: The Road to Emmaus." Scripture: Luke 24:13-35. Main Idea: Jesus did not abandon his followers; we are not alone, for the Spirit of God is with us.

Fellowship and a light lunch will follow the Bible study. All women are invited to attend.

Mark your calendar: **JULY 8 and AUGUST 12** - Circle will meet at our regular time these two Wednesdays, 10:00 a.m. for a girls' lunch date at a predetermined location. We will try to keep the cost below \$15.00. Reservations will be required by the first of each month. You do not need to come to Circle to enjoy this time together; all women are invited for laughter and fellowship.

**Men's Breakfast**

Men's Breakfast will be **June 14 and July 12**. Gathering time is 8:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. Breakfast is provided. All men are welcome.

**DEADLINE FOR NEWSLETTER ARTICLES**

The deadline for the **August** issue of *The Newsletter* is **July 21**.



**Parish Joys/Concerns**

*Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus. Philippians 2:4-5*

**Please keep the following in your prayers:**

- Elmo Birkhead
- Ken Diehl
- Robin Gorman
- Sue Harvey
- Amy Hinds
- Sandy McKinney
- Vanessa McKinney
- Dennis Scharf
- Drew Sterling
- Jim Watts

**Please remember in your prayers** the following people who are unable to attend worship regularly:

- Jean Carter (Life Care Center)
- Ted and Beverly Elsasser (home)
- Patra Escue (home)
- Dot Gilfillan (Morning Pointe)
- Mary Harmon (Brookdale)
- Sue Harvey
- Hilde Joellenbeck (home)



**June**

- 1 – Jim Moran
- 3 – Becky Behrendorff  
Lesley Lawson
- 5 – Tommy Dimon
- 7 – Ken Patterson  
Sherry Ray
- 12 – Susan Harris
- 18 – Marsha Kushman  
Shirley Levine
- 22 – Jamie Fletcher
- 27 – Christine Wright

**July**

- 7 – Cole Sterling
- 8 – Charles Cox
- 11 – Zak Fletcher
- 12 – Kennedee Benderman
- 13 – Mary Harmon
- 15 – Helen McClure
- 17 – Dottie McCallie
- 18 – Mike Bradley
- 19 – Mark Watson
- 21 – Jessica Smith
- 22 – Thelma (Fuffy) Bearden  
Nan Hall
- 24 – Bob Huffines

*If you have a birthday in June or July and your name is not on the list, please call the church office and let us know. We would like to add your name to the birthday calendar.*

**First Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)**  
 P. O. Box 847  
 Tullahoma, TN 37388

**Vision statement: Worshipping God,  
 growing together, serving others,  
 welcoming all**

**Sunday school – 9:00 a.m.  
 Worship at 10:30 a.m.**

**Church Office:** 204 E. Grundy Street  
**Phone:** 931 455-9328  
**FAX:** 931 455-9306

**E-mail addresses**

Jim: [pastorjim Moran@gmail.com](mailto:pastorjim Moran@gmail.com)  
 Martha: [m2bradley@lighttube.net](mailto:m2bradley@lighttube.net)  
 Katie: [katherineprasser@gmail.com](mailto:katherineprasser@gmail.com)  
 Bethany: [bethanybsterling@gmail.com](mailto:bethanybsterling@gmail.com)  
 Robert: [robertwright621@gmail.com](mailto:robertwright621@gmail.com)  
 Mike: [michaelbradley@lighttube.net](mailto:michaelbradley@lighttube.net)

**Church Web site:**  
[www.fpctullahoma.org](http://www.fpctullahoma.org)

**Youth Website:**  
[www.pyc-tullahoma.com](http://www.pyc-tullahoma.com)

**Preschool Office:** 931 455-1515

**Preschool Email:**  
[learningplace@lighttube.net](mailto:learningplace@lighttube.net)

**Preschool Website:**  
[www.learningplacetullahoma.org](http://www.learningplacetullahoma.org)

**Church Staff**

Interim Pastor: Jim Moran  
 Minister to Children: Katie Prasser  
 Minister to Youth: Bethany Sterling  
 Secretary: Martha Bradley  
 Choir Director: Robert Wright  
 Parish Associate for Pastoral Care:  
 Michael Bradley  
 Learning Place Preschool Director:  
 Bethany Sterling

**Members of Session**

Murray Brown  
 Charlotte Broyles  
 Claudine Coile  
 Alan Harris  
 Charles Harvey  
 Karla Haws  
 Bob Huffines  
 Karla Keough  
 Shirley Levine  
 Helen McClure  
 Brad Sturgill  
 Doug Thomas  
 Bethany Sterling, Clerk of Session

## Pastor's Message

My friends,

The 227<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is from June 22-July 2, 2026. It is a great honor to serve as one of the commissioners to the General Assembly (GA) from the Middle Tennessee Presbytery. I will seek to represent our Tullahoma First Prez, the Middle Tennessee Presbytery, and our God with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love. I want you to be aware of the work of GA. Committees of the Assembly will meet online from June 22-24 from the commissioners' hometown area. The plenary in-person gathering of the GA will be in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, from June 28 to July 2. It will be like one majorly oversized presbytery or session meeting with the latest *Robert's Rules of Order* (Newly Revised) keeping order and providing for all to have a voice. Our *Book of Order* defines the GA: "the council of the whole church and it is representative of the unity of the synods, presbyteries, sessions, and congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)." There are an equal number of ruling elders and teaching elders elected by the presbyteries. The GA has a high calling and purpose: "that the whole church becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness." (B.O., G-3.0501, p. 60, 2023/2024) The theme of the GA is "Persevering Toward Wholeness" drawn from the scriptural foundation of Revelation 22:2: "and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." (NRSVUE)

In the middle of May, the commissioners to General Assembly from presbyteries in our Synod of Living Waters met at First Presbyterian Church in Franklin, Tennessee, for an orientation to prepare for the General Assembly. When I was a commissioner to the GA in Columbus, Ohio, in 2001, I did not need my computer laptop (and possibly a second screen!) to participate in the meeting. The orientation was to get all of us baby boomers ready to participate electronically and everyone else prepared for both the rigor and joy of the week with Presbyterians from all over the United States.

Each commissioner serves on a General Assembly committee. *Reformed Identity around the World* is the committee on which I have been assigned to serve. In addition to that GA committee, there are ten more committees, including some committees similar to session committees like *Financial Stewardship and Witness*, which may be like the session's Stewardship and Mission committees combined. Another example would be the *General Assembly Operations*, which would be like our Administration committee, overseeing church operations and personnel. There are several other committees like the one I will serve on that represent some of the work of the greater Presbyterian Church in the nation and world. The overtures from presbyteries coming to our committee include important events and issues like: "Call to Review the Restructuring of the PC(USA) World Mission"; "Calling for a New Missiological Statement for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)"; and "Call Israel's War in Gaza Genocide." As you can see the GA committees discuss and act on some important, and possibly controversial, issues facing the church and world. Prayer and seeking the will of God are a must in the work of the GA. Please pray for the General Assembly (and Jim) to seek faithfully and act on the will of God in their decisions.

May the love and peace of God be with you,  
 Jim

**Minute with Mike** by Michael Bradley, Parish Associate for Pastoral**I'm Still Listening**

I have always liked the story in the Old Testament about how the boy Samuel heard God speak to him but did not know, at first, who it was. When Samuel did understand who was calling him, he replied, "Speak, Lord. Your servant is listening." I like this story because it is my story as well.

When I was about ten years old, I felt a nagging sense that I was supposed to do something. What that "something" was became the realization that I should tell the good news of God's love—I should preach. I remember the time and place when I said "yes" to that urge. I have never had doubts or reservations about my accepting that call. I will be eighty-six on July 18 and I have now had this call for seventy-six years.

When I was fifteen, in 1955, I was asked to speak at a Youth Rally at a small church in New Hope, Alabama. That was the beginning of a public ministry that has lasted until the last Sunday of June 2026. Following that Youth Rally I was regularly asked to speak at Rallies, Youth Sundays, Vacation Bible Schools, and such.

In 1959 I enrolled at Howard College, now Samford University, and two life-changing events occurred: I met Martha and I began to participate in the college-sponsored "H-Day" program. This program sent representatives of the college to various churches to hold a service and to promote the school to the young people of the congregation. I travelled all over Alabama for the next four years visiting a different church every week. In that process I saw that small churches had difficulty finding well-prepared ministers, and I realized that if I had a way of supporting myself professionally, I could serve a small church which could not pay a large

salary. I chose to pursue my life-long love of history so I could teach.

In 1962 I became the pastor of a little congregation at Gaylesville, Alabama, about seventy-five miles northeast of Birmingham. They held worship services twice a month and paid me \$15 for each week. Since I received \$15 every two weeks from my parents, that seemed a good salary, especially since gas was \$.15 a gallon!

In 1963 Martha and I were married and we moved to New Orleans where I enrolled at the seminary and Martha taught in a high school. In 1966 I graduated from seminary and we moved to Nashville while I earned a Ph.D. in U.S. History at Vanderbilt and Martha continued to teach. In 1968 I became the pastor of the LaVergne Presbyterian Church and became a member of what was then called The Presbytery of Nashville.

I went to LaVergne when I saw a notice on a bulletin board at Vanderbilt that that congregation wanted someone to supply their pulpit for a couple of weeks. The holidays were approaching and I thought I would earn some Christmas money. I stayed there eight years. The town of LaVergne grew a great deal during those years, and the church wanted to find a full-time pastor. Martha and I had moved to Tullahoma, with a two-month-old daughter, Nancy Todd, in 1970 when I joined the faculty at Motlow College, finding a job which paid a living wage. We left the church at LaVergne the last Sunday of December 1976. The first Sunday of January 1977, I began preaching at the Presbyterian Church of Clifton, Tennessee. I stayed there thirty years.

Clifton was a wonderful congregation. There were 35 to 40 people present most Sundays, they

had a variety of ages, including young people, and the church was at the center of community life. We worshipped in a building erected in 1854. The only problem for me was that Clifton is 125 miles west of Tullahoma, so I made a 250-mile round-trip each week. When the family went with me, a family that now included our son, Michael, born in 1972, we spent the night in an apartment in the church! After 30 years I had driven 360,000 miles—more than fourteen times around the world—and never went anywhere but Clifton, Tennessee. I still cherish memories of the people and events of those thirty years.

I retired at Motlow College on June 30, 2006, and stayed at Clifton until the end of the year, retiring there on Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24, 2006.

I had one Sunday free at the end of 2006 before becoming the interim pastor at Manchester where I stayed for a year and a half. After a short break I served as interim at Tullahoma for almost two years, then at Normandy (first interim), Decherd, Normandy again, remained at Decherd until Easter of 2024, and, in 2025 back to Normandy for a third interim. Three times I was interim pastor at Normandy! I love that church and its people. They are a loving and caring community.

I have been preaching for seventy-one years. I began when I heard God's call to do so. I have now heard that same voice say it is time to stop. Age reduces ability, tasks are completed, commitments are fulfilled. Ecclesiastes puts it well, "there is a time for every purpose under heaven", and that includes a time to cease what one has been doing.

But should God speak, I am still listening.

## Offering from the Office *by Martha Bradley, Church Secretary*

*“When your spirit starts to feel weary, feed yourself with quietness, with beauty, and with prayer.”* (from *What About God?*, Helen R. Neinast and Thomas C. Ettinger)

Most folks do not think of a wildflower field guide as a devotional tool, but over many years I have found it to be the perfect companion, along with my hiking partner Mike, for taking time away to be renewed, refreshed, and awakened to God’s spirit.

I have learned that the only way I am to get the respite I need is to plan it. One of my favorite places to experience renewal involves a few days in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. We just returned from such a trip, an infusion of beauty, quietness, and restoration.

During such breaks I enjoy the outrageous beauty of the natural world. I pay attention to the wildflowers along the hiking trail – the Pipsissewa, Showy Orchis, Squirrel Corn, Bishop’s Cap, Doll’s Eyes, Dutchman’s Pipe, Brook Lettuce, Lousewort, and an array of Trilliums – noting the interesting intricate details of the plants and their environment. Can’t help but love and remember these names!

The wildflower field guidebook soon becomes my devotional guide. Various wildflowers are sources of a lovely restful mind/spirit reset.

After such experiences as discovering and identifying wildflowers, listening to birdsong and trying to catch a

glimpse of its source, resting beside a gurgling stream or a tumbling waterfall, being chattered by an apprehensive squirrel, and watching any other wildlife that is scampering in the ground cover, and on occasion sighting a black bear, deer, or elk, I feel renewed and ready for the creative and productive committee meeting and the variety of things that present themselves in the church office under the guise of “Ask Martha.”

Precious moments in a natural setting inspire fresh ideas for my work. They help me prepare to give full attention to each situation as it arises – whether working in the office, attending a meeting, participating in a class, or encountering a stranger in the grocery store.

Wise ones remind us to pay attention, to live in the moment. My tendency is to look ahead and plan, but I realize that is also important to savor the moment. Time away gives me the perspective to balance both.

Time away to relax, wonder, and ponder reminds me that all things are not held together by us or through our efforts. It reminds me that we are created for God and, as God’s children, for relationship with one another.

Recovering such a perspective often means learning to say no. It is also seeing that all God’s work is very good. Often our busy-ness keeps us from the task of being still and remembering that God alone is God.

Have you found the joy of scheduling some restorative time each day or at least several times a week? If not, these summer months when schedules are often not quite as tight and rigid may be a time to try making time for some relaxing, joyous humanizing activities. Do something for yourself: walking, gardening, listening to music, reading a delightful book, piddling with a hobby, lingering in a bubble bath.

Whatever you choose, do it with joy, not compulsion, something that refreshes and renews you. I sense that God is present with us in these moments of personal delight as much as when we are praying.

Each of us needs to take responsibility for oneself with unapologetic firmness and clarity. I have begun to understand self-care as a holy act, not only as stewardship of God’s “temple” within us but as a witness to the faith that everyone of us is God’s beloved.



## Around and About FPC

### **Fellowship (Time) Sunday begins**

The Family Activities and Outreach Committee wants to revive our fellowshiping with each other. We are going to be starting a new monthly Fellowship (Time) Sunday where we take some time after worship to visit with old friends and hopefully become better acquainted with newer faces. Our first Fellowship Sunday will be **Sunday, June 21**, following our Youth Sunday worship service.

For this first Fellowship Sunday, we are asking the congregation to bring a small food item to share. This can be a finger food, a dessert, or anything else of your choosing, but it does not need to be a regular potluck amount. We will gather in the Williams Family Center following worship and spend a little time enjoying a post-church snack and conversation.

This new Fellowship (Time) Sunday doesn't take the place of individuals or groups signing up to host a Sunday Fellowship Time, so please don't hesitate to sign up in the narthex for a regular Sunday Fellowship Time.

### **Youth are off to Montreat**

Thirteen youth and three adults will be traveling to Montreat Youth Conference the week of June 7. The youth return from their week at Montreat energized about their faith experience.

We will be sharing some of those experiences during **Youth Sunday on Sunday, June 21**. We hope that you will worship with us as the youth lead the service, which will center around the 2026 Montreat Youth Conference theme "Wonder and Wander".

### **Children's Ministry**

#### Summer Events 2026

**June 3** - 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

#### **Painting Kindness Rocks** -

Younger Elementary (children ages 3-years through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade). We will put out the rocks on our Hike to Tim's Ford State Park

3:00 - 5:00 p.m. **Ceiling Tile**

**Painting** - Older Elementary (rising 3<sup>rd</sup> graders through rising 6<sup>th</sup> graders)

**June 16 - 18 - Vacation Bible**

**School** - 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. All children ages 3 through rising 6<sup>th</sup> graders.

Children will learn stories about Jesus, his ministry, and his followers. They will hear about the miracles, the testimonies, the friends and enemies he had. Each child will have the opportunity to visit different marketplace stalls, such as pottery, weaving, textiles, jewelry, baking, music, and woodwork.

**June 24** - All Ages Welcome 9:00

- 11:00 a.m. **Positive Vibes**

**Sidewalk Chalk** - Come spread some positive vibes and inspiration to our neighborhood by joining us for a morning of sidewalk chalk art.

**June 26 - 27** - 7:00 p.m. - 7:00:

a.m. Rising 3<sup>rd</sup> graders through rising 6<sup>th</sup> graders - **Lock-In**

**July 1** - 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. All Children ages 3 through rising 6<sup>th</sup> grade - **Movie and Popcorn**

**July 8** - 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. All Children ages 3 through rising 6<sup>th</sup> graders. **Community Garden and Ice Cream** - Join us in the

community garden to harvest, weed, and care for the plants we have planted, while we enjoy ice cream and fellowship together. (Lactose-free ice cream will be

available for those who have lactose allergies.)

**July 15** - 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

**Positive Vibes Sidewalk Chalk** - All ages welcome - Come spread some positive vibes and inspiration to our neighborhood by joining us for a morning of sidewalk chalk art.

**July 22** - 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

**Field Day** - All Children ages 3 through rising 6<sup>th</sup> graders - Water games, outdoor activities, snacks, and fellowship.

**July 25** - 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

**Community Garden and Treat** - All Children ages 3 through rising 6<sup>th</sup> graders. Join us in the community garden to harvest, weed, and care for the plants we have planted, while we enjoy a treat and fellowship together.

**August 12** - 5:00 - 6:30 p.m.

**Kingdom Kids starts back for the 2026/2027 school year** - All Children ages 3 through rising 5<sup>th</sup> graders.

\*\*We are looking to schedule a hike with a park ranger at Tim's Ford State Park for a Saturday in August or September.

Katie Prasser  
Minister to Children

### **Mission Sunday**

Please bring some of the following items with you to worship on **June 10** in support of the Good Sam Food Ministry.

**Requests for June/July** - canned fruits, canned vegetables, dry spaghetti, pasta sauce, soup, soda crackers, cereal, peanut butter, canned tuna, canned chicken

**Special food needs** - Mac & Cheese, Ramen Noodles

**Dignity request** - TP, Bar Soap

## Session Committee Reports

### *Property Committee – Bob Huffines*

Our Security Program began on Sunday, May 03. The Police Department recommended the Security person be easily identified. The decision was made to wear a yellow vest, very visible.

Our 8 entrance/egress doors were re-keyed on Monday, May 11. New keys were distributed throughout the following week.

We welcome Debbie Brown to our Security team. **Good Sam Ministry**

We will have 5 Phoenix apartments vacated soon; refurbishing to follow.

The second air conditioner unit was installed in the upstairs Annex.

Life expectancy has expired on our 4 defibrillator (AED) units. We are investigating replacing as needed.

We assisted in cleaning up our building preparing for the Presbyterian Women of Middle Tennessee Presbytery meeting.

Alan Harris continues to replace expended lighting as needed.

Our church van received the annual service on May 07.

First Aid kits are available in both kitchens, identified with first aid labels.

We are investigating the condition of the Annex roof;

shingles are being found on our grounds.

There's work to be done in the rear of the playground, items to be removed, and area to be cleaned.

Unfortunately, our Custodian (Crystal) was relieved of her duties on May 18.

Please forward suggestions and recommendations for improvements to our committee.

Respectfully,  
Bob Huffines, Chairman

### *Stewardship Committee – Charles Harvey*

Everything that we have has been given to us by God. All our resources—time, talents, money, and material possessions—belong to God, and we are merely stewards entrusted with their care. Rather than asking — what does God want me to give to Him? You can ask — is there anything I am withholding from God?

How we handle what God has entrusted to us is a measure of our faithfulness. You are encouraged to give what you believe God is asking you to give. Our stewardship is an expression of our faithfulness to God and trust in His provision. We now can offer it

back to God and allow Him to use it for His purposes.

Tithes and offerings are part of what it means to be good stewards, but it's so much more than that. Stewardship is about the heart of the giver.

Alan Harris explained in his review of church finances that the pledges of financial support by our church members are projected to be far short of our expectations and therefore will make the church pull from our reserves, which have already been depleted in the past few years.

Here is a simple example of how members of the church can

help. Remember that we only have seven months left this year.

Make an additional \$5.00 contribution to the collection plate each week. Which means you have contributed an additional \$20.00 per month. Which means that you have contributed an additional \$140.00 this year.

If we have 100 church members contributing at this level, we will add an additional \$14,000.00 this year.

This weekly additional contribution can be put into the collection plate or as an automatic contribution by credit card.

### *Good Sam Ministry Report - Cindy Kinney, Director*

**APRIL 2026** -Ministry Office was open – 20 DAYS

Code: F-Families, A-Adults, C-Children

**UTILITIES** –23F, 28A, 29C

**PROJECT HELP** – 4F, 4A, 2C

**RENT** – 10F, 12A, 5C

**MEDICATION** – 1F, 1A, 0C

**FOOD & DIGNITY** - 84F, 136A, 73C

*\*All clients are given two dignity items per month, and they may choose 3 extra items from our bookcase in the ministry office. These items may be lotions, candles, candy, spices, protein drinks, hand sanitizer, or over the counter medications\**

**BABY BOOM** - 6F, 8A, 4C

**GIFTS/GIVEAWAYS** - 5F, 6A, 3C (Clothing & Shoes)

**HOMELESS** - 2F, 2A, 0C

**PET FOOD** -32F

### ***The Sacred Pace of Rest***

Jesus, who often withdrew with his disciples to quiet, deserted places, understood something we easily forget: transformation takes time. The richest, most life-giving compost does not form overnight. As author James Gleick observes, “You can’t hurry compost for the same reason you can’t hurry love and you can’t hurry a soufflé. The biochemistry has its own inherent pace.” In much the same way, the most meaningful parts of life unfold slowly. Relationships deepen over years. Wisdom grows through experience. True rest cannot be rushed.

Disciples of Jesus today are invited to rediscover the value of the deserted place. It is not empty or wasted space, but sacred ground. It is where long books can be read, unhurried prayers can be offered and deep thoughts can take root. It is where Sabbath is honored through rest, renewal and quiet attentiveness to God.

In a culture that prizes speed and productivity, stepping away may feel counterintuitive. Yet it is in these still moments that our souls are restored and made fertile for growth. The deserted place becomes a gift, shaping us into people who are grounded, attentive and spiritually mature, ready to reenter the world with renewed strength and purpose.

### ***The Quiet Power of Faithfulness***

The greatest forces in the universe are rarely spectacular. Gentle summer showers often do more lasting good than hurricanes, though they draw little attention. The world depends on the faithfulness, loyalty and dedication of countless people whose names are never known.

Every life, no matter how humble, has a role in shaping a better world and a more beautiful tomorrow. It is easy to overvalue what seems impressive and underestimate what appears ordinary. Yet lasting change is most often built through quiet commitment, patient service and faithful hearts doing what matters most, day after day.

### ***A Child’s Favorite Word***

A 6-year-old boy attended a church conference with his parents. After listening for a short while, he began to fidget in his seat. To help him settle down, his mother handed him a notepad and pencil and suggested he make a mark every time the speaker said the word “and.”

Before long, the boy grew restless again. “Would you like to listen for a different word?” his mother whispered. “Yes,” he replied. “I’d like to listen for ‘Amen.’”