

# *The Newsletter*

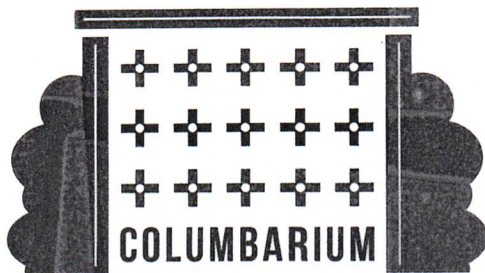
*First Presbyterian Church  
Tullahoma, Tennessee*

August 2025  
Volume 53, Issue 6

## ***Pastor Yates has accepted a call from a Knoxville church***

After almost 12 years as Pastor at First Presbyterian Church, Tullahoma, Pastor Yates will be leaving after Sunday, August 10, to become the Pastor of Lake Hills Presbyterian Church in Knoxville, Tennessee. We express our appreciation for his years of service among us. Our blessings and prayers go with him as he begins his ministry there. The email he sent to the congregation on July 14 is reprinted on page 6.

## ***Columbarium – “in life and in death we belong to God”***



Stephen's sabbatical and our own congregational activities during his sabbatical centered around the theme of baptism. The grant-writing team for Stephen's sabbatical suggested that a permanent water feature could be installed on the First Presbyterian Church grounds as a reminder of the water of baptism. Moreover, if you have ever attended a funeral officiated by Stephen, you will have heard him state that in death we have completed our baptismal vows. For these reasons, Session designated Bethany Sterling and Alan Harris as a two-person committee to investigate the possibility of a columbarium and small water feature here at the church.

If you are unfamiliar with a columbarium, it is a structure for the reverential and public storage of funerary urns holding cremated remains. A church columbarium allows individuals to remain connected to their faith community and the spiritual home where they found solace and fellowship during their lifetime. There are financial benefits as well, since columbarium niches generally cost less than traditional burial plots, caskets, and headstones, making them a more budget-friendly option. Columbariums are tasteful and can be created in a variety of ways.

Bethany and Alan, with Stephen's input, believe installing a columbarium in the courtyard area is both a feasible option and a physical tie to our lives of faith. Installing a columbarium is not without costs; however, a columbarium seems to be a fitting use for the generous amount in the undesignated memorial fund. Once installed in a niche, the cremains are held in perpetuity. In order to determine the size of the initial construction, we would like to know who might be interested in purchasing a niche. At this time, we do not know pricing details; however, we do know it is a more affordable option than a traditional cemetery burial. In fact, if you already have purchased a cemetery plot but would be interested in purchasing a niche at FPC, you may be able to sell back your plot, purchase a niche, and make money in the process.

Niche prices at churches in Middle Tennessee range from approximately \$2,500 to \$5,500, with most in the \$2,700 range. These costs allow for the cremains of 2 individuals in separate urns. The cost typically includes the niche, the urns, a granite front cover, and a front cover engraving.

Purchasing a niche and the internment of cremains in the columbarium would be under specific guidelines and procedures, but we believe having a columbarium on the church grounds is a visible reminder that in life and in death we belong to God.

If you would be interested in learning more, or if you would be potentially interested in purchasing a niche, we invite you to reach out to Bethany ([bethanybsterling@gmail.com](mailto:bethanybsterling@gmail.com)) or Alan ([raharris92854@gmail.com](mailto:raharris92854@gmail.com)) with any questions. This will greatly help us in determining interest.

*In this Issue:* Group Happenings, Joys/Concerns, August Birthdays, p. 2; Pastor's Column, p. 3; Minute with Mike, p. 4; Offering from the Office, p. 5; Around and About FPC, pp. 6,7; Session Committee Reports, pp. 8,9; back page, p. 10

## Here's what's happening!

### Presbyterian Women

All women are invited to come to PW Circle as we start a new Horizon Bible study, *Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Jesus Christ* by Rhashell D. Hunter. We will meet Wednesday, September 10, 10:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

Last year we enjoyed a light lunch after the Bible Study for \$5.00 and plan to continue this fellowship.

Bonnie Watts has the study books for \$10.00.

### Men's Breakfast

The next Men's Breakfast will be August 10. Gathering time is 8:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. Breakfast is provided. All men are welcome.



*If you have a birthday in August 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.*

- 1 – Willow Hobbs
- 3 – Debra McCullough
- 5 – Sophie Sanders
- 7 – Karla Haws
- 15 – Doug Thomas
- 18 – Toby Wright
- Noah Prasser
- 21 – Dan Peres
- 24 – Ted Ball III
- 27 – Cheryl Scharf
- Diana Hamilton
- 29 – J. Ray Joellenbeck



### 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:**

- Ed Crenshaw,
- Ardeana Patterson's brother
- Beverly Elsasser
- Dot Gilfillan
- Sandy McKinney
- Vanessa McKinney
- Avery Scheider, a former Learning Place student
- Drew Sterling
- Don Stuck, Greg Sterling's father

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

- Jean Carter (home)
- Patra Escue (home)
- Connie Flath (NHC)
- Sue Harvey (home)
- Hilde Joellenbeck (home)

### Birth –

We welcome Henry Emerson Cadman, born on July 3, 2025. Parents are Grayson and Jack Cadman; Grandparents are Julie and Max Christopher. Great-grandmother is Mary Jane Christopher. Congratulations and best wishes to all!

### Good Samaritan Ministry

Ministry Office was open 20 days in June.

(Code: F-families; A-adults, C-children)

Utilities - 22F, 29A, 27C

Project Help – 1F, 1A, 0C

Rent - 8F, 13A, 10C

Medication – 0F, 0A, 0C

Food - 82F, 132A, 86C

Dignity - 82F, 132A, 86C

*\*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 - 3F, 4A, 2C

Gifts/Giveaways - 2F, 2A, 2C (Clothing & Shoes)

Homeless - 0F, 0A, 0C

Pet Food -32F

Your support through your monthly donations is a blessing to our ministry and to those we serve! Thank you.

Cindy Kinney, Director

### DEADLINE FOR NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

The deadline for the **September** issue of *The Newsletter* is noon on **Tuesday, August 19.**

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  
Phone: 931 455-9328  
FAX: 931 455-9306

**E-mail addresses**

Stephen: [sgyates1970@gmail.com](mailto:sgyates1970@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: [michaelrbradley@lighttube.net](mailto:michaelrbradley@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**

Pastor: Stephen Yates

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

Custodian: Shannon Prasser

**Members of Session**

Murray Brown

Charlotte Broyles

Alan Harris

Charles Harvey

Karla Haws

Bob Huffines

J. Ray Joellenbeck

Karla Keough

Shirley Levine

Helen McClure

Bethany Sterling, Clerk

Brad Sturgill

## Pastor's COLUMN

Dear Church Family,

Way back in 1988, during the last week of my senior year at Bearden High School in Knoxville, we had a “field day,” which also included the chance to sign each other’s freshly delivered yearbooks. Running into Pat Mashburn, who had been my AP Government teacher for the year, I asked her to sign my yearbook. Rushing from person to person, it was only later when reviewing the assorted comments and signatures from people that I ran across what Mrs. Mashburn had scribbled in my yearbook. “Teachers aren’t supposed to have favorites,” she wrote, “but you are one of mine.” I had always enjoyed her class, and I guess it showed to her. But her remark in my yearbook stuck with me. “Teachers aren’t supposed to have favorites, but you are one of mine.”

Well, I think it could be said the same principle applies to ministers and the assorted churches they may have served over the years. Ideally, ministers aren’t supposed to have favorites either, right? In keeping with the Gospel message that all people are beloved children of God, ministers should seek to care for everyone, and as best they can, treat all congregants the same. Admittedly, a tough job that every minister fails at to one degree or another. And for those times when I have not lived into that high calling during my time with you, I seek your pardon. And yet, that’s been the goal nonetheless.

But at the risk of getting in trouble with the two other churches I have also served, I will let you in on a little secret. Ministers aren’t supposed to have favorites, but you are one of mine. It truly has been a pleasure to be among you for the last 12 years. Out of the many things we have done, I am personally most proud of the work at the Phoenix Apartments, as well as the Cold Night program. I can think of no better examples of a church reaching out into the world in an effort to make a difference in people’s lives. And while there have been other ministries we have also engaged in, I am especially thankful for your willingness to embrace those two endeavors.

Back in 1982 I was obsessed with a movie called *The Man from Snowy River*. The protagonist of the movie, Jim Craig, is a mountain man who finds himself working on a cattle farm in the lowlands somewhere in Australia. Getting into a fight with several other workers in the bunk house, another ranch hand, a fellow named Frew, comes to Jim’s aid, allowing him to win the fight even though outnumbered. As Jim gathers his stuff to leave to head back to the mountains, he stops at the door, turns, and says to Frew, “A man can be hard to find in the mountains. But you’re welcome at my fire anytime.”

As I have said to many of you over the last several days, the decision to take a new call has been one of the hardest decisions I’ve ever made. But please know every single one of you is welcome at our fire anytime.

I wish you God’s grace, love and peace.

**Stephen**

**Minute with Mike** by Michael Bradley, Parish Associate for Pastoral Care**Too Old to Cut the Mustard  
but Young Enough to Pass the  
Pepper**

I was in the Tractor Supply store recently to buy some bird seed. I got to the display of forty pound sacks of sunflower seed at the same time as another man who looked to be about my age. I started to slide a sack from the top of the stack when, without a word, the other man steadied my buggy so it would not roll away when I slid the sack of seed into it. He then reached for a bag of seed, so I held his buggy steady.

When we were both loaded up, he said, "That sack says it holds forty pounds, which is the same thing it has said for a long time. But I don't believe it; I think they put a little extra seed in it every time I come get one." I agreed with him, said that I had noticed the bags got heavier over time myself.

The man continued; "Used to, I would take a load that weighed this much and just throw it up on my shoulder and walk off with it. Now I ease it in my buggy and look for help getting it to my truck. It is frustrating not being able to do what you used to do and still want to do."

He noted that he was 83-years-old, and I replied that I was 85 and that there were any number of things I used to do that I had given up, some aspects of which I found frustrating.

"Giving up things" seems to be one of the themes of advancing age. The passing of years can be

denied mentally, but the physical changes it brings cannot be avoided.

An important question is "How does one avoid a life of frustration?" In John 21:18 Jesus says to Peter: "When you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." It seems that the issue of being frustrated with the changes brought by aging has been a part of the human condition for a long time.

For myself, I find no advantage to focusing on what I can no longer do. The list would be long, if I were to make one, and contemplating it would be frustrating. It is much better to adapt and to find new ways of doing what I still can.

I know my balance is poor, so I carry a walking stick—but I insist on a stick that has some "swagger" and not one that says "old man." I know that people my age have a tendency to ramble when they talk, so if I am addressing a group, I use a full manuscript to keep me on track. I know I get tired in the afternoons, so I keep time available to have a nap. As my Great-grandfather, Poppa Johnny, used to say, "I ain't the man I used to be, but I probably never was."

It is also important to focus on what I can do now that I could not do when I was younger. Years ago

I did not have the time to read all I wanted to: I had to spend time working. Now I have time to read and to explore subjects that have long interested me but which I did not have the opportunity to follow.

Because work does not demand so much of my time, I can spend some time with other people in social settings. A significant social problem today is that many people are lonely. I can help remedy that by asking people out for coffee or for lunch. That contact is good for them and good for me. I can offer stories which reflect the accumulation of insight gained from long experience with life, and sometimes that insight may offer a glimmer of help and hope to the people who hear the stories.

Yes, the forty pound sacks of seed do weigh more today than they did years ago. But I can adapt, I can change, I can accept, I can find a way to live productively and not be frustrated by what I am. With God's help, so can we all.



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

### We Are Copycats

I once read an article which said that pastors preach themselves into belief. I don't know if that is true, but I do know from observation that in preparing sermons and wrestling with the scriptures week after week for years upon years, that the stories of Scripture become embedded in their brain and the essence of the verses bubble up unbidden, if not the direct quote. Pastors spend a lot of time studying, writing about, praying with, and preaching God's Word. Therefore, it is conceivable to me that they may preach themselves into belief – including also that Holy Spirit has a part in the process.

My guess is that pastors may occasionally wish the divine speech would not echo so loudly in their head. They do not always want to be reminded that they are to be perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect. They may want to ignore the holy decree that love of money is the root of all evil or that love of enemies is critical to discipleship. When the epistles invade daily living, they must reckon with their inability to give thanks in all circumstances.

While they may realize that they still have much to learn about the inspired Word of God, most of them know the major themes, the arc of the narrative, the parables, many of the Psalms and no doubt at least a conflated version of the prophets. Moreover, they well know all of this is God's Word.

But does biblical knowledge translate into faithful living?

I read recently that actors'

brains are changed through the portrayal of characters. Pretending to be someone else informs and shapes who they are. "Acting changes the brain: It is how actors get lost in a role," an article in *Aeon* by Christian Jarrett, reports.

Experiments reveal "the ease with which the self can be weakened or overshadowed." Further research showed that even with non-actors, "by simply thinking about another person, we may adapt our self to take the shape of that person."

It is no wonder then that Paul calls us to imitate him as he imitates Christ. (It has taken me a while to get passed the notion that this statement of Paul is narcissistic. What he is saying, I think, is that we should be imitators of Christ, of which he is an example.) Learning about God through Scripture does indeed change us, if we think about it and enact it.

As a new program year begins at First Presbyterian Church, what if we attempted some discipleship role play? Could we learn the divine script and act it out until it becomes embodied in us? At the very least we should pay attention to who it is we emulate. It is sobering to realize that those we merely think about shape us. The self, as it turns out, can be overshadowed more readily than we thought. We ought, then, to seek to be overshadowed by the power of the Most High and not the lowest common denominator of our culture.

Just as many do at the beginning of a new year in January, making New Year's resolutions, or

at least giving some thought to ways to improve ourselves and our world, perhaps we can use the beginning of the new program year to take stock of our spiritual side and consider ways to become "better imitators of Christ."

Consider participating in a class and/or becoming more involved in some aspect of the life of the congregation. There are a plethora of ways to be involved: if you are a teacher, teach; if you are a planner, serve on a committee; if you enjoy visiting people, use that gift to bring joy and comfort to members who would enjoy the company; if you enjoy being with children, talk to Katie for ideas of ways that can happen; if you have specific skills, there is undoubtedly a way to use those in the church or your neighborhood.

I believe God's Word does not return to God empty but accomplishes the purpose for which God sends it. I am hopeful that all the biblical fragments floating around in my head are somehow written on my heart and subsequently steer the work of my hands. I am reminded that Scripture tells us that when we love one another Jesus abides in us.

As one of the researchers cited in the *Aeon* article noted, "As each of us chooses who to befriend, who to model, and who to ignore, we must make these decisions aware of how they shape not only the fabric of our social networks, but even our sense of who we are."

Jesus tells us we are his friends when we do as he commands. Perhaps he was on to something.

## Around and About FPC

### **Pastor's email to the congregation**

July 14, 2025

Friends,

Yesterday, following their morning worship service, the congregation at Lake Hills Presbyterian Church in Knoxville heard a report from their Pastor Nominating Committee, which included a recommendation that I be called as their new minister. That recommendation was approved unanimously and I have officially accepted the call. I informed the session of my new call yesterday late in the afternoon and asked that August 10 be my last day at FPC Tullahoma.

It has been a joy and honor to serve as your minister for the last 12 years and this has been an incredibly difficult decision. You are a fine congregation and your next minister, whoever that might be, will be a fortunate one. You will be missed.

Over the next several weeks, I will work with the session to prepare for what will follow in the coming months. Again, I am grateful for my time with you and wish you nothing but the best in the years to come.

Peace.  
Stephen

### **Learning Place Preschool**

The Learning Place Preschool registration is currently underway for the 2025-2026 school year. At this time, we only have openings at the Pre-K level; however, if you know anyone who is looking for a preschool, please send them our way.

Preschool orientation is August 7; our first day of class is August 11. Starting this year, all

our classes are Monday through Thursday mornings. We made the change based on both demand and the educational needs of students. Our tuition remains comparable to other preschools in the area, and we continue to offer 10 partial scholarships, which are funded by FPC.

Bethany Sterling, Director

### **Thank You!**

Dear FPC Congregation,

Thank you for your continued support of our youth programs, particularly your financial support for our attendance at Montreat Youth Conference.

This year 15 youth and 3 adults attended the Conference. The general consensus was participating in Montreat energized their faith, showed them they were allowed to share their experiences about what they believed, and reminded them that they were called to not just know about God but be God's feet and share their best, even if it may not always be enough.

On a personal note, I found it pretty exciting that the co-moderator of the current General Assembly, Rev. CeCe Armstrong, was our nightly preacher. It is not every day that Presbyterians have the chance to hear from and interact with a GA moderator.

Thank you again for supporting our youth through a budget line item, fundraisers, individual donations, prayer, and simply showing up.

Blessings,  
Bethany Sterling

### **Youth Activities**

Youth activities will resume on a regular, weekly basis on August 13. Middle school youth will begin in the gym at 5. At 5:30, we will move to the youth apartment, where we will have our lesson and eat dinner. On the third Wednesday of each month, we will go out to a local restaurant for dinner.

Middle school youth ends at 6:30. Parents or guardians should be on time to pick up their youth, as high school youth starts at 6:30.

High school youth meets from 6:30 to approximately 8 p.m. High school youth begins in the youth apartment; however, after our lesson, we go to a local restaurant for dinner each week. Pick up is at the local restaurant.

Throughout the year, we do have exceptions to these times. For instance, on Ash Wednesday we gather as a single group at 6:00 to participate in the church-wide service. Additionally, the senior high youth gather at 6:00 on the first Wednesday of each month to participate in our church-wide service, *Salon: A Rave for the Soul*, which is a much less formal, but still Presbyterian, thirty-minute worshipping experience geared towards youth.

It is very helpful if our adult churchgoers attend this service, as it is a way to connect our congregation with our youth. In addition, the "sermon" is presented by an adult and is a discussion-format. Having adults from our congregation participating in the service is an extremely helpful way to kick-start and continue the discussion.

Bethany Sterling,  
Minister to Youth

## Meet church committee members

During the next few months in the *Newsletter* we will be introducing the members of the Session Committees to help congregants feel more familiar with the people who lead various church activities and the role that each committee has in helping our church fulfill its mission. We will make available contact information so you can contact the chair if you have ideas which you wish to share or if you would like to serve on the committee.

This month the committee we are featuring is the **Family Activity and Outreach Committee**, co-chaired by **Helen McClure** and **Shirley Levine**. Other committee members are Thelma Bearden, Debbie Brown, Charlotte Broyles, Claudine Coile, Mary Grigsby, Nan Hall, Alan Harris, Katie Prasser, Bethany Sterling, and Stephen Yates. They meet on the second Monday of the month at 1:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.

Their responsibilities include providing opportunities for folks to have the opportunity to get together for fellowship; that means fellowship lunches and supper, oversight of Fellowship Time following the worship service, church picnics and other outings. They have oversight of inter-generational recreational activities, community groups using church facilities, and FPC's participation in community activities.

In addition to providing opportunities for the church family to get to know each other better, this committee is also tasked with outreach – contacting visitors and increasing visibility of First Presbyterian Church in our community.

The committee welcomes new ideas and depends on members of the church family to keep them informed of ways that they can better fulfill their responsibilities.

If you have a suggestion that you would like for the committee to consider, talk with one of the committee members or contact one of the committee chairs: Helen McClure at [jamcc@lighttube.net](mailto:jamcc@lighttube.net) or Shirley Levine at [shirley.levine@yahoo.com](mailto:shirley.levine@yahoo.com)

## Mission Sunday

Mission Sunday is the Sunday each month during which we bring items for the Good Sam Ministry. Please bring some of the following items with you to worship on **August 10**. There is a recurring list and special requests for particular months.

### Requests for August

**Regular food request:** canned fruits, canned vegetables, dry spaghetti, pasta sauce, soup, soda crackers, cereal, peanut butter, canned tuna, and canned chicken.

**Special food needs: canned tuna or chicken, and soup**

**Personal hygiene request: dish soap or bar soap**

## Children's Ministry

"Does God have a girlfriend?"  
 "Where is heaven located? My mom told me that it was outside of four circles and beyond an ice wall."  
 "If heaven is above the clouds, shouldn't we be able to see it from space?"  
 "What happens when we die?"  
 "What is heaven like?"  
 "Will God ever walk among us on this Earth?"  
 "Why are there bad people if God created all of us to be good?"

"How do we hear God?"

"Do we all come from Adam and Eve? Does that mean we are all related?"

These are some of the questions that were raised during our discussion at this year's annual lock-in. Some of them are common questions that kids ask, while some questions had the adult volunteers looking at each other in utter shock.

To listen to 8 to 12-year-olds debate why they think God does or does not have a girlfriend was, to say the least, very interesting. While the main argument for God having a girlfriend seemed to be "because that's just how things work," with the argument against it being "if he did, we would worship her too!" This one question sent us down a rabbit hole.

By the end, we had discussed every possible side, with the conclusion being that in reality, we have no real way of knowing, but probably not. We discussed how even though we, as humans, need relationships, which is why God created Eve for Adam, God himself is not human. God is God, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. God isn't human and therefore does not need the same connections that we, as humans, need.

We talked about how God sent Jesus, in human form, to help bridge the gap between God and humans. It is because Jesus came in human form that we can have a better relationship with God.

We have a unique opportunity to help shape not only these children's relationship with God, but also to help mold their foundation of faith.

*Continued on back*

As the school year starts back, our regular programming will also. We will be starting our monthly **Sunday School Class** again on August 3. Our 3-year-olds through 5th graders meet in the gathering room from 9:00 A.M to 10:00 A.M on the first Sunday of each month. We are focusing on people in the Bible; each month will be a different person.

**Kingdom Kids** will start back on August 13. We will meet from 5:00 P.M. to 6:30 P.M. each Wednesday, following the Tullahoma City school schedule for breaks. Kingdom Kids uses the Deep Blue Rotation Station Curriculum, focusing on the same story for several weeks while we rotate through each station. Each unit has a lesson for art, science, games, missions, spiritual practice, cooking, and storytelling/drama.

The kids love the hands-on activities that reinforce the Bible story. We have dinner and music as a whole group and then split into smaller groups by ages for lessons and activities. The kids also sing in church and do a Christmas and spring program each year. We would love to have your child join us each week.

Katie Prasser  
Children's Minister

## Session Committee Reports

### Family Activities and Outreach Committee

Sign-up sheet to provide snacks, etc. for fellowship time following worship service is available on the lectern in the narthex. Remember that it doesn't have to be an elaborate spread.

This is such a good time to visit and catch up with fellow church members.

The location of our dinner out event for August has not been determined. If you have a restaurant you want to be considered, please notify Shirley Levine or Helen McClure.

Family Activity Committee will meet August 11 at 1:00 p.m., in Fellowship Hall.

Schedule for chair yoga classes for August will be announced at a later time.

Men's Breakfast will resume Sunday, August 10, at 8:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. All men are welcome.

Our church wide picnic is scheduled for Sunday, September 14, at Frazier McEwen Park. Shelter is reserved from 12:00 - 5:00. Plan to eat around 3:00 pm. We hope to have a good turnout again this year.

Helen McClure, Co-chair

## Worship Committee

A Letter from the Choir Director

It appears we will never be out of school. For decades, the church has followed the school calendar. For better or worse, humans need the kind of *rhythm* that the school calendars provide. In June and July, we let our guard down. We feel that we need a break. So, as schools and classes begin for our children and youth, we can also prepare our hearts for renewed activities within our lives and faith community.

Our church provides guidance for most of our lives if we read or listen. From our *Book of Order* we are urged to take part in all areas of our church's life, including worship.

For millennia, the people of God have sung psalms as praise and prayer to God. The Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs are in our hymnal, which is changed and updated regularly. Early Christians continued to sing, pray, and study the psalms, interpreting them in the light of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Singing psalms remains an important part of the Reformed heritage. To the psalms the Church has added other hymns, canticles, and spiritual songs.

Through the ages and from varied cultures, the Church has developed many other forms of congregational song, accompanied by a great array of instruments. We draw from this rich repertoire in the Service for the Lord's Day, singing glory to God.

As you may have guessed, I invite you to join the choir to assist in leading worship. God has given us voices; let us use them to God's glory. Choir only adds about 30 minutes to your Sunday. We have scaled back. We arrive about 9:45 a.m. We look at the hymns and responses and the song for special music. I'm sure you notice that not all of the choir is present every week. You can miss. Join us. Try it out for a few weeks.

Thank you,  
Robert Wright

## Finance Committee

Our August report was, once again, a rather mundane summary of our typical financial accounting, routine reports to the IRS, workers comp reports to our church insurance provider, and other accounting work. Of course, the lion's share is taken on by Clark Lawrence and Don Jones. This

*continued*

time, however, our report is pre-empted by the news of our pastor departing to Knoxville in August.

He and his family will be missed.

Not many folks know Stephen basically opens the church every Sunday, turning on lights, checking thermostats, turning on the sound system, and making coffee on occasion. I'm sure there are other things he sets up, but he essentially fulfills the role of Sexton on Sunday. At the end of every service, he closes everything down.

Since we have no fulltime organist, Stephen has become intimately familiar with our Clavinova (organ/piano) features and limitations. On those Sundays when we have no temporary organist, Stephen programs an iPad with hymns for the entire service, including the prelude and postlude. Do we have a backup for Stephen's skill in this area? No, we don't. Speaking of organist, we will also lose our connection with the young man from MTSU who is scheduled to fill in beginning in August. Audrey was facilitating that effort. The Worship Committee has their work cut out for them.

I know this sounds gloomy, but I believe it will work out fine once we find a pastor/Clavinova tech/choir singer/sexton/soccer coach/bus driver. Easy, right?

For our part, we will be involved in establishing the terms of call for our new pastor, once he/she is determined.

Alan Harris

## Mission Committee

**Thank You!** Many thanks to everyone who donated items for the rummage sale. As of this

writing, we have raised about \$4,150, all of which will go towards local missions. This would not have been possible without all of the volunteers who unpacked, organized, and priced donated items during the week leading up to the sale and all of the volunteers who helped on the day of the sale by collecting money, helping shoppers, and working the holding area. Finally, we would like to give a special thanks to Nan Hall and Debbie Brown, our coordinators for the event, as well as Betty Gault and Charlotte Broyles, all of whom worked tirelessly throughout the week leading up to the sale to ensure that things progressed smoothly.

### Reminder about an ongoing volunteer opportunity -

Remember that Volunteers are needed on Mondays and Tuesdays from 9:00am-12:00pm in the church office to serve as the church representative responsible for helping community members purchase gas or pay electric bills. Some Mondays and Tuesdays, especially at the beginning of the month, can be quite busy with numerous community members visiting the church office. As a result, there is a non-trivial time commitment that has historically fallen on the shoulders of the church staff. We, as a congregation, have the opportunity to assist community members in need as well as take pressure off of our wonderful church staff so that they can tend to their many other responsibilities in an efficient manner. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex.

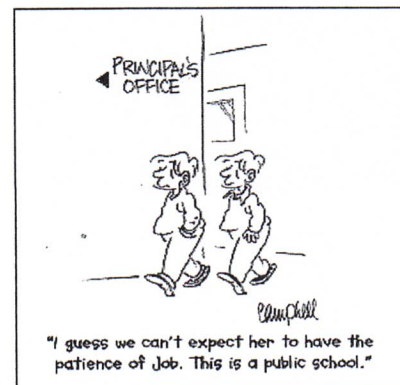
Brad Sturgill

## Loving my "enemies"

In polarized times, when people view huge concepts such as justice, government policy and care for neighbors differently, how do we follow Jesus' command to love our enemies? I prefer the word *opponents*, but our Lord's instructions still stand.

In the Bible, "love" doesn't mean liking someone; it means caring for them, treating them kindly. I find *The Message* paraphrase of Luke 6:27-36 helpful: "Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst," Jesus says about one's enemies. So, when I contact government leaders to express my opinions, I address them with respect, whether I agree with them or not. When I encounter a neighbor whose views oppose mine, I ask myself what I would want them to do for me, whether help with an errand or be friendly. Then, as *The Message* puts it, I "grab the initiative and do it for *them*."

And this, which might be the hardest: Amid tough times, Jesus says, "Respond with the supple moves of prayer." It's human nature to pray that God change our enemies' or opponents' minds. But it's more Christ like to pray for their health, their families and whatever *God* desires for them, not what *I* want. Can I do this? With God's help, yes.



## ***God is watching***

In the cafeteria line one day, a seminary dean noticed a bowl of big, juicy oranges. A sign by it read, "Take only one. God is watching you!" At the other end of the lunch line sat a large plate of freshly baked chocolate chip cookies. Beside it was a hastily scrawled note, likely from a hungry student: "Take as many cookies as you want. God is back there watching the oranges."

The message behind that good-natured irreverence? If you believe that God's sight is limited to one place, then your idea of God is too small!

—adapted from *The Wired Word*

## ***Following Christ***

To have faith in Christ means, of course, trying to do all that he says. There would be no sense in saying you trusted a person if you would not take his advice. Thus, if you have really handed yourself over to [Christ], it must follow that you are trying to obey him.

But trying in a new way, a less worried way. Not doing these things in order to be saved, but because he has begun to save you already. Not hoping to get to heaven as a reward for your actions, but inevitably wanting to act in a certain way because a first faint gleam of heaven is already inside you.

—C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*