



THE GOOD NEWS

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August 2014

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Worship with us!

"A Christian Community
of Faith"

**9:45 a.m. Sunday School
for all ages
10:50 a.m.
Sunday Worship**

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A Message From the Pastor

Dear First Presbyterian Church,

"Our job as pastors is not to push our beliefs onto other people but to help others and walk with them on their faith journey." This was said by my best friend's (in college) father, who is an ordained minister in the PC (USA) church, and at the time an associate executive presbyter of Grace Presbytery.

We were learning a lot in college, and some of it had me questioning what I had always grown up believing. I grew up in small towns, without the luxury of having a university in those towns. I never questioned my faith, but only my beliefs about certain things. I was learning to critically think about information and sources given to me, to think on my own. My friend and I (who both already had felt the call to ministry at that time) were concerned that other people might not understand what we were learning; that some might not understand our change in beliefs, and what we had come to learn and understand. And what my friend's father said has always stuck with me.

I am sharing this story with you because there were a lot of actions taken by the recent General Assembly (our highest governing body of the Presbyterian Church (USA), made up of elected commissioners) that have stirred up some debate, and confusion. I of course have some of my own beliefs and convictions about some of the decisions made and still with some of the other decisions I, myself, am confused and feel I need to learn more before making a decision of where I stand. I believe that a lot of you feel the same way. But no matter how I feel, I believe that my job is to help you, and walk with you, as you come to learn, and grow, and walk down your own journey of faith. We are always on our own journeys of faith, sometimes there are mountain top experiences and sometimes we feel as if we are in the deepest valleys. Having a community of faith to walk with on these journeys is just as important as knowing that God is always with us no matter what. That is why our PC(USA) Book of Order states expressively that . . .

. . . we also believe that there are truths and forms with respect to which men of good characters and principles may differ. And in

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Presbyterian Women News

• *Special Thanks and Fond Farewell to Irene Humfeld*

We say farewell to Irene Humfeld who has served in many capacities in Presbyterian Women during her long and productive tenure as a member of FPC-Commerce. In the past she has been circle chair, co-moderator, and treasurer and served many years in each category. Thank you, Irene, for all your capable and willing endeavors for our PW and for your gracious spirit and service in so many other aspects of the congregational life of our church. All of us wish you the very best as you begin the "next chapter" of your life in Brownwood with Nancy Jo. You will be missed by all in our congregation and by the entire Commerce community as well. May God continue to bless you and Nancy Jo.



Irene's new address (also Nancy Jo's address) is 707 Oak Trail, Brownwood, TX 76801. The home phone number is (325)643-1204

• *Ladies' Restroom Project Now Completed*

We wish to thank Joyce Isaacs for donating a lovely upholstered cane-back chair for use in the women's restroom. With this acquisition, we have completed the repairs and updates that we began in the summer of 2013. Joyce, we truly appreciate your generous donation to our restroom.

• *Upcoming PW Events*

Monday, August 11, 9:00 a.m. – Kitchen Clean-up Day and Officers Meeting following the clean-up

Everyone is welcome to help as we clean the kitchen (including the appliances) and re-organize shelves and cabinets. Officers are reminded that we will meet following the clean-up to make plans for the new year beginning in September.

Saturday, September 6, 12:00 Noon – Covered Dish Luncheon in Fellowship Hall

All women are invited to join us at the covered-dish luncheon. The newly-elected officers will be installed by Tina Selvaggi.

Officers are listed below:

Moderator – **Toni Deaton**
Co-Moderator – **Helon Razniak**
Circle Chair – **Nila McQuary**
Secretary – **Martha Clevenger**
Treasurer – **Brenda Estes**

Historians – **Beverly Housewright** and **Bettina Zvanut**

Monday, September 8, 10:00 a.m. – Circle Meeting in Fellowship Hall

At this meeting we will begin our new Horizons Bible study which is entitled ***Reconciling Paul: A Contemporary Study of 2 Corinthians*** by **Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty**. The author is chair of the Department of Theology at Bellarmine University, associate professor of theology, and co-director of BU's program in peace studies. Her passions in life and her research interests include social gospel theology, Christianity and social justice, wealth inequalities, poverty issues, and theologies from the margins. She has written numerous articles and other publications that deal with Christian ethics and social issues. She is a Fulbright scholar (Hungary 2010) and lives with her family in Louisville, Kentucky.

Nila McQuary, Circle Chair, will be distributing study books in the next few weeks. All women are invited to attend our Circle meetings and other events.

New Beginnings Journey Continues

The quest to discover ourselves as a church, what we want to do for the future and where we will focus our energies continues. We've already had a sight visit in the New Beginnings process. Two Leadership Training Days on **Sept 12-13** are next. The training begins with a meeting for pastoral leaders on Sept. 12 (Friday) at 3 p.m. Congregational leaders will join in at a 5:30 p.m. dinner that evening. Training for both groups will continue through Saturday afternoon.

According to Grace Presbytery's Ronnie Holland, Senior Director of Ministry and Church Transitions) some of those who participate will lead House Meetings (small group conversations) in the phase to follow.

In Sympathy

We are sorry to report Joan Walvoord's mother passed away recently. We regretfully overlooked this important item at the time.

Rev. Krista's on Facebook!

Now there's another way to reach Rev. Krista Rasco. She's on Facebook!



www.facebook.com/krista.rasco

See you there!

Newsmakers

• Sherry Johnson

FPC's Sherry Johnson was on the front page of (as she is often) of the Commerce Journal this past week. The story noted her leading role as Commerce Tourism and Events Coordinator in the new mural in downtown Commerce.

The article by Joseph Hambrick quoted her as saying the mural was even more beautiful in its final form than she had imagined it would be. She gave credit to the talented students at Texas A&M-Commerce.

Way to go Sherry!



Sherry Johnson did some brushwork on the new mural.

•The Selvaggi Family

Editor's Note: The trip of a lifetime needs to be celebrated, and recounted, with friends. Recently, the Selvaggi family took such a trip. They've already blessed us with a couple of pictures and another is included here (we are hoping to show you more in the future). But for now, we'll just let their own words describe their adventure, which—by the way—took place June 17-July 8.

The Accidental Fletcher Selvaggi Holy Land Pilgrimage

What started as a simple bucket list excursion to the Greek Islands and the Selvaggi home front of Italy ended up as a lesson in religious history for Rick, Lily, and Tina. We began with a short stay in Athens and three day Greek island ferry cruise.

Kusadasi, Turkey, was the ancient home of the Ephesians. Unlike so many ancient cities that were toppled by war, murder, and mayhem, Ephesus died from an overabundance of silt that clogged its beautiful harbors, causing an influx of mosquitoes and

overwhelming citizens with malaria. The city simply faded away. It was a beautiful and literate place, housing the largest library of the time, and it was easy to imagine the apostles engaged in lively debates there.



The library at Kusadasi, Turkey. Photo by Lily Selvaggi

Our excursion to the tiny island of Patmos where Revelations was written did not reveal why such a book was created there. We felt no narcotic vibes or weird ions in the air. It is just a lovely wind-swept place full of whitewashed buildings festooned with strings of cactus pads and blue glass protective eyes. The dialect of Patmos' residents is beautiful, almost sounding like bird song.

We eventually found our way to Rome, rented a little apartment next door to the Vatican, and Rick and Lily were lucky enough to see the Pope (Papa Francesco).

The Feast of Saints Peter and Paul occurred June 29 and streets surrounding the Vatican were lined with stunning 12-foot long floral murals for one day only (*these murals were pictured in previous newsletter*). They looked to our eyes like fragile Persian rugs.

We traveled the Appian Way that Paul used when in central Italy, and marveled at how hilly and rugged it still is in places. This journey led us to the best preserved catacombs of Rome, where we navigated part of the 11 miles of tunnels and subterranean church and worship spots, and saw some of the graves for 225,000 souls.

And, well, then we went to Venice. It does not qualify for mention in our Accidental Holy Lands Pilgrimage except in helping us understand how instrumental ancient Venetian seafarers were in overseeing multiple cities on the Greek islands.

Our overarching feeling about the apostles is how difficult and far-flung their travels were, and how diverse their audiences must have been. These men must have faced so much uncertainty, not knowing how

safe they were, where their next meal was coming from, or what people knew and cared about.

Our travels seemed complicated enough, but throwing in a mix of disease, language barriers, and oversight from a government that didn't place value on their teachings made us realize how committed the apostles were.

Next on Tina's project list: Reread the New Testament with different insights and think about tough, probably fearsome men on a mission; a mission that we are still on today.

Do you know someone related to FPC in some way who has made good news lately? Let us know!

August Worship Leaders

August 3

Host Elder:..... **Monty Howard**
Head Usher:..... **Wendell Linton**
Candle Lighter: **Mason Howard**
Liturgist: **Helon Razniak**
Elements: **Sherry Johnson**

August 10

Host Elder:..... **Dave Walvoord**
Head Usher:..... **Jim Calvert**
Candle Lighter: **Matthew McFarland**
Liturgist: **Keith McFarland**

August 17

Host Elder:..... **Rick Selvaggi**
Head Usher:..... **Jim Norwood**
Candle Lighter: **Lily Selvaggi**
Liturgist: **Bettina Zvanut**

August 24

Host Elder:..... **Sherry Johnson**
Head Usher:..... **Nancy McFarland**
Candle Lighter: **Matthew McFarland**
Liturgist: **Neal Stewart**

Thanks to these folks and those who have performed worship service duties in the past. You make our worship service more meaningful.

If you would like to take part in the worship service in some way, contact the church secretary or Pastor Rasco.

Card of Thanks

I would like to commend Brenda Estes for the wonderful job she did as the art and crafts teacher for the VBS. Despite large groups and a wide array of ages, Brenda presented some thoughtful and lovely art projects. Each project fit in with the Bible story and included a picture frame, a refrigerator magnet, and a book mark. The children learned to lace, glue, and cut in their projects. I thank Brenda for the incredible amount of time that she put into her work to make the VBS a success.

I would also like to thank Helon Razniak for sharing a ukelele and guitar book with gospel music so that our strings trio could present songs for the service. The book was very helpful to all of us in the group!

And I have a last thank you for David Walvoord. He donated two large packages of washcloths for our hospice project. In January, we deliver robes and slippers to hospice patients, but now we have washcloths for the nurses to give out also.

--Bettina Zvanut

August Calendar

Worship Schedule

- 3**– Morning Worship Service 10:50 a.m.
*Sermon Scripture focus on Geneis 28:10-19a
Jacob's dream*
- 10** Morning Worship Service 10:50 a.m.
*Sermon Scripture focus on Genesis 32:22-31
Jacob wrestles*
- 17** – Morning Worship Service 10:50 a.m.
*Sermon Scripture focus on Genesis 37:1-4,
12-28 Joseph sold*
- 24** – Morning Worship Service 10:50 a.m.
*Sermon Scripture focus on Genesis 45:1-15
Joseph reveals himself to his brothers*
- 31** – Morning Worship Service 10:50 a.m.
*Sermon Scripture focus on Exodus 1:8-2:10
Birth of Moses*

Other August events

- 5, 12, 19, 26** – Tuesdays, 9 a.m.—Teach the Preacher
- 6, 13, 20** – Wednesdays. 6 p.m. Adult Bible Study
- 11** – Monday, 9 a.m. PW Kitchen Work Day
- 12** – Tuesday, 6 p.m.—August Session Meeting

Military Salute

FPC's celebration of July 4 included hot dogs and a Wednesday Night Fellowship meal whose stars were those in our congregation who have served in the military. The event was a big success and this month's newsletter is proud to show this picture of our military honorees.



At left, the military honorees present for the July 2 Fellowship Dinner were (front row, left to right) Walter Stokes, Eric Clevenger, Jim Norwood, Keith McFarland, Dave Walvoord, (back row, left to right) Bob Johnson, Joe McIntier, Neal Stewart, Wally Tucker, Jim Calvert, Ric Estes, Dennis White, Charles Adams, and Jim Deaton.

Message from the Pastor

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all these we think it the duty both of private Christians and societies to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other." (F- 3.0105)

We are a part of the church of Jesus Christ and we are to love one another while working our differences out. Although I may believe something in particular that does not mean that I will not learn, and respect what your views are and able to have constructive dialogue all the while. I hope you will do the same.

Included in the newsletter below are some of the decisions of the recent GA that I have decided to highlight. More information on these issues and more issues not included are located on the Grace Presbytery's website along with the PC(USA) website.

Please, please, please, call me or come by my office (or make an appointment to come by my office or for coffee or lunch) if you would like to discuss any of these issues further. Also please let me know if you would like to have a group discussion or information on these issues. If I find there is enough interest I will be more than happy to put something together.

Grace and peace be with you my brothers and sisters in Christ,

Rev. Krista Rasco

Grace Presbytery Offers Help

In addition to the help offered by Rev. Rasco (above), Grace Presbytery's website (www.gracepresbytery.org) offers Presbyterians some sources that may lend insight into actions of the General Assembly. Two General Assembly actions, for instance, that leave some people in need of clarification are Middle East Divestment and the Belhar Confession.

Help understanding these and other General Assembly actions can be found on the Grace website under a heading of [Resources to help you understand the actions of the 221st General Assembly](#).

Pastor's Schedule

Rev. Rasco will be taking Mondays off as her Sabbath, although she will still be available for emergencies and important meetings.

On Friday, Aug. 15, she will be out of the office since Kaitlynn's daycare is closed. However, she plans to take Kaitlynn along with her to visit shut-ins that day.

Note: The office will be closed Labor Day, Sept. 1.

Food Pantry Items

1st Sunday—Peanut butter and/or jelly

2nd Sunday—Bag of pinto beans and/or rice

3rd Sunday—Box of cereal or oatmeal

4th Sunday—Cans of tuna, spam, chicken

5th Sunday—Cans of fruit: peaches, fruit cocktail

In Our Prayers at First Presbyterian

If you have anyone you would like to add to the Prayer List, contact the church office.

Our Troops	Diane Little	Gordon Hunter
Jace Carrington	Bruce Campbell	Sara Grace Pullen
Melba Blount	Amy Lopez	Billy Marshall
Barbara Leonard	Riley Isom	Joe Yeakley
Rev. Roy Ditmar		Family of Joyce Isaacs
Pat McFadden	Peri Poole	Beverly Housewright
Nila McQary	Family of Larry Yearwood	Todd Shinn
Charles Burns		

August Dates to Remember

Happy Birthday to:

4 - Donna Dickerson

5 - Odeana Stewart

6 - Jason Rasco

7 - Kay Davis

7 - David Duncan

7 - Carolyn McFarland

17 - Nancy Jo Humfeld

17 - Gaye Furry

20 - Rose Rhodes

23 - James Ballew

23 - Melissa Towne

29 - Rick Selvaggi

Happy Anniversary to:

8 - Toni & Jim Deaton

31 - Mona & Larry Towne

If we overlooked your birthday or anniversary, please let us know.

Please keep us informed and let us know about news items we can use for our next newsletter. Call or email (we prefer email) the church office with your news. Thanks for all your help!