

The Epistle

ST. PAUL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

July, 2014

Volume 14, Number 7



FROM THE PASTOR

The first thing many folks think about concerning the month of July is July 4, which for most is a day of picnics and other outings, fireworks and parties. But in the midst of our merry-making we should never forget what we are really celebrating – our hard-won independence as a nation. And as we remember, a name that should come immediately to mind is that of George Washington.

Our country has seen many great heroes, excellent citizens and people to be admired. But with the possible exception of Abraham Lincoln, there has been no other who has been a living example of what we think great Americans should be than George Washington. He gave us quality leadership with integrity and displayed an eagerness for life in a new nation that was forming and still seeking an identity.

Many stories about Washington abound, some factual, some apocryphal. What is true is that after many years spent in pursuit of the good life, in the social whirl, enjoying his wealth, on his 40th birthday he went to a part of the vast lawn of Mt. Vernon overlooking the Potomac River and meditated, dreamed and prayed about his future. It was at this moment that he gave himself to God and pledged his life to this new country. He began his public service in a humble position, that of adjutant in one of the five military districts of Virginia.

He left the comforts of home when he was called on to serve his country. We later see him in the bitter winter of Valley Forge sharing the hardships with his men, leading by example. One of the most touching scenes is seeing him kneel in the snow in the quiet of the woods, and there calling upon God to aid his suffering, oppressed people.

After military victory was finally won he was summoned once more to serve, as the first president of our new country. After two terms which could have become another Imperial kingdom he walked away without pay or any kind of remuneration.

Of the many quotes attributed to Washington, one that may not be so well known should be very meaningful for us as people of faith: *“It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible!”* Thank you George Washington for setting a high standard for us!

Enjoy the celebration, but let us never forget those whose sacrifices made it possible for us to have the day to celebrate!

See you in church.

Jay



JULY HYMN OF THE MONTH - #340 – This Is My Song

A somewhat different “patriotic” song, but nonetheless appropriate for the month in which we celebrate our independence as a nation. The first two stanzas of this hymn were written between the 20th century’s two world wars and focus on the theme of international peace. The third stanza, by another author and added later, uses the language of the Lord’s Prayer to voice a distinctly Christian perspective. The tune is the well-known theme from “Finlandia” by that country’s most famous composer, Jean Sibelius.



THE WORD PROCLAIMED

	<u>Sermon topics</u>	<u>Scripture Readers</u>
July 6	“Jesus Gives Rest” Text: Matthew 11:16-19; 25-30	Margaret Tewes Reading: Zechariah 9:9-12
July 13	“What Kind of Soil Are You?” Text: Matthew 13:1-9; 18-23	Ben Parke Reading: Genesis 25:19-34
July 20	“Living in the Weeds” Text: Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43	Phyllis Watkins Reading: Genesis 28:10-19a
July 27	Dialogue, Q&A Gospel: Matthew 13:31-33; 44-52	Jim Tewes Reading: Genesis 29:15-28



Birthdays This Month

July 7 – Gerry Burnside	July 18 – Molly Lancaster
8 – Michael Smith	19 – Larry Bailey
12 – Judy Miller	20 – Emy Crump
18 – Dale Holder	23 – Grace Wyrick

ANSWER TO JUNE BIBLE KNOWLEDGE QUESTION

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul lists nine “fruits of the spirit.” How many can you name?
 Love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.
 (See Galatians 5:22-23)

* * * *OUR JUNE RECORD* * * *

	<u>Worship Attendance</u>	<u>Stewardship</u>
June 1	50	\$ 4,875.00
8	53	\$ 2,327.00
15	52	\$ 1,731.00
22	47	\$ 2,985.00
29	30	\$ 3,022.00



FOOD CART

Food cart item for July 2014 is juice. No glass jars, please.

TEST YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

From what document did Jesus read when he went into the synagogue at Nazareth? BONUS: What was his comment about what he read?



PRAYER CONCERNS: Luke Finison, Barbara Carter, Marjorie and Jack Herndon, Andy Bristow and family, Emily Bristow, Lucy Smith, Aiden and Jeanetta French, Bob Berthold, the families of Myrna Stell, Earney Walker and Joe Herndon, Katie Williams, Chuck Adams, Ron Ervin, Dale and Nita Holder, Ruby Whitley, Jane Lochbaum, John Perkins, Joe Miles, Edith Taylor, Gary Houglan, CF Houglan, Roger Coleman, Gerry Burnside, Mark Griffin, Ed and Becky Taylor, Bob Miller, Rick Fulp, Jim Anderson, Luke Neal, Carl Hollman, Carolyn Davis, Pauline Hales, Candice Walker, Kevin Tewes, Terri Battle, Zachary Reavis, and our own family members in the military: James Lochbaum, Andy Bristow II, Shane Finison, Brian Fountain, Brandy Zehr, Brett Slate and all who serve in our armed forces.

“...pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.”

James 5:16 (NLT)



IN HIS SERVICE

JULY USHERS

Eb Hancock
Diane Hancock
Dale Holder
Nita Holder

JULY COMMUNION SERVERS

Sunday, July 6* – Eb Hancock
Diane Hancock
Liz Miles
Nita Holder

*Intinction



ITEMS FROM THE 221st PRESBYTERIAN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The 221st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was held from June 14 to 21, 2014 in Detroit, Michigan. This biennial meeting brings together commissioners and advisory delegates from all 172 presbyteries, as well as other delegates and observers from around the world. The Assembly begins and ends with worship, and in between there are celebrations, deliberations and inspirations for everyone.

As usual, there were a large number of items to be considered and acted upon, far too many to summarize here. But there were a couple that have caused quite a stir in the faith community, and as Presbyterians you need to be aware of them. This is a lot of reading, but important.

First, the Assembly approved a recommendation from its Civil Union and Marriage Issues Committee that allows for pastoral discretion in performing a marriage of same-sex couples, where legal by state law. (*Note: At this time such marriages are not legal in North Carolina.*)

The action passed by a vote of 371 to 238.

The Assembly also approved a recommendation to change language in the Book of Order to indicate that "marriage involves a unique commitment between two people, traditionally a man and a woman." That action passed by a vote of 429 to 175.

"Obviously members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) bring differing viewpoints to this issue," said Heath K. Rada, Moderator of the General Assembly. "However, much respect has been shown between people with different viewpoints and there is an acceptance that even in a family where we disagree, we can love each other. The church has spoken and we will follow their lead."

The Assembly also took action intended to foster reconciliation and unity within the church on the overall issue. The action will provide support and resources to presbyteries and congregations.

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ITEMS FROM THE 221st PRESBYTERIAN GENERAL ASSEMBLY (Continued from page 4)

Regarding the issue of pastoral discretion, the General Assembly issued an Authoritative Interpretation (AI) of the *Book of Order*. An AI is an interpretation of the PC(USA) Constitution that carries the authority of the General Assembly and is binding on the councils of the church. The Assembly said, "When a couple requests the involvement of the church in solemnizing their marriage as permitted by the laws of the civil jurisdiction in which the marriage is to take place, teaching elders (*pastors*) have the pastoral responsibility to assess the capabilities, intentions and readiness of the couple to be married, and the freedom of conscience in the interpretation of scripture to participate in any such marriage they believe the Holy Spirit calls them to perform. Exercising such discretion and freedom of conscience under the prayerful guidance of Scripture, teaching elders may conduct a marriage service for any such couple in the place where the community gathers for worship so long as it is approved by the session; or in such other place as may be suitable for a service of Christian workshop."

NOTE: This AI does not require that congregations, which are guided by their own governing bodies, nor pastors, perform same-gender marriages. Congregations and their governing bodies, still have the right to decide what happens in their facilities.

The AI took effect immediately upon adjournment of the assembly on June 21st. The *Book of Order* change regarding marriage must go to the PC(USA)'s 172 presbyteries for their ratification during the next year. A majority of the presbyteries must approve the amendment in order for it to take effect.

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Also, with audible gasps from those in the plenary hall, the Assembly narrowly approved divestment from three United States companies doing business in Israel-Palestine.

By a vote of 310-303, the Assembly approved an overture calling for divestment from Caterpillar Inc., Hewlett-Packard and Motorola Solutions, companies some allege are engaged in "non-peaceful pursuits" in the region. A similar overture failed 333-331 at the 220th Assembly (2012).

Although divestment was its most debated item, the overture also affirms the PC(USA)'s commitment to interfaith and ecumenical dialogue and relationships in the region, and a preamble was added on the floor to reinforce that, saying, "The PC(USA) has a long-standing commitment to peace in Israel and Palestine. We recognize the complexity of the issues, the decades-long struggle, the pain suffered and inflicted by policies and practices of both the Israeli government and Palestinian entities. We further acknowledge and confess our own complicity in both the historic and current suffering of Israeli and Palestinian yearning for justice and reconciliation."

Immediately after the vote, Moderator Heath Rada reaffirmed that, saying, "In no way is this a reflection for our lack of love for our Jewish sisters and brothers."

The overture included amended language acknowledging the complexities of the conflict in Israel-Palestine, the PC(USA)'s longstanding commitment to peace in the region, the suffering of both Israelis and Palestinians and the church's complicity in that suffering."

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ITEMS FROM THE 221st PRESBYTERIAN GENERAL ASSEMBLY (Continued from page 5)

The Assembly committee on Middle East Issues, which recommended the overture for approval, feels it is a “compassionate and holistic approach to relationships in the Middle East,” said committee moderator Teaching Elder Commissioner Stephen Choi.

Many opposed to divestment cited damaged relationships with Jewish partners as a major concern.

As noted earlier, there were many other actions taken by the Assembly, but these two seem to be by far the most controversial and will be reported and discussed for some time to come. Please feel free to share with me any thoughts, comments or concerns you might have.

Jay

THANK YOU!

A really big “Thank You” to John Watkins for transplanting hosta to the planter on the FB, for planting the melampodium (yellow flowers) and for keeping all fed and watered. It adds so much to our campus. You are appreciated!

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN CIRCLES

The Peace/Love Circle will meet at the church Tuesday, July 1 at 9:45am. Members should bring fruit to share in making a fruit bowl. The Charity Circle will meet at 11:30am July 1 at the Lonestar Steak House on High Point Road.

GAD-A-BOUNTS

The Gad-A-Bouts will meet at 10:00am Tuesday, July 22 in the session room to play Bingo.



PROBLEMS RECEIVING THE EPISTLE?

A few folks have reported difficulty in receiving *The Epistle* by email (maybe you are reading this from a hard copy at the church). Please let Jay know and perhaps we can figure out a solution.