**Presbyterian Times**

**May, 2016**

First Presbyterian Church

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**A Message from Our Pastor**

Rev. Lou Ellen Hartley

In May we will hear one of my favorite lectionary passages: the story of Lydia. She was a business woman who specialized in the sale of purple cloth. She hears Paul share the story of the gospel, and she, along with her household, is baptized. We also hear the story of Pentecost, when the multitudes from the ends of the earth heard the Word and the Holy Spirit filled the church. Many baptisms ensued.

In recent weeks we have gotten to celebrate the sacrament of baptism with Luke Gutches and Wyatt Evans. When we witness a baptism we are called to remember our own baptism and all God has done for us through Jesus Christ. We offer thanks for the water and recall how God has been present in and through water. As part of the liturgy for Wyatt’s baptism, I read a reflection on water from Rachel Held-Evans’ book, Searching for Sunday. It reads: . “by God’s word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water. —2 Peter 3: 5

IN THE BEGINNING, THE SPIRIT OF GOD HOVERED OVER water. The water was dark and deep and everywhere, the ancients say, an endless primordial sea. Then God separated the water, pushing some of it below to make oceans, rivers, dew drops, and springs, and vaulting the rest of the torrents above to be locked behind a glassy firmament, complete with doors that opened for the moon and windows to let out the rain. In ancient Near Eastern cosmology, all of life hung suspended between these waters, vulnerable as a fetus in the womb. With one sigh of the Spirit, the waters could come crashing in and around the earth, drowning its inhabitants in a moment. The story of Noah’s flood begins when “the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened” (Genesis 7: 11). The God who had separated the waters in the beginning wanted to start over, so God washed the world away. For people whose survival depended on the inscrutable moods of the Tigris, Euphrates, and Nile, water represented both life and death. Oceans teemed with monsters, unruly spirits, and giant fish that could swallow a man whole. Rivers brimmed with fickle possibility—of yielding crops, of boosting trade, of drying up. Into this world, God spoke the language of water, turning the rivers of enemies into blood, calling forth springs from desert rocks, playing matchmaker around wells, and promising a future in which justice would roll down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. And the people spoke back, seeking purity of mind and body through ritualistic bathing after birth, death, sex, menstruation, sacrifices, conflicts, and transgressions. “Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean,” the poet-king David wrote; “wash me, and I will be whiter than snow” (Psalm 51: 7).

 It is naïve to think all of these ancient visions must be literal to be true. We know, as our ancestors did, both the danger and necessity of water. Water knits us together in our mothers’ wombs, our ghostlike tissue inhaling and exhaling the embryonic fluid that grows our lungs and bones and brains. Water courses through our bodies and makes our planet blue. It is water that lifts cars like leaves when a tsunami rages to shore, water that in a moment can swallow a ship and in eons carve a canyon, water we trawl for like chimps for bugs with billion-dollar equipment scavenging Mars, water we drop on the bald heads of babies to name them children of God, water we torture with and cry with, water that carries the invisible diseases that will kill four thousand children today, water that if warmed just a few degrees more will come crashing in and around the earth and wash us all away.

But just as water carried Moses to his destiny down the Nile, so water carried another baby from a woman’s body into an expectant world. Wrapped now in flesh, the God who once hovered over the waters was plunged beneath them at the hands of a wild-eyed wilderness preacher. When God emerged, he spoke of living water that forever satisfies and of being born again. He went fishing and washed his friends’ feet. He touched the ceremonially unclean. He spit in the dirt, cast demons into the ocean, and strolled across an angry sea. He got thirsty and he wept. After the government washed its hands of him, God hung on a cross where blood and water spewed from his side. Like Jonah, he got swallowed up for three days. Then God beat death. God rose from the depths and breathed air once again. When he found his friends on the shoreline, he told them not to be afraid but to go out and baptize the whole world. The Spirit that once hovered over the waters had inhabited them. Now every drop is holy.”

In her words we read a litany of ways water is so integral to our lives. How marvelous it is that God uses something so ordinary to do achieve the extraordinary. As we move through our days, we do not have to wait for special moments carved out of a worship service to stop and remember baptism. Every time we wash our hands or quench our thirst or water our gardens we can experience the feeling of baptism. In those moments we can offer thanks for the gift of water and what God does through it – refreshes, renews, sustains, teaches, names, claims…. Thanks be to God.

**Presbyterian Women**

Cynthia Hobart, Moderator

The Presbyterian Women invite everyone to a Wedding Shower for Kristin Eye and Luke Gutches at 1 pm on Saturday, May 14, in the Fellowship Hall. (The couple is registered at Kohl’s, Walmart, and the Red Door.

Earlier that day the Presbyterian Women will hold their Annual Spring Meeting at 11 am followed by a luncheon.

**Memorial Bricks**

Cynthia Hobart

There is still time to place an order for a Memorial Brick. The cost is $100 (part of which pays for the maintenance of the Memorial Garden). If you wish to order a brick, contact Betti Jo in the church office or Cynthia Hobart.

In June the brick orders will be sent to Acme Brick Company. Six to eight weeks later the engraved bricks will be mailed back to the church. After the bricks are placed in the Garden in the fall on a Sunday after Worship (All Saints Day) the congregation will be invited out to the Garden for a dedication of the bricks.

**Worship and Music Updates**

Jonathan Kimball

We are approaching Pentecost, May 15, which marks the end of Eastertide. This is the one Sunday each year where the liturgical color is red. **Please wear red on May 15** to celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit!

Recently, we purchased new personal PA receivers (the hearing assistance devices). Now there should be plenty for anyone who needs help hearing the sermon. The new ones function the same as the old ones, though there has been some question regarding sound levels. Most likely, the new earbuds are sufficiently different that people notice. So, there are a few options. One, we will continue to search for reasonably-priced options that are “better” in some sense. Two, there is one headset available. Three, if you have earbuds or headphones of your own that you like, you can use them with the PPA receivers—it’s just a conventional headphone jack. The ones that we have purchased are single buds since the signal is mono, but you can use normal ones if you prefer.

As time has passed, some openings have developed on the usher teams. If you would like to serve as an usher, please contact any of the usher captains. The job is straightforward: greet people at the beginning of the service, give them a bulletin, direct visitors appropriately, and then collect the offering later. We have five teams, one for each Sunday of the month (the fifth-Sunday team only serves four times a year). For special occasions, such as Christmas Eve, we gather ushers from across the teams.

FIRED UP! is continuing as usual. We have shifted to a lectio divina style of service. All that means is, we read the scripture lesson three times and listen for God’s message in it, and then share our thoughts. We have moved permanently to the Sadler Chapel, Thursdays at 6:30. We still target 30 minutes, though we often run longer (more like 40 minutes). NOTE: **We will NOT have service on May 19** due to the ballgame.

May 22, Trinity Sunday, will mark the last Sunday when the choir participates in worship until the fall. The bell choir will also play. For the summer, we will instead have special music offerings. There will shortly be a sign-up sheet outside the church office.

**Membership / Fellowship News**

Bob May, Chair

**Turner Family moving**. Kathi, Jay, Molly and Josh are in the process of moving to New Mexico. Part of the transition has occurred, so we won’t have a chance to see them all at a time for a while. Say prayers for them until we can have a party when they come back to visit.

**World Day of Prayer**. Our church will be the location for the community World Day of Prayer evening activity on **Thursday, May 5th at 7:00** p.m. All are invited to participate.

**MS&T Students** will be leaving for summer break soon. Take them out to eat when they can break away from studies.

**First Friday Night Out.** **Friday** **May 6th, 6 p.m. at Sawadee Thai Restaurant**, Kingshighway, Rolla. Our own Jun Jeenakorn is on the staff at Sawadee.

**Cardinal Baseball Trip.**  Bus trip to Cardinals vs. Rockies game will be **Thursday, May 19th**. leaving church parking lot at **3:00 p.m**. Some tickets are still available – contact Britt Whitaker right away!

**Common Call**. Common Call (Our connection to MS&T Campus Ministry) students will be hosted by our church **Sunday May 8th 5:00 p.m.** for supper. Let me or Jonathan Kimble know if you’d like to help.

**Block Party** – Outside Fellowship Hall, **Saturday, June 4th**, **5:00 p.m.** A few days prior we will be canvassing a nearby neighborhood – come join our committee for a fun time in visiting neighbors then getting to know them at the party.

**Church Picnic.** Notice of our Church picnic will be coming soon.

**Sunday Fellowship.**  Volunteers are requested to sign up to provide for refreshment, drinks after Sunday Worship Service.

**Oat Theatre Play**. Save the Date – **Saturday, July 9th**. Dinner and then attend the Play - More info later.



**Preschool News**

Rachel Allison, Director

It’s hard to believe we are nearly ready to close the book on another school year. There are so many people in the Church I want to thank for all of their help in making this year a success!! First of all, we would not even function without the wisdom, guidance and support of our amazing preschool management committee. Eleanor Van Horn, Mary Alofs, Bill Neely, Casie Wilkins, Ray Fox and Pastor Lou Ellen, thank you for all that you do! Betti Jo Pyatt and Katie Sands, thank you, thank you, thank you! You two pitch in and help on a daily basis and I am grateful! Frank and Carol Jessop for afternoon story time, you are a blessing to us! Larry and Jan Roberts for the many ways you’ve been involved, thank you! Angela Isaacs I do not know what we would do without you! Melba Read, you’ve been a blessing! Mary Kwantes, your gift of music and your time is much appreciated! Cynthia Hobart, it’s been fun collaborating on bulletin boards! Marilyn Schmidt you are wonderful! I’m afraid that when I start naming people I will forget someone important but I want to stress that you, the Church, are an amazing group of talented and generous people, whom it has been a pleasure to serve with! Thank you from the bottom of my heart!

**Medical Accessories**

Carol Jessop

If you or a family member has a need for medical equipment, we now have a list. Church members that have equipment are willing to loan it on a temporary basis for those that might need it. If you are in need you may call Carol Jessop (364-2433) and I will put you in touch with those that have the items.

We have the following items to loan: walkers, wheel chairs, bedside commodes, boots, crutches and support hose.

**From the Office**

Betti Jo Pyatt, Office Manager

Wow, May has arrived and we look forward to the end of school, graduations, and vacations.

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 We can’t start our month off without loving wishes to all our momma’s and grandmother’s out there who have been such a blessing to all of us throughout the years. *“Happy Mother’s Day, ladies. God bless you all and thank you.”* For those of us whose moms are in heaven, we cherish each and every memory. Mother’s Day is May 8th.

New temporary address for Frank and Carol Jessop is 1355 California Drive, Brownwood Estates, Rolla, MO 65401.

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**Our Church Officers**

**Elders:** Jonathan Kimball, Joanne Zap, Bob May, Marilyn Schmidt, Melba Read, Britt Whitaker, Susan Murray, Eleanor Van Horn, Christine Rueff, and Cynthia Hobart, Clerk of Session.

**Deacons**: Carrie Aswegan, Kathleen Dean, Bill Neely, Jr.; Jan Roberts, Dixie Finley, Marian Pruitt, Karen Hudson, Sophia Leu, and Amy Whitaker.

**Trustees:** Ray Evans, Darryl Alofs, Bill Cottingham, Eugene Zanders, Ray Fox, and Clayton Read.

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Birthday wishes go out to the following Linda Rose, Ron Elliott, Mary Alofs, Sharlene Morgan, K.M. Isaac, Jan Sletten, Russell Fox, Caitlyn Sandquist, Dean Sletten, Molly Turner, Rebecca Fox-Rantanen, Horace Jeffery and Pam Cottingham.

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Anniversary wishes go out to Ken and Mary Kwantes and Ardel and Christine Rueff.

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May 1 – RCAS Concert 3 pm in the Sanctuary

May 2 – 8 Rev. Hartley will be out of the office

May 5 – National Day of Prayer Service at 7 pm in the Sanctuary following Fired Up!

May 6 – First Friday Night Out will be at Sawadee Thai Restaurant at 6 pm

May 14 – PW Spring Gathering and Luncheon at 11 am

May 14 – Wedding Shower for Kristin Eye and Luke Gutches at 1 pm

May 15 – Piano Recital at 1:30 in the Sanctuary

May 18 – LAST DAY OF SCHOOL

May 19 – No Fired Up! service

May 19 – Cardinal Game to St. Louis; leave parking lot at 3 pm

May 20 – Preschool Graduation at 6 pm

May 22 – Session Retreat at Wellington at 1:30 pm

May 27 – **Articles for the June Newsletter due in the office**

May 30 – Office closed for MEMORIAL DAY