

First Presbyterian Church

October 2024



The Preservation of the Truth

Newsletter article for October 2024 by Jonathan Kimball

“A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on.” – Variously attributed to Mark Twain, Winston Churchill, and others

Recently, I have been talking about the Great Ends of the Church. This month, I’d like to talk about the Preservation of the Truth. This is always important, but is becoming increasingly difficult.

Social media is a major culprit. Facebook and its ilk have tuned their algorithms to show people information that gets a reaction. If you like or share a particular post, you will be shown similar posts that are even more likely to provoke a like or share. Unfortunately, the things that get the most reactions are generally the most extreme versions of reality, or else blatant falsehoods. It used to be that urban legends traveled slowly by word of mouth; now they are blasted around the world in milliseconds.

But we can’t lay all of the blame on Big Tech. We are responsible, too. We are gullible, ready to believe anything that confirms our pre-existing worldview. Consider the recent blow-up regarding Haitian immigrants in Springfield, Ohio. There was a speculative Facebook post that turned out to be completely false, but because it spoke to the anxiety that the residents felt about Haitians, the idea that immigrants were killing and eating pets made national news. Responsible people, such as Springfield city officials, tried to deflect the outrage with the truth, but the lie had taken root. Beyond the immediate harm to the Haitian community, stories like this only serve to inflame passions when what is needed is cool-headed problem-solving.

We are nearing the height of the presidential election season. I have watched local politics long enough and closely enough to know that nothing that any of us say or do will change the local outcome. No Republican candidate will lose in Phelps County, and no Democratic candidate will win. Arguing about politics cannot change that.

What those arguments can do, though, is damage relationships. If we parrot political talking points to one another, statements that are almost always half-truths that are slanted towards a particular candidate’s position, we will only separate ourselves from one another and build barriers between good people who are trying to make the world a better place but who see things differently.

So my hope and prayer this election season is that we will all remember that everyone is trying to make good decisions that reflect a positive future for our community, state, nation, and world. We all have partial knowledge at best. Let us seek the Truth that was revealed in Jesus Christ as we also discern what is true, what is false, what is loving, what is needlessly inflammatory, and what will drive people away from or attract them to the kingdom of God and its righteousness.

Message from Your Clerk

As you may know, the clerk in a Presbyterian church is sort of a cross between a secretary and a parliamentarian. One of my jobs is ensuring we follow the Book of Order (the PCUSA Constitution) and our bylaws. Did you know we have bylaws? Lucky for me, they are only three pages long.

One thing spelled out in our bylaws is church officers. Every church is required to have elders, who oversee the church's business affairs. Historically, we have also had deacons and trustees. Their focus is on people's well-being and the building's well-being, respectively.

In our last meeting, the session voted to recommend changing our bylaws to give us more flexibility. The congregation will vote on the changes later in the fall. I am writing to provide you with time to learn about the changes and ask any questions you might have.

Our bylaws currently call for nine elders, and we have often struggled to meet that requirement. The recommended amendment would change the session from a mandatory nine elders to a six-to-nine range. This range provides more flexibility, and if someone steps down for health reasons or a move, we aren't required to replace them mid-year unless we fall below the six. Currently, we have eight, and with Britt Whittaker moving to St. Louis, we will drop to seven.

The second recommended amendment is very similar and would change the board of deacons from a mandatory nine to a six-to-nine range. Like the elders, we haven't had an entire board in several years, and with Amy Whittaker moving to St. Louis, we will decrease by one more.

The final recommendation is to eliminate the Board of Trustees as a separate board elected by the congregation (subject to term limits) and replace it with a Building and Grounds committee that would serve the same practical purposes as the current Board of Trustees. The Book of Order has term limits, and we have had to seek waivers each year to extend the trustees' term. Those serving are doing a great job and have a wealth of knowledge. They are willing to stomp around in the basement and boiler, where many can't or are not interested in venturing. A proposed Building and Grounds committee member could serve as an elder if they wish. That can't happen under our current setup.

We will vote on the bylaws later this fall. If the changes pass as recommended, we will elect elders and deacons at the same meeting, and they will begin serving in January 2025. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

Respectfully submitted – Susan Murray

Mission and Outreach Committee

The Presbyterian Preschool and Greentree Learning Center will be working together to celebrate a Fall Festival for our families. We will be hosting the event at our church on Thursday, October 24. Please consider donating boxes of snack cakes (which are individually wrapped) for the snack-cake walk. If you prefer, monetary donations are welcome and we will purchase them. Please bring any donations to church or the church office by Tuesday, October 22. Volunteers are welcome to attend and help greet families, set up activities, or serve food.

During the month of October, we will be collecting items for the Presbyterian Disaster Relief Blue Buckets. We have a sign-up sheet on the easel near the entrance of the church. As in the past, there are specific sizes and amounts listed. Please use those guidelines. They are used to make sure everything will fit in the bucket. If you have difficulty shopping and would like for us to do that for you, we will accept monetary donations as well.

Christ Episcopal Church is looking for volunteers to help with their Sunday community lunches. They need help with cooking, serving and clean up. You would be working with an established team. The teams rotate every eight weeks. If you feel this is something you would like to help with, there is a sign-up sheet on the table by the church entrance. If you have questions, you can talk to Maudanne Pursley.

Worship Committee

We are going to remember all the loved ones that passed in the previous 12 months on November 3 during our All Saints Day Service. Names to be read include; Liz Stottlemeyer, DC Look, Bob May, Karen Read, Jean Day, Freddi Zobrist, Betty Pietsch, Eugene Zanders, and Katherine Cook. Please reach out to folks who may be interested in being present for the celebration of these church family members.

We are happy to return to passing the peace in our pre-covid fashion with extending a hand of fellowship to any around us or even those in other areas of the sanctuary. This is especially important for visitors. If, however, you are not ready to exchange a handshake, place your hand on your heart to express your love without physical contact.

Our Choral Christmas Cantata has been scheduled for December 15. Those who normally use the live stream or podcast may want to plan to present for this event. Also, any singers available to sing that date are welcome to join us late November as we begin our practice. More information will be shared later.

We are hoping to upgrade our visual presentation of the worship service through large television screens. Think about this as a wonderful inspiration for increased pledging for 2025. This equipment will reduce the coverage of the lovely windows and increase the sharpness of the image.

JOIN US FOR PRESBYTERIAN
PRESCHOOL & GREENTREE LEARNING
CENTER'S

FALL FESTIVAL

October 24th 5:30-6:30

PRESBYTERIAN PRESCHOOL PARKING
LOT



Administrative Committee

We want to thank you for your continued generosity and support of our church. Your donations help us spread the word of God and make a positive impact in our community. As we near the middle of October our 2025 budget planning is now under way. Administrative letters and pledge cards will be going out soon. We would ask that your pledges be mailed in by November 15th or you may place them in the offering plate on Consecration Sunday November 24, 2024.

Without your generosity, none of this would be possible. It is through your giving that we can fulfill our mission as a church.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
WISHES GO OUT
TO

Judy Fox 6th

Christopher Bennet 11th

Dwight Look 25th

David Wallen 27th

If you would like your birthday or anniversary shared please update in the office with Katie.



PRAYER REQUEST

Connie & Bob Dewitt - Continuing health care needs
after stroke and surgery.

Ruby & Lee Malone - Residents of Silverstone.

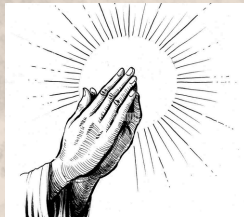
Bob Yenzner - Continuing health challenges.

Katherine Cook Russell - Suffering from dementia.

Bill Neely- Headaches, Back & Hip pain.

Julie Murray- Recent foot surgery

Bill & Pam Cottingham -Pam moved into Cedar Point



Please pray for those named and their families
as well as their caregivers.

The prayer request will start over every two months.
If you have someone that needs put on or taken off the list,
Please contact Katie in the office.