

First Presbyterian Church of Alvin

Press Bytes



To the Saints of First Presbyterian,

Greetings, my partner in ministry is pastor of First Presbyterian in Lufkin. He has written a good article on worship and patriotism. I thought it would be good to print the whole article. So, here is his letter:

I have been asked why we keep our worship separate from our patriotism. It is a complicated and nuanced issue and a very good question. As the son of a career military officer that flew the American flag every day, patriotism is a big part of who I am. Likewise, as a Presbyterian pastor, the son of a Presbyterian elder, and the grandson of a Clerk of Session, keeping the church free of political influences that interfere with Christian doctrine is also critically important to me.

Briefly, let's talk about separation of church and state. This constitutional doctrine is very much misunderstood and boils down to the tension between two constitutional clauses known as the "free exercise" clause and the "non-establishment clause." Both are limits on what the government can do, not the free exercise of religion (that includes all religions, not just Christianity.) The government is also prohibited from establishing a national religion (again that includes Christianity and all other religions). To illustrate the tension, the government cannot tell students not to pray before a test in school (free exercise). On the other hand, a government employee (such as a teacher) cannot require students to pray (non-establishment).

So, you can see that what we do in church is not really a matter of separation of church and state except to the extent the government cannot tell us how to worship. However, we should not let our personal patriotism affect our dedication to the Word of God. God created the whole world and instructs us to love contrary to scripture. This is when patriotism becomes nationalism. Patriotism is love of country. Nationalism is the hate of others, or fear of others who are perceived as a threat to our country. There is no room for hate in Christianity. Perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18).

Some have argued that the United States is somehow the new chosen people of God and therefore subject to blessings from God above other nations. This is wrong on several levels. God chose Israel to be a blessing to all nations, not somehow better than all nations. As Christians, we believe God fulfilled this purpose when Jesus, a Jew, died to redeem all people. When Israel fell short, God judged Israel, and sent prophets to cause Israel to repent. Likewise, we are called by God to be a blessing to all nations. We have been richly blessed and are called to be good stewards of those blessings, not storing those blessings in barns and protecting those blessings from those who are in need. Remember, when we serve the least, we serve Jesus (Matthew 25). Also, remember that Jesus defines our neighbor without regard to national origin (see the story of the Good Samaritan, Luke 10:25-37).

We are also called by God not to have loyalties that get in the way of our worship of God and our reliance on God. In a word, this is the command to avoid idolatry. It is easy to cross the line when we start putting symbols in our sanctuary that represent loyalty to anything but God. This can go to extremes in movements such as iconoclasm,

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Every
journey
begins
with
just
a
single
step

“Behold, I am doing
a new thing; now it
springs forth, do you
not perceive it?
I will make a
way in the wilderness
and rivers in the
desert.”

Isaiah 43:19

YOUR LOVE
NEVER
FAILS
NEVER GIVES UP
NEVER RUNS OUT
ON ME.

Upcoming events in:

September

- 2nd Labor Day (Office Closed)
- 5th Coffee with C.O.
- 7th Tai Chi
- 8th Stewardship Committee meeting
- 10th Mission Committee meeting
- 15th Congregational Life Committee meeting
- 21st Mission Sale
- 22nd Session meeting

October

- 3rd Coffee with C.O.
- 5th Tai Chi
- 6th World Communion Sunday
- 8th Mission Committee meeting
- 13th Stewardship Committee meeting
- 14th Indigenous People Day (Office Closed)
- 17th Coffee with C.O.
- 19th Tai Chi
- 26th Pumpkin Carving contest in the Fellowship Hall.
Snacks will be provided.
- 31st Trick or Treat trail at Oak Park 6:30p-8:30p

2023-2024 CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

CLASS	TEACHERS	CURRICULUM
Preschool - 5th Grade	Rachel Grimmett, Cindy Waggoner	FOUNDATIONS 52-week Children's Ministry Curriculum (a year-long journey through every major section of the Bible)
Junior High	Barbara Bennett	Youth Specialty "Talk Sheets"
Senior High	Adrienne & Scott Thomas	The Chosen Bible Study by David C. Cook Publishing
Women Wondering Why	Ruth Frerking Brandi Bowers (Alt & 5th Sunday)	Meeting Jesus, a Life Guide Bible Study
Fellowship Class	Herb Myers (Pat Spiller)	Overview of the Bible



Pennsylvania Church Offers Community a 'Fresh Start'

The local laundromat was Linda's chapel. It was where she first shared a prayer concern that had been weighing heavily on her mind — and on her family's heart — to say nothing of their budget.

At the time, Linda was dealing with stage 4 cancer.

She confessed to the pastor and volunteers from the Presbyterian Church of Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, who were gathered around Linda and her daughter, "Since I got sick, my washer and dryer can't handle the volume of blankets and bedding."

The cost of doing laundry was driving Linda's family and other families deeper into poverty. And so began the church's "Fresh Start: Loads of Love" laundry outreach program, funded in part by a grant received from the Presbytery of Carlisle's portion of the Peace & Global Witness Offering. The presbytery grants empower congregations and individuals to become peacemakers in their communities and in the world.

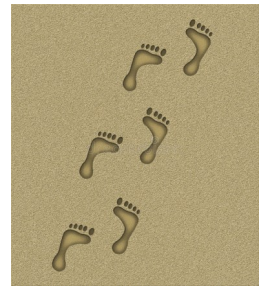
Traditionally received on World Communion Sunday, the Peace & Global Witness Offering is unique in that half of it is directed to peacemaking and global witness efforts at the national church level to address critical justice issues around the world. Twenty-five percent is retained by our congregation for peace and reconciliation work, and 25% is kept by mid councils for similar ministries on the regional level.

"The Waynesboro church's laundry outreach program exemplifies the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s longstanding commitment to peacemaking," said the Rev. Wilson Kennedy, the PC(USA)'s associate director for Special Offerings and Appeals. "Even the simplest tasks, like washing clothes for those on the margins of our communities, helps sow seeds of peace like Jesus commands us."

And following Jesus' commandments is integral to the mission of "Fresh Start."

The Rev. Caroline Vickery says, "We know that Jesus makes it clear that how we treat the vulnerable is how we treat Jesus. Most of our members are college-educated, literate and middle-class. Our laundry outreach has put them in touch with a world whose hardships they're unaware of. It comes as a shock for people to realize how costly doing your laundry can be and to

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"All that the
Father gives Me
will come to Me,
and the one who
comes to Me I will
certainly not
cast out."

John 6:37





Ongoing Prayers : Patty Costanzo, Irene Peltier, Geri Ebert, Wayne Williams, Jill Wheatley & Family, Kathryn Wilkerson, Colton Rogers, Marilyn & Dan Thomas, Nancy & Charlie O'Hare, Stephanie Elkins, Paul Reed, Mandi Odom, Joanne Froberg, Rosemary Hervol, Roger Hawkins, Karen Hensley, and Nancy Williams.

Immediate Concerns : The Family of Rick Wells, the Mallet Family, the Family of Mona Carter, the Family of Oscar Voigt, and the Family of Nora Richardson.

Please call the church office with updates.

Elder of the Month - Marisa Whitfield

Refreshments - Stewardship & Personnel

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1	Aunnie Petersen	1	Emma Andersen
3	Marietta Benson	5	Jill Wheatley
5	Madizen Gondesens	9	Marisa Whitfield
12	Kaye McDonald	13	Jeff Pearce
19	Nancy Williams	19	Paul Froberg
20	Kelsey Del Basso	22	David Pannell
23	Pat Spiller	23	Shelley Andreas
25	Sarah Thomas	26	Alfred Froberg
27	Gloria Mercer	28	Mary Aparicio



ATTENTION JR-SR HIGH YOUTH AND PARENTS!

The Education Ministry Team is emailing a digital Youth-Parent Survey after Labor Day to all youth and parents. We are sending out this survey so youth and parents can express their expectations, concerns and availability relative to youth activities at First Presbyterian Church-Alvin for the coming year. We need your input! When you receive it, please complete it and return it digitally. It is quick and easy! If you do not receive a survey or would rather complete a paper form, please text or email Rachel Grimmatt at (281) 467-3236 or rachgrim@comcast.net.

We will be participating in Alvin Parks & Recreation's Trick or Treat Trail on Halloween. Last year, approximately 3000 children came through the line. We can use your help!! Please donate a bag or two of candy/ small toys to help distribute to the children of Alvin. If you'd rather help financially, please indicate "Trick or Treat Trail" on the memo line of your check. If you are able to give your time to help at the booth, please let Janet DeLeon know as soon as possible.

Thank you!!



Seafarer's Boxes

- ♦ Our Mission team is collecting items to prepare Christmas boxes for Seafarers.
- ♦ Below is a wish list from the Seafarers.
- ♦ Please place items in the container in the Narthex labelled SEAFARERS or place a donation in the offering plate with Seafarers in the memo line.
- ♦ Please send empty shoe boxes.
- ♦ We plan to prepare 48+ boxes as we have in the past.
- ♦ Deadline for items is November 17th.



Please try to pack a shoebox full with new items such as these:

**** Note: Full-sized items are much preferred over small travel size**

Body Wash (sealed)	Band-Aids (fabric)	Socks	Popcorn
Shampoo/Conditioner (sealed)	Lip Balm	Pocket-sized Notebooks	Gum & Hard Candy
Deodorant	Nail Clippers	Cold Weather Caps	Needle & Thread
Toothbrush/Toothpaste	Q-Tips	Pens	Calendar
Dental Floss	Gold Bond Powder	Word Search/Sudoku/Fill-in books	Magnets
Disposable Razors	Gold Bond Cream	USB Flash Drive	Key Chains
Shaving Cream	Baseball Caps (NEW)	Earbuds/Headphones	Playing Cards
Hairbrush/Comb	T-shirts (NEW)	Flashlight w/ batteries	Texas Souvenirs
Lotion	Whistle	Bible/Devotional materials – Daily Bread, Open Door, etc.	Personal note or card

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where even sacred objects were smashed in belief that they represented a violation of the prohibition against graven images/idolatry. While there is nothing wrong with loving our family and our country, we do not worship our country, we do not worship ancestors or nations, we worship God.

Yes, we love our country. Yes, we are grateful for the blessings we have received from being so fortunate as to have been born here. No, we do not worship our country, we worship the God of love who calls us to live as Jesus lived, loving and serving others.

Grace & Peace

Gordon



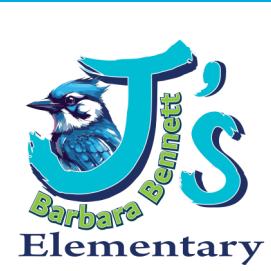
Mission Sale

Donations are being accepted for the **Summer Mission Sale** that will take place on Saturday, September 21st, 8 am - 2 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Accepted items should be gently used and may include tools, kitchen ware, household objects, toys, bags and purses, and small electronics in working condition.

In addition to clothing and shoes, we are no longer accepting books, DVD's, and VHS tapes.

You may donate your treasures Monday - Thursday, 9:00a - 3:00p. If you need any assistance, please call the church office, 281-585-3406, before dropping off your donations. Remember that the proceeds from this sale will supplement the offerings collected for our local and world outreach efforts. These include Clothing Outlet/School Supplies, Heifer Project, American Cancer Society, the Women's Center of Brazoria County, Joy Gift Offering, One Great Hour of Sharing Offering, Christmas families, Peace and Global Witness Offering, and Pentecost Offering. Thank you for your help.

ALVIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT AND THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO ATTEND THE



DEDICATION CEREMONY *of Barbara Bennett Elementary*

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2024
5:30 PM

9235 N. INSPIRATION WAY
MANVEL, TX 77573

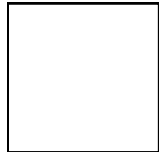


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know that people can't use their SNAP benefits to buy detergent, cleaning supplies or personal hygiene items. Not being able to keep yourself clean robs people of their dignity. There's something restorative about knowing that people will be able to be their best selves. That's why we call it 'Fresh Start.' It's a chance to start over."

"There are many other small churches who want to improve the lives of people in their communities so that the love of God can be made visible through their ministries," Vickery said. "By giving to the Peace & Global Witness Offering, people can help other small churches make God's love real — in their town and around the world.

And as we always say, when we all do a little — it adds up to a lot! Please give generously.



First Presbyterian Church
302 South Johnson Street
Alvin, TX 77511



Address Service Requested

**Please notify the church office
of any change of address or
telephone number.**



*"The First Presbyterian Church of Alvin has been called by God and organized to
share the Gospel message of Jesus Christ in our community and world."*

First Presbyterian Church of Alvin
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