

First Presbyterian Church of Alvin

Press Bytes



To the Saints at First Presbyterian:

Greetings. There is a really good book written by Rabbi Kushner entitled, "How Good Do I Have To Be?" This is the same rabbi who wrote, "When Bad Things Happen To Good People"

This book is about growing up and expectations his father had on him to be good and follow all the rules set down by his parents. It was hard growing up for him to always having to be "good" so to speak. It deals with all the expectations placed upon him and what expectations we put on others.

When you think about it, we all had expectations put on us as we grew up. We have expectations of other people in our lives, even among others in society. We expect people to be as we think they should be.

I think one of the big problems we have today is we expect too much from each other. Everyone should be perfect we have been conditioned to believe. Mistakes aren't forgiven. The main problem is that we are never perfect and too often we cannot meet the expectations others place on us. This can affect all relationships, especially marriages, family and parent/child relationships, not to mention other people in society. The demand to be perfect I think drives us to drugs, depression, alcoholism, and all sorts of broken relationships, even violence and sometimes death.

A reason many people avoid church I'm told, is that they don't feel good enough to come, as if the church places godness as a requisite to enter the sanctuary. Perhaps some churches do but the stigma is out there.

We will often carry this burden in our relationship to God. "I gotta be good for God to love me." We do all sorts of things to impress God. The church, no matter what denomination or major religion, has a pathway to God's heart. It's all about us or so we think.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, that's never been the way things work in the true meaning of Christianity. We are and always have been a religion of grace. We don't have to be good for God to love us. Our goodness isn't going to get us closer to God or into heaven. It is our relationship to Christ and our faith in him. Goodness (the Law) was replaced by Jesus who came to fulfill the law and open the door to God's grace that accepts us just as we are. Our goodness is from our love of Christ. We were first loved. Jesus came to redeem and save our fallen lives which could never be good enough. He loved sinners.

Remembering this I think what a great change we might have in our personal relationship with God, and others, if we didn't place so much emphasis on goodness or perfection on them and allowed them to just be human and imperfect. God does that for us and maybe we can do that for others. When the New Testament tells us to "be perfect" the Greek word actually means to "be fulfilled, made whole." That only comes from our Lord who loves us even with our imperfections! What an awesome God! No wonder our catechism tells us to enjoy God forever!

Peace,

C.O.

August Issue

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C.O. Magee (on Cover)

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August Press Bytes – Christopher Lo
Text: Psalm 23

Over this past two weeks, it seemed that our world was plummeted by multiple vicissitudes. On July 23, the Houston Chronicle announced that in Oklahoma, fifteen vaccinated wedding guests were infected with the Corona virus.

On July 27, the number of active Corona virus cases in Harris County nearly tripled since the beginning of July from 3,076 to 8,431. The Texas Medical Center announced that more than one thousand people are being tested positive daily for COVID in Greater Houston, which is seven times last month’s daily average.

Athletes at the Olympic Games in Tokyo are residing in quarantined conditions, compete in empty stadiums and are being tested daily for COVID. On July 26, when my fellow Australian, Ariarne Titmus, beat reigning champion Katie Ledecky of Team USA in the 400-meter freestyle by two-thirds of a second, Titmus' coach, Dean Boxall, was her only fan in the stands. Fear not, on July 28, Katie Ledecky bounced back to claim the first gold medal in the women’s 1,500-meter freestyle. Even with this amount of precaution, Tokyo had 1,832 new cases of COVID. On July 21, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government reported 1,149 cases.



“I will look from
 My dwelling
 place quietly
 like dazzling
 heat in the
 sunshine, like a
 cloud of dew in
 the heat of
 harvest”.

Isaiah 18:4

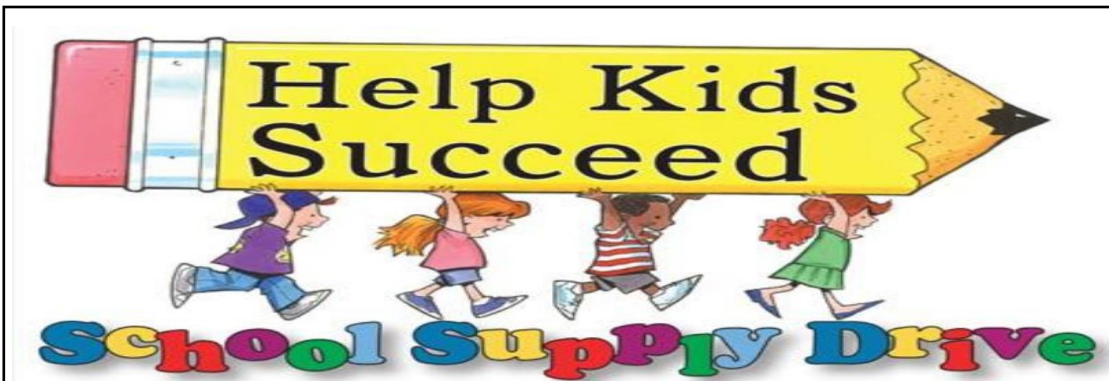


On July 21, we learned that the Bootleg Fire in Fremont-Winema National Forest of Oregon covered 617 square mile and had created its own weather system. By July 28, near Bly Oregon, a pyrocumulus cloud was spotted in the air. At least 2,000 homes had been evacuated during the fire and 5,000 were threatened. At least 70 homes and more than 100 outbuildings had gone up in flames.

On July 22, the residents in Zhengzhou, the Capital City of Henan Province in north central China, with a population of over twelve million people, were shoveling mud from their homes, and hauling away wrecked cars and piles of destroyed belongings following floods that killed at least sixty-three people, with five missing, and 8,876 homes collapsed. There were memorable video images of

ZHENGZHOU





In 1967 Grace Ward Harby had a vision to provide inexpensive, serviceable clothing to school-age children and their families. What started as a ministry in her car evolved into what is now the Clothing Outlet, located on our church campus. As it was back in Ms. Harby's day, the proceeds from the Clothing Outlet still provide school supplies for children/families in need.



Now, over 50 years later, this ministry is still going strong, and we have joined with the Alvin Independent School District, Alvin Area Retired School Persons and the YMCA, to better serve our community. August 9th-12th, we will be sorting and stuffing supplies into backpacks at Manvel High School. This year, will be similar to last year, with a drive through pick up. The backpacks will be distributed to qualifying students on August 16th. We are limiting the number of volunteers, so if you are able to help, please let me know as soon as possible.

What a joy and privilege to continue this vital ministry to our community.

Blessings and peace.

Thank you to everyone who has provided school supplies and financial support to purchase additional supplies. We definitely could not do it without your support!!



"For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."

Galatians 5:13



Knights of North Castle Vacation Bible School



During the week of July 19th about 15 young children participated in learning about Ephesians 6:10; Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. The knights met Armorer Adrienne and Sparky the dragon who helped them learned different stories in the Old and New Testaments to assist them in discovering different pieces of protective armor. On Monday, the knights learned about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego which helped them locate the Belt of Truth.



Tuesday they learned about David and Goliath which helped them find the Breastplate of Justice. On Wednesday they learned about Mary's journey to Bethlehem and the Shoes of Peace, but found the Helmet of Salvation.



Thursday the knights learned about Jesus walking on water which assisted in finding the Shield of Faith. On Friday the



knights learned about Paul and Silas praising God while in jail at midnight and how to Armor Up with Salvation.



passengers standing waist high in water inside a flooded train.



Government of Maharashtra

On July 25, monsoon related landslides and floods in Indian State of Maharashtra, where Mumbai is the State Capital, had caused the death of 127 people.

I am grateful to the Reverend Eric Youngdahl, the Pastor of the House of Prayer Lutheran Church (www.houseofprayerhouston.org) in Clear Lake for sharing with me this recent epistle to his congregation:



“Psalm 23 is one of the classic pieces of Biblical literature that assures us that no matter where we find ourselves physically, mentally, or spiritually, our God is there with us. He is our source of strength when the storms of life rage on. He is our guide as he leads us to the still and calm waters where our worries are carried away. He is our Shepherd and provider, giving us hope for a new tomorrow through the forgiveness and love of Jesus Christ.

One of the commands that we receive from God in the Psalms is, “Be still, and know that I am God.” Be still. Be quiet. Listen to what God has to say to you today. Trust that the creator of this world is with you, journeying by your side. And when the calm, glassy lake of your life turns into a raging storm with waves beating against you with reckless abandon, know that it is God who will shepherd you through the rough seas. We are the sheep of God’s pasture. Though we may wander and stray, he will lead us to those green pastures that are calling our names.” Amen.



On Sunday, July 11, we welcomed trumpeters, the Reverend Nan Doerr, and Denise Saylor, to First Presbyterian Church. Nan is a retired Episcopal priest who enjoys supply work on Sundays at different parishes in the Episcopal Diocese of Texas. Denise works as a speech pathologist with Santa Fe I.S.D. Both Nan and Denise play with the Alvin Community Band which is sponsored by the music department at Alvin Community College.

The Reverend Nan Doerr is pictured in this photo with Pastor C. O. and her husband Sam.



Ongoing Prayers : Martha Phipps, Jill Wheatley, John Shaw, Herb Myers, James Hill, Kim Hill, Kathryn Wilkerson, Wayne Williams, Wanda Cunningham, Evelyn Robison, Patty Costanzo, Davis Buescher, Logan Skeen, Bess, Maudine, and Irene.

Immediate Concerns : Graciela Catarossi & family, and Angela & Tom Clayton, The Harkness family.

Please call the church office with updates.

Elder of the Month - Cindy Waggoner Refreshments - Education

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

2	Adam Wells	2	Bill Pannell
3	Caitlin Melchor	3	Gabby Dantzman
8	Brendon BuPane	8	Violette BuPane
9	Alice Sloan	11	Lexi Hunt
12	Kathy Miller	12	Thomas Lewis
14	Michael DeLeon	22	Emma Gondesens
23	Herb Myers	24	Brandy Carlson
26	Wayne Williams		



Campus Clean Up

On Saturday, July 24th a group of members came together to tidy up the campus. It turned out to be a beautifully hot day. We spent several hours removing unsightly brush, trimming trees, and removing dead leaves from the flower beds. Thank you to everyone who was able to come out! Keep an eye out for our next Campus Clean Up day.



Pictured above: Scott Gondesens, Barbara Bennett, Sheila Follmar, Bill Waggoner, Cindy Waggoner, Audrie Gondesens, Colton, Mandi Odom, Scott Elkins, & Owen Wilson.

Not Pictured: Brandi Bowers & Andrew Hunt.

Genesis Sunday

Come celebrate the beginning of another fantastic year of fun and learning at First Presbyterian! Genesis Sunday is on August 15. During the worship service the 2021 - 2022 church teachers/leaders will be recognized and commissioned and the students and their backpacks blessed. Remember to bring your backpack. We will also present Bibles to 3rd graders. If you know of any 3rd graders and higher who are active in our church and have not previously received a Bible from us, please contact the church office. We don't want to miss anyone.

After church the celebration will continue with a Pot Luck Luncheon. So bring your favorite dish and enjoy delicious food, fun and fellowship with your church family. We'll have a great time!