

First Presbyterian Church of Alvin

Press Bytes



To the saints at First Presbyterian,

Greetings! As we move into the Fall, I look forward to several holidays and fun events. Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas. It's a great time to gather family together to reconnect where we have been separated. Also, a time to remember loved ones who are not with us. Some of those chairs will never be filled again.

Relationships are vital to our existence. We need each other to make life full as God intended. We are a social creature.

Rabbi Evan Moffic in his book, Reading the Old Testament Through Jewish Eyes, discusses the Torah and his interpretation of what the Torah means. It's really great. He has a wonderful interpretation of Genesis 1:27. I'd like to share some of his thoughts for I believe it speaks to all of us.

Genesis 1:27 describes human creation. "Male and Female, He created them". I read this at all the weddings I officiate. This shatters the belief that some people are more important than other people. Family lineage, class or social status, wealth or even race, doesn't matter. Rabbi says none of these factors matter because God has put His spark within all of us. We are all different but within us is a reflection of God. We all have one maker who made us unique. Our differences may well be God's signature.

Harmony in life depends on accepting the uniqueness of others. Problems occur when we try and make a person into someone they are not. God loves every human being as they are because every human being is created in the divine image. We have that same capacity.

In the Adam and Eve story the word "Adam" means the human race. It's the scientific name for humanity. Adam is connected to the word, "Adamah" which means earth. The word, "Ish" is a distinct person, a living being. This is important in the Adam and Eve story. In Gen, 2:23, Adam says, "This one is at last bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. This one shall be called Woman (ishah). From the man (ish) she was taken". In this statement, Adam becomes ish! Rabbi says, "in other words, only in relation to other people does our full personality and humanity emerge." God creates us to live in relationship. It reflects the divine image within us. Relationships begin when we see the spark of God in others.

Our Christian faith is a social faith. We do not believe we can understand our God outside of others. Jesus reached out to everyone no matter their social status. We are bid to do the same. The major problem

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Heads Up!

As in the past, you will be able to purchase poinsettias to remember and honor your loved ones. Once again, we're asking for a love donation to help defray the cost of poinsettias and other decorations. The proceeds from the poinsettia sales will go to the Youth Fund to help our young people with their activities for the coming year. Order forms will be in next month's newsletter. Thank you!



Poinsettia Orders

"Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?"

Luke 6:41



Love. Grow. Serve.

"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."

John 15:12

The new Christian Education year has begun! This is always an exciting time of the year! We honor our third graders with a bible, commission Sunday School teachers, and bless backpacks. Everyone is always excited to begin new lessons and learning more about Jesus. Mission, Outreach and the Church's Ministries restart each January but get refueled at this time of the church year. With summer ending and fall beginning we are also fast approaching the Advent Season. As you begin studying your new lessons also take a few moments to see how you can better serve your church in our Outreach and Ministry opportunities. Below is a list of opportunities to serve our church and community. If you see something you would like to volunteer or serve please contact a Session member or C.O.

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Gathering Place | Clothing Outlet | Sunday School |
| Potluck setups | Children's Christmas Party | Mega Brain |
| Christmas Families | Headstart Christmas | Nursery Volunteer |
| Children's Worship Bags | Choir Christmas Cantata | |
| Refreshments after worship | Decorating for Advent | |
| Preparing Advent Devotion packets | Mission Christmas Sale | |
| Watering Poinsettias during Advent | Baking Cookies for Advent Season | |
| Hanging of the Greens | Ringling Salvation Army Bell | |



About World Communion Sunday

“World Communion Sunday (originally called World Wide Communion Sunday) is a gift of the Presbyterian Church to the larger ecumenical church. The first celebration occurred at Shadyside Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, PA, in 1933 where Dr. Hugh Thompson Kerr served as pastor.

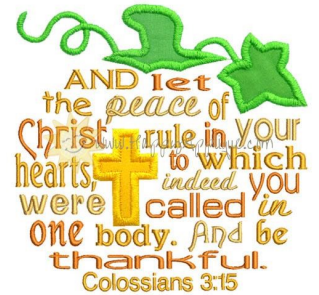


John A. Dalles, a PCUSA pastor who has researched the history of World Communion Sunday notes this in his blog entry, reprinted from the October 7, 2002, issue of Presbyterian Outlook:

Davitt S. Bell (the late Clerk of Session and church historian at Shadyside) recalled that Dr. Kerr first conceived the notion of World Communion Sunday during his year as moderator of the General Assembly (1930). Dr. Kerr’s younger son, the Rev. Dr. Donald Craig Kerr, who is pastor emeritus of the Roland Park Presbyterian Church in Baltimore, was sixteen in 1933. He has related that World Communion Sunday grew out of the Division of Stewardship at Shadyside. It was their attempt to bring churches together in a service of Christian unity—in which everyone might receive both inspiration and information, and above all, to know how important the Church of Jesus Christ is, and how each congregation is interconnected one with another. When I asked Donald Kerr how the idea of World Communion Sunday spread from that first service to the world wide practice of today, this is what he replied,

“The concept spread very slowly at the start. People did not give it a whole lot of thought. It was during the Second World War that the spirit caught hold, because we were trying to hold the world together. World Wide Communion symbolized the effort to hold things together, in a spiritual sense. It emphasized that we are one in the Spirit and the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Celebration of World Wide Communion Sunday was adopted as a denominational practice in the Presbyterian Church (US) in 1936. Churches in other denominations were invited to celebrate with us from the beginning, but it wasn’t until 1940 when the Department of Evangelism of the Federal Council of Churches (a predecessor body of the National Council of Churches) promoted extending the celebration to a number of churches around the world that the practice became widespread. Today, World Communion Sunday is celebrated around the world, demonstrating that the church founded on Jesus Christ peacefully shares God-given goods in a world increasingly destabilized by globalization and global market economies based on greed.



“There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man.”

Mark 7:15





Ongoing Prayers: Jill Wheatley, Kathryn Wilkerson, Wanda Cunningham, Evelyn Robison, Patty Costanzo, Mike & Cheryl Case, Jennifer Rich, Lexi Hunt, Tony DeLeon, Raymond Hill, Mike Moreno, Judith Martel, Rachel Martel, Carmen, Stephanie Elkins, Andy Dalmolin, Jennifer & Charles Krampota, Denise Lance, Brandi Bowers, Audrie Gondesens, Jackie Chavez, and Juanita.

Immediate Concerns: The Family of Martha Phipps, The Family of James Hill, The Family of Kim Hill, and The Family of Pam Bates.

Please call the church office with updates.

Elder of the Month — Helen Escobedo

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

September 2021

The Stated meeting of the Session was held on Sunday, September 19, 2021 in the Fellowship Hall. The Session set the date for Children's Protection Policy Training January 16, 2022. Two time options will be available. Budget revisions from Education, Mission & Outreach, Congregational Life, & Personnel committees were discussed. A conversation to replace the air conditioning units in the Education building was discussed and is awaiting a few more bids in order to make a final decision. Funding for the air conditioner will be taken from the Pagel Endowment fund to prevent incurring additional fees due to interest. Lighting in the library, Narthex, Fellowship Hall, and Education building will be replaced upon receipt of the fixtures needed. The Session decided to participate in the Annual Trick or Treat Trail on October 31st at Oak Park and the Home for the Holidays Light Parade on December 4th. Buddy Ruskey will pull the trailer with a nativity scene. Damage to the fence at the manse, due to Hurricane Nicholas, was discussed and will be repaired soon.

Pumpkin Carving Contest

On Saturday, October 30th we will have a pumpkin carving contest!

The Fellowship Hall will open at 4pm.

The judging will occur at 6pm.

Categories: Most Creative

Spookiest

Funniest

Snacks will be provided.



Cont. from cover we are having today in our society is we are failing terribly to accept

others. We are so self-centered we fail to realize our responsibility we have to our neighbors. Freedom isn't to do whatever you want just because you want to do it. It carries responsibility to others and their lives as well as our own. In a sense, we are accountable to each other. Jesus tells us if we want to follow him, we must be a servant to all people.

This sounds really strange in today's chaotic rhetoric, but it is still our message from our Lord.

We can have any kind of life we want, and kind of society we want. The choice is ours. The world's way is destructive and fatal to abundant life. Jesus is the Way that leads to happiness and peace. That is what God intended since creation. Hopefully our "Adam" becomes an "Ish", and an "Ishah", a real human claiming the spark of God within us and seeing the spark of God in others.

Peace,

C.O.

Trick or Treat Trail



For the past few years, the Parks and Recreation Department of the City of Alvin has sponsored the Trick or Treat Trail event as an alternative to the traditional going from house to house on Halloween to trick or treat. In keeping with First Presbyterian Church's focus on mission, we will once again be sponsoring a booth along the trail where goblins, ghosts, and other Halloween creatures can get their candy in a safe environment. The Trick or Treat Trail will be held on October 31st from 6:30 to 8:30 pm at the National Oak Park by the railroad station in downtown Alvin.

In order to accomplish this, the church needs your help. This can be done in several ways.

First, we need CANDY, CANDY, CANDY! *Please remember as you shop for candy that allergies to peanuts are much more common than they were when you and I were young, so try to stay clear of candy containing peanuts. Please bring your candy to church beginning now through Sunday October 31st. We will have totes set up in the Narthex for you.*

Second, we need people to help set up our canopy, lights, and tables. These people need to be at the National Oak Park at 5:30 pm.

Third, we also need people to work the 2 hour event.

Fourth, we need people to take down our canopy, lights, and tables when the event is over.

As you can see, there is a lot to do to make the Trick or Treat Trail a wonderful and safe experience for the children of Alvin. To get an idea of who can work the event, there will be a signup sheet in the Narthex of the sanctuary beginning the first Sunday of October for those who can help with the last three items needed.



- 1 Joan McNabb
- 3 Jeanine Richey
- 3 Mark Busscher
- 5 Paul Rayburn
- 8 Megan Melchor
- 8 Robert Escobedo
- 9 Cory Day
- 14 Mike Case
- 14 Buddy Ruskey
- 20 Nan Self
- 24 Ayla Busscher
- 24 Pat Carpenter
- 26 Alex Pannell
- 28 Barbara Whitfield

Sunday, October 31, 2021 is Remembrance Sunday

During the morning worship service we will have a time of remembrance for those church members, and those close to our church members, who have passed away this past year.



Members:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Dixie Clark | Ingrid Holdorff | Billy Murff |
| Reuben 'Butch' Passmore | Pamela Bates | Jackie Childs |
| James Hill | | Martha Phipps |

Those close to us:

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Joe Rossano | Mary Magee | Andrew Cordova |
| Kim Hill | Melvin Johnson, Jr. | |

Guest musicians in August

On Sunday, August 15, we welcomed violinist Julie Hanford to our service. The composition Julie played "Do It Again," was composed by Matt Redman (b. 1974), Steven Furtick (b. 1980), Chris Brown (b. 1989), and Mack Brock, who are members of a contemporary worship band from Charlotte NC named "Elevation Worship." Julie is an 8th grader at Seabrook Intermediate School in Clear Creek I.S.D. She last played at FPC in 2019. Julie was accompanied on the piano by her mother, Alisa Hanford. We also welcomed Julie's father, Dr. Tony Hanford to that service.



On Sunday, August 29, we welcomed saxophonist Fred Linton to our service. Fred is a resident of Dickinson and works as a NASA engineer. Fred improvised his own variations to the hymn tune "New Britain" (The Presbyterian Hymnal No. 280), and also composed his own ornamentations to "Hallelujah" by Leonard Cohen (1934 - 2016). Fred plays tenor saxophone with the funk band "Funkcion."

Organist's Musings

By: Chris Lo

In 2007, Michael Spurlock, graduated from seminary and was ordained by the Episcopal Bishop of Tennessee.

After ordination, Fr. Michael was assigned to All Saints' Church in Smyrna TN (www.allsaintstn.org), located around twenty-two miles southeast of downtown Nashville on I-24. At the time, the church had only 25 members and a mortgage it couldn't afford to pay. Michael's tenure came with a catch: he was to close the church doors for good and sell the prime piece of real estate. Developers eagerly eyed the property while the congregation mourned their church's inevitable end. Michael and his family looked forward to moving on to an established church where they can put down roots.



In 2008, however, God had other plans. A group of Karen (kuh-REN) refugee farmers from southern and southeastern Myanmar, came to ask if they could plant crops on the church property to provide for their families, and if possible, to help the church at the same time. These refugees were Anglican Christians, members of the Church of the Province of Myanmar [Burma] (anglicanmyanmar.org).

One day, Michael and his wife Aimée went on a hike when they randomly met a farmer with his wife and baby. From that brief encounter, this couple donated a thousand-gallon water tank mounted on a trailer with a pump to All Saints' Church.

The parishioners of All Saints' and the Karen refugees all worked together to begin farming the 16 acres of bottomland, which was ideal for growing crops. They grew spinach, sour leaf, long beans, as well as gourds, squash, cucumbers, chili pepper, okra and mustard greens. Much of the proceeds were donated to help pay the church's bills.

By 2017, 130 to 150 parishioners attend Sunday services at All Saints. Many of the Karen worshipers fill those pews – barefoot after leaving their flip-flops at the door. Since June 2016, All Saints' Smyrna has been served by a part-time vicar, the Reverend Robert Rhea, who is also a full-time emergency-room physician. The church also has a Karen priest associate, the Reverend Thomas Bu Christ. The church farm is still operational and plowed.

In 2017, this true story was made into a Hollywood movie starring John Corbett as the Reverend Michael Spurlock, Cara Buono as his wife Aimée, and Nelson Lee as the Karen Lay Worker Ye Win, with many of the parishioners playing the roles of extras. This movie was shot on the campus of All Saints' Church.

Until the end of August, C-17 Globemaster large military transport aircraft together with some commercial passenger aircrafts were lifting off the Hamid Karzai Kabul International Airport carrying refugees for resettlement around the world. Many countries, including the Republic of Kosovo in Southeastern Europe, and the Republic of Uganda, a landlocked country in East-Central Africa, were accepting Afghan refugees.

Not long after his birth, Jesus became a refugee. To escape the tyranny of King Herod, he fled with Mary and Joseph to Egypt, a nation which did not worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

In the July 28 edition of the Houston Chronicle, readers were informed that "a Houston refugee agency estimates 1,500 to 2,500 Afghans will come to Houston over the next six to nine months through a discretionary humanitarian designation called 'parole' and will not initially be eligible for public benefits." Seventy refugees arrived in Houston during August.

Five local refugee agencies and nonprofit groups are looking for volunteers to set up apartments and to work with incoming families during their first six months in Houston. Prospective employers are sought to hire arriving Afghans, many of whom have previously worked with the U. S. military. A local veterans' group, "Combined Arms" (www.combinedarms.us) are accepting donations that will be used as airport welcome gifts, halal food vouchers, computers, and for social events.

Jesus said, "And the king will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me'" (Matthew 25:40). Amen.