

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

PRESBYTERIAN CONNECTION

SUMMER EDITION 2021

GREETINGS,

Years ago, author George Barna wrote a book discussing polling data entitled, *The Frog in the Kettle*. It was my first dalliance with seeking to understand the impact of the church on culture and culture on church, and first exposure to how faith matters were evolving over time.

The premise of the book was this. If you place a frog within a kettle of boiling hot water, it will frantically employ every means necessary to get out of the water. If on the other hand, you place that same frog in the same kettle with normal water and gradually turn up the heat until the water boils, the frog will comfortably remain in the water and boil itself to death.

The implication was, most things do not change radically overnight or even weeks. If it did, the screaming would be ear piercing (think COVID restraints). Most all change happens over time, without a perceivable sense of it happening. An idea might be considered radical or implausible when first mentioned, but over time it becomes acceptable and is established as a new sense of normal. Something that we might frantically seek to escape if brought on suddenly, we over time allow to comfortably boil us alive.

All significant change occurs over time. It unfurls gradually without much notice until all of a sudden we seem to wake up and ask, "How did we get here?" Think in terms of cell phones, on-line purchasing, video streaming (even church services), alternative lifestyles and sexual practices, the essential belief in and place of marriage, size of houses, and so much more. Years ago a prominent church leader declared, "What is shocking and extreme to one generation becomes the norm for the next." He is correct.

Unthinkable at one point is tomorrow's standard. Too hot to swim in now becomes just right for a plunge later. My oldest granddaughter just finished her high school play (she was amazing by the way). Afterward we sat around a table nibbling on snacks and talking about the cast. In the conversation she mentioned that two of the performers were transgender. Being masked and costumed for the performance, it was not noticeable. We had no idea. But here's the thing...Bree just dropped that information as if it is completely normal. Julie and I sat fascinated and we discussed the issue at length. It seems so strange to us...it is the norm for her. Trying to get into her world is hard work.

Some of us are old enough that we have opted out of much of this. We still hold to traditional values and live in yesterworld's mindset with yesterworld's accessories. We simply choose to swim in a different kettle. But that kettle is becoming colder over time rather than warmer. The danger in this, and you already may be feeling it in different ways, is that the alternative kettle is becoming irrelevant to the world around us. Participants swimming in that kettle are now considered unimportant to society as a whole. Eventually freezing to death in the kettle is the fate that awaits this group.

I'm not sure if freezing to death is considered better than or is to be preferred over being boiled alive. Neither sounds especially inviting to me. But I do know that the kettle is like the stock market, though there are occasional momentary outliers, culture is always heading to
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warmer water and over time we find that the water that would have sent us scurrying years ago, is now considered comfortably warm. At some point I believe that everything will boil over. The expanding amount of stretch and expansion and heat applied to culture and the faith eventually brings about a breakdown.

I am not sure how hot the water is that we are in currently, but I am convinced that we are now a long way from the place where God walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day. And that is the point of my article. If you allow yourself to sit for a moment and take notice, our walks with God now are experienced in the heat of the desert comparatively speaking. We have become so far removed from the original model our Creator had in mind that we as God's people are barely recognizable. All seems normal because over time we've adapted to temperature increases without knowing it. But it is not nor-

mal. At least it is not normal compared to the Creator's grand design and purposes for us.

Culture's heat has over time moved the whole essence of faith into something built upon the ideals of: personal comfort, consumerism, celebrity ministry, civil religion, personal freedom, tribalism, and judgmentalism. Long gone is a faith rooted and grounded in laying down our lives for others, servanthood, obedience, humility, compassion, empathy, community, and sacrifice. Contrition, repentance, and spiritual disciplines have given way to cheap grace. Counting the cost of following Jesus is now replaced with counting your blessings. Ambassadors of reconciliation has given way to political activism and partisanship. All with barely a whimper or sense that we are so lost.

It's getting hot in the kitchen. Are we aware of it? That's what I'm thinking about these days.

Blessings,
Pastor Tom

OUT OF COMMISSION



Tom will be taking some time off in May to recover after his total knee replacement surgery on May 17, 2021.

We are fortunate to have Bruce Brown filling in for Tom on Sundays, May 23, and 30!

Keep Tom (and Julie) in your prayers for a speedy recovery!

CHURCH OFFICE SUMMER HOURS

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
8:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m.



STATISTICS FOR MARCH, APRIL

Attendance

| | |
|----------|----|
| March 7 | 28 |
| March 14 | 33 |
| March 21 | 21 |
| March 28 | 31 |
| April 4 | 29 |
| April 11 | 30 |
| April 18 | 23 |
| April 25 | 29 |

Financial

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Budgeted expenses/month | |
| | \$ 12,635.00 |
| March contributions | |
| | \$ 7,660.00 |
| April contributions | |
| | \$ 7,910.00 |

THANK YOU
FOR YOUR
SUPPORT OF THE
CHURCH,
COMMUNITY,
AND THE
WORLD.

IN OUR PRAYERS

VANCREST HEALTH CARE: Ann Spieth

ALPINE VILLAGE: Sherry Joseph, Connie Cobb

FAIRLAWN HAVEN: Don Stange

FULTON MANOR: Kathy Rubinstein, Frank Brown

HOME: Bob Brubaker, Mike Hershberger, April Brown,
Sandy Johnson, Jim Etoll, Dan Badenhop, Margaret Whitman,
Linda McOscar



**PRAYER
WARRIORS**
PLEASE CONTACT THE
CHURCH OFFICE WITH YOUR
PRAYER REQUEST. PRAYER
REQUESTS ARE CONFIDENTIAL.
NAMES WILL BE PUT
ON THE CHURCH PRAYER
LIST ONLY IF REQUESTED.



Our deepest sympathy is extended to Terri Snyder and her family following the death of Terri's father, Donald Baden on March 16, 2021.

Our thoughts and prayers are extended to Patricia Birkhold and Lisa Brejcha and their families following the death of their father, Milton Apel on April 3, 2021.

Dear Church Family,

Thank you for all of your cards, phone calls, and support after the passing of our father, Milt Apel. Your kindness and prayers for comfort are appreciated. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Patricia Birkhold, Lisa Brejcha and Families



CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!

Congratulations to the Birkhold family! Craig and Patricia are celebrating two graduations this spring.

On May 9, 2021, Andrew will be graduating from The Ohio State University with a Bachelor of Science Degree.

On May 30, Claire will be graduating from Napoleon High School and has been accepted into the pre-engineering program at The Ohio State University, with a goal of obtaining a degree in Chemical Engineering. Claire is also the recipient of the Presbyterian Heritage Fund Grant this year.



Please join the Birkhold family in celebrating Claire's graduation.

Monday, May 31, 2021

2:00-7:00 p.m.

*R053 County Road 15
Napoleon, OH 43545*



Dear 1st Pres Friends,

Was so delighted to receive your Easter card and see the names of so many Napoleon friends. Thank you!

I hope that this isolation will end soon so I can once again pay a visit to Napoleon and you!

All is well here, but did not go to Florida this year.

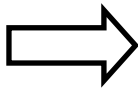
Love to All

Glenna Pool

BIRTHDAYS!

MAY

- 2 Barb Lauber
- 4 Beverly Koenig
- Carole White
- 7 Tracy Stevens
- 16 Sara Weaver
- 20 Carol Leonard
- 23 BOB ELLIOTT**
- 27 Sue Harris



JUNE

- 1 Patricia Birkhold
- 20 Lynne Etoll
- 21 Charlie Leader
- Jim Etoll
- 23 Joel Bokerman
- 25 Lynn Yarnell



JULY

- 2 Gavin Pitt
- 9 Sandee Schweter
- Morgan Etoll
- 12 Dan Badenhop
- 30 Sandy Johnson
- Jana Schroeder

AUGUST

- 17 Bruce Brown
- 24 Don Stange
- 25 Andrew Birkhold
- 27 Claire Birkhold

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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TOM POLKER, PASTOR

10:00 a.m. Worship In-person or Live Online

