

Eastminster Eagle

Volume 40, Issue 7

July 2023



As Christians, our main allegiance is to God. That makes Independence Day/God and Country Worship services tricky to navigate. 1 Timothy 2:1-3 instructs us to pray for our leaders and be good citizens as long as the policies and practices do not conflict with the Reign of Christ. However, if nations abuse the God-given power, God calls us to hold leaders and the government accountable to God.

Worldwide over the last 2000 years, and in the case of our Country's almost 250 years, millions of people have died to ensure that their descendants, and we can worship as we wish. They have paid for the freedoms that we have in our religion and our daily lives. We do not want to minimize the sacrifices that have enabled our freedoms, but the primary sacrifice we honor is that of Jesus Christ.

Some of us have been in churches where the flag of the United States of America is displayed sometimes along with the Christian flag. We do not do that here. Yes, when we are doing a 4th of July celebration in the Sanctuary, we may have the U.S. Flag and maybe the Christian flag. But never in worship. They are continually displayed in the fellowship hall. Why not do it like some other churches and display them in the sanctuary? Here is an answer from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA.

“As Presbyterians, we affirm the sovereignty of God above all earthly powers, profess our loyalty to God before all others, and confess the universality of Christ’s church in the world. Symbols of national sovereignty and loyalty in worship can send mixed messages about these essential tenets of the faith. For this reason, many congregations avoid the use of flags in worship. Churches that choose to display national flags should be mindful of the ambiguities this may engender. If a national flag is used alongside a symbol of God’s realm (such as the popularly accepted “Christian flag,” found mostly in U.S. congregations), the Christian flag is appropriately given a preeminent place. However, the cross itself remains an eloquent and universal emblem of the Christian church throughout the world and is certainly a sufficient sign of our faith. Particularly in times of war or national tragedy, many understand flags and other patriotic symbols to be signs of national solidarity and support for those serving in the armed forces. These symbols hold deep affection and convey important values — particularly in the appropriate context. However, when it comes to worship, there is no substitute for our prayers.”

On July 2nd we will have a “God and Country” worship service at 10:55 a.m., We will sing some of the God and patriotic hymns/songs that are in our hymnal, and the choir will sing choral arrangements based on some of those hymns/songs. We will offer prayers to God on behalf of ourselves, our church, and our country. We will hear a few brief statements of some of our forefathers’ ideas of God and God’s involvement in the founding of our country.

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Following the God and Country Service, there will be a luncheon in the fellowship hall, giving us an opportunity to interact with each other.

Join us on July 2nd as we worship and pray for our country and the world.



Felicia Matthews, Face It Counseling. Felicia has set-up her office here at Eastminster in room 17. She is a woman of God, and serves her clients with faith, love, and kindness. She guides them through their challenges.

She works with children, teens, adults, and families of varied races, religions, nationalities, ethnicities, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Felicia is a Licensed Professional Counselor, and she is also a licensed educator in the state of Texas, and is a graduate of the National Center for Biblical Parenting.

Welcome Felicia!

WHAT'S THE STORY OF *MY COUNTRY 'TIS OF THEE*

On July 2nd we will sing *My Country 'Tis of Thee* during our worship.

You probably have sung this hymn many times from elementary school to the present. Here's the story behind the text of the hymn.

When Martin Luther King Jr. made his famous "I Have a Dream" speech on August 28, 1963, from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. to over 200,000 civil rights supporters, the refrain, "Let freedom ring!" from Samuel Smith's patriotic hymn climaxed this famous speech.

Samuel Smith (1808-1895) wrote the hymn in 1831 and Martin Luther King's speech took place 132 years later—a testimony to the power of a song to shape and maintain an idea.

Smith was born in Boston and educated at Harvard and Andover Theological Seminary. Though inspired by Adoniram Judson to mission service, poor health forced him to give up that dream. Smith was a friend of Lowell Mason, the famous Boston music educator and hymn tune writer. According to hymnologist Leonard Ellinwood, *My Country, 'Tis of Thee* was one of a group of German poem adaptations Smith wrote for Mason.

Carlton Young (who died last month and was my hymnology teacher), editor of every United Methodist Hymnal since the mid-1960s, indicates that the hymn, in its original form containing five stanzas, was performed at the Park Congregational Church in Boston on July 8, 1831 by a children's chorus. Mason included it in his Choir, or Union Collection of Church Music, in 1832. Only four stanzas were included. The

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What's the Story continued from Page 2

original third stanza celebrating a land free from tyrants did not survive past the original performance:

No more shall tyrants here
with haughty steps appear,
and soldier bands;
no more shall tyrants tread
above the patriot dead—
no more our blood be shed
by alien hands.

It is not until the final stanza that God and country are linked. The author offers a prayer of petition to God to maintain "freedom's holy light" in our land and to "protect us by thy might."

Infinitely more singable than the National Anthem, *The Star-Spangled Banner, My Country, 'Tis of Thee* earned Smith a certain level of popularity. The famous 19th-century Chicago evangelistic singer, Ira Sankey, cites one example:

"Dr. Smith visited the Board of Trade in Chicago in May of 1887. While sitting in the gallery he was pointed out to some of the members. Soon he became the center of considerable notice. All at once the trading on the floor ceased, and from the wheat pit came the familiar words, 'My country 'tis of thee.' After two stanzas had been sung, Dr. Smith arose and bowed. A rousing cheer was given by the men on the floor, to which Dr. Smith was now escorted by the secretary of the Board. The members flocked around Dr. Smith and grasped his hand. Then they opened a passage through the crowd and led him to the wheat pit, where they took off their hats and sang the rest of the hymn."

It is doubtful that many United States citizens could sing the entire hymn by memory today, but, thanks to Martin Luther King Jr., the power of the first stanza continues to resonate in ways probably not imagined by the author. King transformed Smith's antebellum poem into a civil rights refrain in one of the most famous speeches ever given in the history of the United States.



I hope you have July 2 marked on your Calendar. We'll have a special July 2 God and Country worship service, and afterward we'll head to the Fellowship Hall for a pot luck lunch. Fried Chicken and dessert will be provided. We ask that you bring a side dish or salad. Darlene is bringing her famous deviled eggs. You don't want to miss those!

July 2—mark the date!



Summer Dining

A great group of people gathered at the Black Bear Diner and enjoyed some fantastic food. People choose a variety of food from breakfast to salads to soup and, of course, Chicken Fried Steak. We enjoyed some great fellowship and had a great time visiting with good friends. We look forward to our next gathering at Verona Italian Restaurant on Garland Road. So, if you missed the first stop, we hope to see you on July 15 at Verona Italian Restaurant.



If you missed the first stop of Summer Dining, never fear. You have 2 more chances.

Summer Dining meets on the second Tuesday of July and August at 6:30 p.m.

July 11th, Verona Italian Restaurant, 9039 Garland Road. Come enjoy some wonderful Italian food: from the appetizer bruschetta to pizza to parmigiana to seafood. Wow! What a menu!



The last stop is on **August 15th**, El Vecino Mexican Restaurant, 718 Buckner Blvd. We are all familiar with Tex Mex food, but I guarantee that the food there is good.



Are you hungry yet?

Puzzle!

Jesus instructs us to give and serve. What does Proverbs 3:27 (NIV) tell us *not* to do? To find out, cross out all the following letters. Then write the remaining letters in order on the spaces below.

B J K Q X Z

BWJITJHQHOB LZD GBOOK
 DKFQR OMTBH JOBSQEXZT
 OKXWJHOB MIZTIJSDQKU
 EWXBHEQNITKISIZNYOU
 RPJZOWBEQRTOAXCZTXJ

DO NOT _____

_____ , _____

_____ .

PROVERBS 3:27, NIV

“Until the great mass of the people shall be filled with the sense of responsibility for each other’s welfare, social justice can never be attained.”

—Helen Keller

“You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget the errand.” —Woodrow Wilson

“Instructions for living a life. Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it.” —Mary Oliver

“Don’t tell me the sky’s the limit when there are footprints on the moon.” —Paul Brandt



T u r n around and believe that the good news that we are loved is

better than we ever dared hope, and that to believe in that good news, to live out of it and toward it, to be in love with that good news, is of all glad things in this world the gladdest thing of all. Amen, and come Lord Jesus.

—Frederick Buechner, *The Clown in the Belfry*

Answer: Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act. Proverbs 3:27, NIV

House & Property

It is summer time in Texas so it is hot outside but not inside! Praise the Lord. What have we done in the month of June:

- ◆ Replaced lights in the women's restroom.
- ◆ DFW Security replaced the secondary panel in the hallway and installed a WIFI router
- ◆ Painted a portion of the hallway with a higher-grade paint. Looks good! Thanks to Katie Karlen, Jo Bird and Bruce Turner for devoting a Sunday afternoon to do the painting. We will plan future paint dates to have the main hallway completely painted from the nursery door to the Narthex doors of the sanctuary. These dates will be announced in the future.
- ◆ An estimate of \$2,800 to trim 8 large trees on the property was received. H&P plans to get additional estimates before the work is started. If you have not noticed, the Pistachio tree at the front of the sanctuary has died. The estimate to remove this tree is \$1,000. Plans to replace it are underway.
- ◆ Replaced air filters to the HVAC systems
- ◆ 8 of the most often used HVAC systems were serviced by Advanced Texas Air. A few of the units were low on freon but are operating and cooling well after freon was added to three of the units.
- ◆ Prepared Room 17 for our new tenant, Felicia Matthew. Felicia is the owner of Face It Counseling and started her 1-year rental contract with Eastminster as of June 1st. Felicia's hours are from noon-7 pm Tuesday-Friday and 10am-3pm on Saturdays.

We celebrate the 1-year anniversary with St. Peter's Anglican Church as a tenant and partner in ministry. Pastor Inno Nwogwugwu leads worship in the chapel from 10 am to 1 pm each Sunday. Their rental contract is in effect until December 31, 2023.

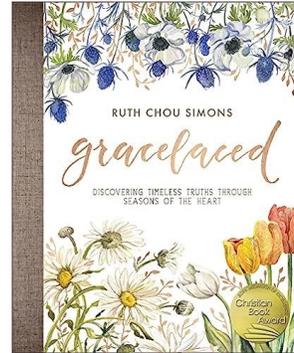
Blessings,

Blair Garrett, Chairman

Bruce Turner and Jo Byrd, Members

Finding freedom

What does freedom look like to you? In *GraceLaced*, Ruth Chou Simons lists examples such as



r u n n i n g
unhindered,
viewing a
mountaintop
overlook and
enjoying iced
tea with lemon.

Because our good, creative God made us each different, our descriptions of freedom vary too. I think of deep breaths, an unhurried pace, genuine smiles, lack of regrets and deep belly laughs.

I love to laugh. Recently, during a demanding season of family celebrations, hardships and surprises, I realized I was laughing less. I felt bound to the next task on my long to-do list, but even good efficiency can shackle our spirits.

A good laugh — beyond a quick chuckle — offers many physical and emotional benefits. According to the Mayo Clinic, laughter relieves stress and pain, boosts the immune system and stimulates organs and endorphins. So today I'm determined to laugh loudly and joyfully while remembering my freedom in Christ.

—Janna Firestone

Turn your platform into an altar

Having a platform — or an avenue to communicate with lots of people — can be useful to share important messages, as long as we don't focus on our number of followers and pageviews. A platform also may tempt us to think we're the gift being offered; instead, I like to picture an altar. It's a place of offering and humility, where we give sacrificially through the reach God provides.

Use these reminders to view your platform as an altar:

- ◆ Strive to obey and trust God, who calls and strengthens you.
- ◆ Be a good steward of God's gifts and messages, caring for the people you're reaching.
- ◆ Avoid comparisons with others, looking to God alone for validation and approval.

Through Abraham's willingness to surrender his only son, the Old Testament patriarch modeled



how a platform can become an altar. So did Jesus, the sinless Lamb of God, who became the ultimate sacrifice to pay our debt. As his New Testament followers, it's our privilege to invite others into this paradoxical kingdom, to give of ourselves as a living sacrifice.

—Monica Wilkinson

An abundance of gifts

In 2022, people set some amazing Guinness World Records. A Nebraska man paddled



more than 37 miles in a hollowed-out pumpkin boat. A Vermont teen wearing 4-inch heels walked more than 600 feet across a tightrope. And an Oregon man found

and alphabetized all 26 letters in a can of alphabet soup in 2 minutes and 8.6 seconds. (The toughest part, he says, is distinguishing subtle differences between letters such as M and W.)

Your talents might not earn you any world records, but they certainly can grow faith and change lives. Whether you're good at teaching, singing, writing, cooking or accounting, the church can put those skills to productive use. Romans 12 lists many more qualities you may not realize are spiritual gifts: graciousness, serving, generosity, acts of mercy, loving and honoring others, extending hospitality, rejoicing and weeping with people, making peace.

You might not be able to outperform the alphabet soup record. But God abundantly blesses each of us to “outdo one another in showing honor” (Romans 12:10, ESV) and in sharing his love. —Stephanie Martin



In what land and at what age did Moses die?

- A. The land of Israel; 100 years old
- B. The land of Canaan; 70 years old
- C. The land of Moab; 120 years old
- D. The land of Judah; 102 years old

Answer: C (See Deuteronomy 34:5, 7.)



"I realize we've run into the lunch hour, and I'm sorry. Now, who's the wise guy who ordered pizza?"

What did Jonah's family say when he told them about what happened before reaching Nineveh? "Hmm, sounds fishy."

What was Moses' wife, Zipphora, known as when she'd throw dinner parties? "The hostess with the Moses."

What did pirates call Noah's boat? "The arrrrrrrk."

How are toddlers and those who attempted to build a tower to Heaven similar? They all babble.

Why didn't anyone want to fight Goliath? It seemed like a giant ordeal.

Which nursery song would Jesus have heard the most? "Mary Had a Little Lamb."

Scripture Readings for July

1 Pss. 56; 149	12 Pss. 96; 147:1-11	23 Pss. 19; 150
2 Pss. 67; 150	13 Pss. 116; 147:12-20	24 Pss. 135; 145
3 Pss. 57; 145	14 Pss. 84; 148	25 Pss. 123; 146
4 Pss. 54; 146	15 Pss. 63; 149	26 Pss. 15; 147:1-11
5 Pss. 65; 147:1-11	16 Pss. 103; 150	27 Pss. 36; 147:12-20
6 Pss. 143; 147:12-20	17 Pss. 5; 145	28 Pss. 130; 148
7 Pss. 88; 148	18 Pss. 42; 146	29 Pss. 56; 149
8 Pss. 122; 149	19 Pss. 89:1-18; 147:1-11	30 Pss. 67; 150
9 Pss. 108; 150	20 Pss. 97; 147:12-20	31 Pss. 57; 145
10 Pss. 62; 145	21 Pss. 51; 148	
11 Pss. 12; 146	22 Pss. 104; 149	

God's got you

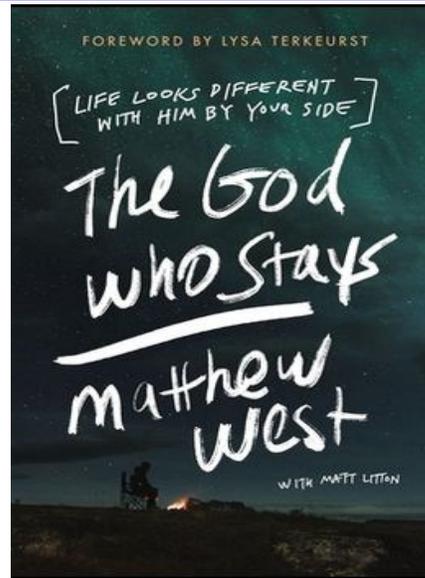
In Roman 4 Paul writes: “If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. . . . For this reason the promise depends on faith, in order that it may rest on grace” (v. 14, 16, NRSV). Here and elsewhere, Paul firmly explains that we are saved through God’s grace, or unconditional love, made known most profoundly in Jesus Christ. But this passage raises a question: If belief (trust, faith) reckons us as righteous before God, what if we don’t trust, can’t believe, have lost all faith?

Pastor Martin Luther (1483-1546) assures us that even this is a gift of God: “I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but instead the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy and kept me in the true faith” (The Small Catechism; emphasis added). Later in Romans, Paul declares that when we feel so lost (unbelieving, lacking in faith) that we don’t even know how to pray, the “Spirit himself intercedes for us” (8:26, NIV). Rest assured, dear one: God’s got you.

—Heidi Hyland Mann

It's a miracle!

I believe in miracles. While I believe in the possibility, under God, of any kind of miracle, I am committed especially to the miracle of the changed life. When a human being goes from despair to hope, when a lost soul comes home, or when a mean and destructive person becomes kind and fruitful, the greatest of all miracles has occurred. —J. Ellsworth Kalas



Keep trying

In *The God Who Stays*, contemporary Christian musician Matthew West writes about the pandemic’s fear-filled early days. After his concert tour

was abruptly canceled in March 2020, he rode to an airport “feeling utterly hopeless about a world that was spinning out of control.”

Then Arthur, his ride-share driver, began singing along to the radio — and the song happened to be West’s “The God Who Stays.” West joined in, jokingly asking how he sounded. “Not so good,” Arthur replied, not knowing West’s identity. “You keep trying.”

The driver shared how those lyrics uplifted him during life’s difficulties, and West later recalled that conversation during lockdown, while wondering where God was. The musician realized he had “settled for a socially distant relationship with the One who is nearer than I dare to believe, closer than the air I breathe.” But West pictured “God running toward me with open arms like the prodigal’s father,” and he resolved to keep trying — and to grow closer to the God who always stays.

Welcomed back to the fold

When her beloved dogs “returned home from an adventure smelling of eau de skunk parfum,” Pastor Joanna Loucky-Ramsey refused to let them in the house. Instead, she cleaned and cared for them outside, slowly reintroducing them to “full participation in family life” once the stink eased.



“The odor left by the skunk could serve as a metaphor for our sin or for the sin others perpetrate against us,” she writes. “As much as God loves us, he hates the sin that hides the lovely fragrance of the image of God within each of us. God wants to welcome each of us into his family and into the heavenly home he has prepared for us, but we need to be ‘deodorized’ from the eau de sin parfum that would mar the entire experience of being in God’s fragrant presence.”

Loucky-Ramsey continues: “Just as our dogs needed our help to get rid of the smell of skunk, we need God’s help to purge us from the offense of sin that permeates our nature and masks who God created us to be. That’s what Jesus accomplished by his death and resurrection: to make us new and whole.”

—adapted from *The Wired Word*

Prayer brings heaven to earth

When you received Jesus as your Savior, you began to live in two homes — earth and heaven. You were born the first time into your earthly family. Now you have been born again into the family of God. You are a citizen of both worlds. Your new heavenly home is the biggest one. It is God’s home. It is yours because you are united to Jesus, and heaven is where he lives.

But we don’t need to wait until we die to visit heaven. Prayer is the airline to our heavenly homeland. We walk heaven’s streets and view its wonders each time we fellowship with the Lord. —

Ben Jennings

Pleasant Grove Food Pantry for month of October

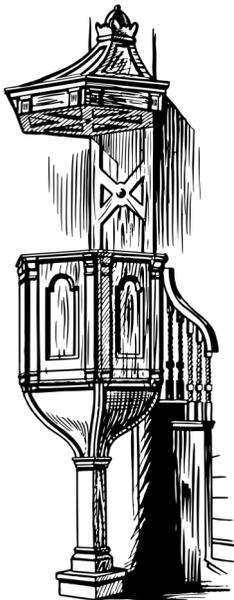


Date	Families	Adults	Seniors	Children	Persons	Pounds
5/1	175	307	112	246	665	13094
5/2	251	515	132	386	1033	18520
5/8	177	326	109	258	688	13325
5/9	250	508	141	418	1067	19137
5/15	162	299	107	209	615	11832
5/16	237	455	133	352	940	17957
5/22	154	278	103	192	573	8229
5/23	252	489	141	371	1001	13181
5/30	298	565	171	450	1187	15372
Total	1957	3743	1150	2882	7775	130722



JULY BIRTHDAYS

Blair Garrett	7/5
Emma Wallis	7/8
Steve O'Neil	7/9
Joseph Bacon	7/13
Tim Kreger	7/16
Darlene West	7/20
Bonnie Lucas	7/21



In the Pulpit:

July 2—God and Country
 July 9—Vernon Wease
 July 16—Tom Pappas
 July 23—Vernon Wease
 July 30—Gary Fox



Eastminster Session

Chandra Anderson
 Betty Crabtree
 Blair Garrett
 Philis Knox
 Dick Knox
 Jim Lee
 Tom Pappas
 Charlotte Turner
 Sean Turner
 Fred Watkins



Director of Music	Fred P. Watkins
Organist	Melody S. Davis
Administrative Assistant	Chandra Anderson
Hostess/Housekeeper	Minerva Hernandez
Child Care Provider	Betty Crabtree



Special dates

- ◆ Canada Day, July 1, 2023
- ◆ U.S. Independence Day, July 4, 2023