



First Light

Volume 27, Issue 8

August 2017

News from the Elders

The elders met once in July and conducted the following business:

- Session is considering participation by FPC as a host church in the Love, Inc Loving Families program, which will house 4 to 5 families, for a week, several times a year. FPC volunteers would provide food and shelter in the church
- Treasurer Dave Stephenson met with Session to provide a report on the budget. Out of that update came three motions:
 - ⇒ A Special Corporate Meeting has been called on Sunday, August 6, 2017 at 12:45 pm. The purpose of this meeting is to “Authorize Session to release \$111,000 from the Capital Improvement Fund to pay expenses incurred in the remodeling of the basement over and above monies received through the Growing Deep Roots Campaign.”
 - ⇒ RE Barb Page, Chair of Session Finance Committee moved that “1) Session be authorized to use funds from the Revolving Loan Fund to pay in full for the carpeting and flooring project, and 2) That Session be authorized to hold any balance in the Revolving Loan Fund for use on future capital projects.” The motion passed. RE Page will relay the request to the Revolving Loan Fund board.
 - ⇒ There is a balance of \$8,736 in the Organ Replacement Fund. There is also a deficit of \$3,276 in the restricted fund for the organ. It was moved to “pay off the deficit in the restricted fund for the organ, using the surplus from the Organ Replacement Fund.
- The Congregational Care Committee moved that, “FPC begin a cancer care ministry with volunteer training to begin this fall.” The motion passed.
- RE Barb Page was elected as the President of the Corporation.

SUMMER COMBINED SERVICE AT 11AM AUGUST 6, 2017

<u>THROUGH JUNE 2017</u>	
TOTAL RECEIPTS	292,160
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	<u>328,395</u>
NET	<u>(36,235)</u>



Membership or Discipleship?

“As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me and I will make you fish for people.’ And immediately they left their nets and followed him.” (Mark 1:16-18)

I’m continually struck by this passage. It’s striking to me perhaps because many times in my experience in the church I’ve received the message that being a Christian is all about what a person believes or about how good their behavior is.

Interestingly enough, Jesus never told the disciples “In order to be my people...in order to be saved...you must believe such and such.” Neither did Jesus say, “You know, if you’re a good person, you’re in.”

Jesus simply said, *‘Follow me and I will make you fish for people.’* Jesus’ primary concern was with our relationship to him and that we’d be following him in life. Translated, following Jesus means doing the things he did, loving people the way he loved them, obeying the Father as Jesus obeyed the Father, touching the hurting and broken the way Jesus touched them, seeking the lost as Jesus sought them, and training future followers as he did. That seems to be the bottom line. Oh, and one more thing. Jesus said, if we’re following him, we’ll be made into fishers of people. In other words, we will develop a burden for those who don’t know God and we’re reach out to them.

Somehow or another we, in the church, sometimes get the mistaken notion that being a Christian is about what we get out of it or about “membership benefits.” While I certainly believe in the importance of benefits and highly value what I get out of my relationship with God, and I also know the value of membership consider a few differences between membership and discipleship as typically understood:

“Membership is about getting; discipleship is about giving. Membership is about dues; discipleship is about stewardship. Membership is about belonging to a select group with its privileges and prerogatives; discipleship is about changing and shaping lives by the grace of God.” (Power Surge: Six Marks of Discipleship for a Changing Church, Michael Foss p. 21)

While church membership really is about following Jesus, we often don’t make the connection. The marks of a disciple, we could say, are a life marked by regular engagement in prayer, worship, scripture, service, witness in word and deed, generous giving, and spiritual friendship with God and others.

Jesus called us to be, above all else, his disciples or followers. Are you following Jesus? What needs to be changed so that you can say with confidence, *"I am truly a follower of Jesus Christ"*?

If you'd like to talk about how to take the next step toward following Jesus I would welcome talking with you. If you are interested in entering into an intentional discipleship growth experience, let me or Pastor Dave know and we will give you some ideas.

Yours in following after Jesus,
Pastor Andy



- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Jim Aldrich | 20 Rick Wagner |
| 1 Ava Denton | 20 Perry Schneider |
| 1 Andree Thies | 20 Siegfried Fink |
| 2 Joyce Gardella | 20 Savannah VanHarper |
| 3 Angela Adams | 22 Jim Williams |
| 3 Nathan Vander Lugt | 23 Lauren Bouta |
| 4 Phillip Jones | 23 Eli Brovold |
| 5 Blake Bunch | 24 Amber Sunderlund |
| 6 Wally Burnett | 24 Debbie DeWitt |
| 7 Greg Young | 24 Kathy Buckley |
| 8 Nathan Vander Lugt | 25 Wendy Cogley |
| 9 Kelsey Per Nore | 26 Dan Brady |
| 9 Karen Binkley | 26 Toby Rozell |
| 9 Bryon Cogley | 27 Isaac Mackey |
| 10 Linda Armstrong | 27 Janice Cleworth |
| 11 Heather Young | 28 Karson Riggs |
| 13 Mark Albert | 30 Marita Bunch |
| 13 Sena Gilbert | 31 Barbara Nore |
| 15 Paul Reichardt | 31 Liesl Wietgreffe |
| 16 Maggie Hess (Demers) | 31 Abigail Sirevaag |
| 17 Colleen Abrams | 31 Hunter Dudgeon |
| 18 Peggy Nicholas | |

First Light

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Of First Presbyterian Church

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Deadline for newsletter submissions is the 20th day of each month. Submissions may be dropped off at the church office, mailed, faxed or emailed to Claire.

Four

August, 2017

The Salmon hit Claire's desk with a frozen sounding **thud!** It was wrapped in a plastic garbage bag, but was peaking out the top staring at us with its dead eyes. I estimate it weighed maybe 30 lbs. We both looked at what was obviously a frozen king salmon on Claire's desk, and then up to the 60 ish yr old native gentleman who was standing there holding its tail smiling at us.

"I want to give this to you," Thus began a really strange hour last Friday afternoon...

To sum up, he wanted to sell us the salmon for some help buying groceries, dry goods, etc...- Claire had dry goods stored away, several boxes ready to give 'for such a time as this', food left over from the normal Wednesday food box distribution- and so we had a box for him. I politely declined our need for a fish- wasn't sure when we'd use it, how long it had been thawing figured he could probably use it more than we could at the moment. He then asked for ride to his apartment, as he now had a box of food, in addition to a half thawed, slippery King. I gave him a ride to his basement apartment. And here's where it got just a little weird and that I wasn't here by accident.

As I walked into the apartment there wasn't a horizontal space that was clear, to set the food box down. The table, countertop, top of the microwave were littered with dirty dishes and half empty mugs and cups, - I wasn't sure what was in them. In the corner was a mattress and an elderly woman sitting there, and on a chair a man I recognized from the Well. He smiled, I smiled, we shook hands. I looked around, getting a better lay of the land, when my eyes fell upon the Fridge.

From top to bottom the refrigerator was covered with row upon row of magnets. The same magnet. Must've been 50, 80 of them. Heart shaped purple magnets. The same magnet we had on the refrigerator at the office. "Connect with God & others at First Presbyterian Church, 7th and Cushman. 452.2406." And here I was, not particularly wanting to be here, uncertain what I was to do... but at that moment knowing it was no random accident.

"Will you pray for my mother, and us? You pray in English and then we'll pray in Gwich'in." I asked names, and what they wanted to ask of God. And so we prayed... while we prayed, the man beside me grabbed my hand, and hung on for dear life. The image that came to mind in that moment was of the death grip Peter undoubtedly had on Jesus, when he was sinking under the waves after taking his eyes off Jesus, and Jesus reaching out and grabbing Peter before he sank. The analogy isn't that I'm Jesus... I'm in the water with the guy next to me, and the other two, drowning - save for Jesus. The analogy was in the sense of desperateness and hanging on for dear life-ness in the grip he on me. I think his grip was as much a prayer as any words which were spoken. After the Lord's prayer in English and

again in Gwich'in, I left and drove back to the church, wondering about what had just taken place- what it meant, underneath and behind the surface.

The magnets said it all. God, used me to connect these folks to himself and us to each other. I. Did. Nothing. I had no strategy. I felt awkward. I didn't really want to be there. There was nothing I could do to fix anything. I didn't say much, asked a question or two, and listened. Again, I did nothing. I was simply there holding a desperate hand connecting someone made in God's image to his Creator and Redeemer. And that was a privilege. A privilege I oftentimes miss out on in my hurriedness and busyness of trying to do things for God.

Keep you eyes fixed upon Jesus. Be present. Listen, and Relax. He's got you.

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Dave

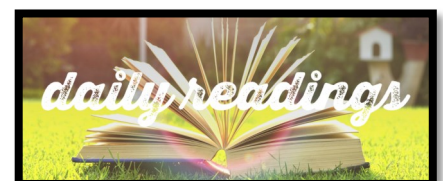


We are grateful for Connie Arp and the way she ministered to all the children and our congregation at First Pres! As many of you know, she accepted a position in Kenai and has moved to continue her ministry there. We pray that God blesses her in the transition and this next chapter in her life.

Please keep the church in your prayers as we discern the steps to take in our Children's ministry. Thank you to all the teachers and volunteers who are stepping up to help in this work of nurturing and leading the children at First Pres!

Daily Lectionary Readings for August 2017

www.pcusa.org/devotions/lectionary/lectionarylist.htm



Anyone who has lost a loved one by death is invited to attend Grief Share. This DVD seminar features nationally respected grief experts and real-life stories of people, followed by a small group discussion about what was viewed. Confidentiality is very much a part of this program. Whether your bereavement is recent or not so recent, you will find encouragement, comfort and help.



Date: Wednesday, September 6

Time: 6:30~8 p.m.

Place: FPC Fireside Room

For information contact:

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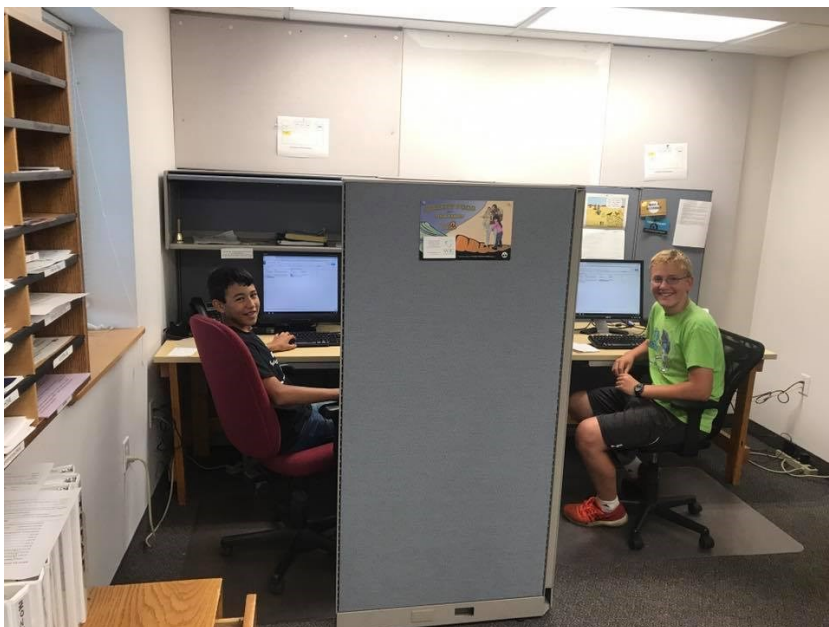
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Spicy Mustard Youth News!

Thank you for all of your prayers for me and our Youth Ministry this summer, especially during our week of spiritual retreat and local mission!





Over the course of another busy Alaskan summer, we have welcomed a half dozen new seventh grade students into our group and programs. We have gathered at least twice a week to pray, play, and serve together. We have helped students with tough questions about transitioning into more challenging stages of life including middle school, high school, college, and all the responsibilities and opportunities that come with those changes.

We will continue to pursue our life of following Jesus, loving God, and loving neighbor together as the summer winds down and school starts back up! If your summer was extra busy and you or your teenager hasn't been to youth group, don't worry: now is the BEST time of year to jump back in!

Here are some wonderful activities coming up in Youth Ministry:

- > Wednesday Hangouts every Wednesday from 1-4pm at church ending August 16.
- > Sunday Youth Group every Sunday from 1-4pm
- > 30 Hour Famine/Homeless Night Sept 8-9

For more information and to subscribe to regular email and text updates, please contact me at David.Booher@fpcfairbanks.com



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