



First Light

Volume 27, Issue 9

September 2017

News from the Elders

At its August meeting, the elders gathered to pray for the church and conducted the following business:

- > Interested members of Session were invited to meet on August 22, as a "Futures Task Force." The purpose of the meeting, is to set the parameters for a discussion by Session. The discussion by Session will focus on clarifying how FPC does mission, outreach, and discipleship.
- > In order to insure the ability to provide Sunday School course material, session authorized hiring of a temporary assistant for Sunday School, for 10 hours a week, at \$12 an hour, through December 2017.
- > Approved Pastor Ekblad's vacation leave request for September 18-24, 2017.
- > Approved Pastor Ekblad's request to use banked study leave to begin training towards certification as a Spiritual Director with "Soul Formation" out of Portland, OR. The first training begins the week of November 6.
- > Reschedule the September Session Meeting to September 26, 2017.
- > Decided to amend the 2017 budget line item titled "Presbytery per member asking" to \$4,224. This is an increase of \$384. This was to help cover some unforeseen expenses.

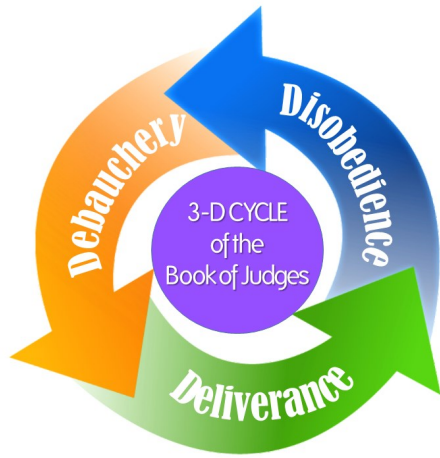
THROUGH JULY 2017

TOTAL RECEIPTS	342,856
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	<u>375,140</u>
NET	<u>(32,284)</u>



DISOBEDIENCE, DEBAUCHERY AND DELIVERANCE: THE 3-D CYCLE

A Study of the Book of Judges



Welcome to the title of our thirteen week Fall Sermon Series beginning September 3.

The book of Judges has a bad reputation. In fact, when it comes to war and violence, Judges is considered to be the most prolific book of the Old Testament. Given its notoriety, one might ask why we should spend time in it? The reason is because Judges may be the most timely and relevant of all the books in the Old Testament. Consider the following list of items:

- ⇒ Tension, strife, and injustice between rival groups.
- ⇒ Disputes over land and territory.
- ⇒ Misplaced priorities
- ⇒ Power-hungry leaders.
- ⇒ Child and spousal abuse
- ⇒ Senseless and excessive violence
- ⇒ Inappropriate sexual relationships
- ⇒ Excessive individualism
- ⇒ Moral confusion
- ⇒ Social chaos

What time and place is being described by this list? It sounds like the state of our world, especially in our nation today. But, in fact, the list is an accurate description of the contents of the book of Judges.

If this book offers a challenge, it is the one that lies at the heart of the gospel. The gospel promises life, but the gift must be accepted and embraced and then extended to the world that God loves. When it is not, the results are destructive and ultimately deadly. So the question that will hang before us in our study is this: "Will we, the people of God, be faithful to God alone and so fulfill our God-given role of being a light to the nations?"

The book of Judges is a prophetic word for our time calling us to self-examination and then to repentance so that our lives bear the good and life-giving fruit of faithful worship and obedience to God. Ultimately, the message of Judges calls us to pursue King Jesus and in that this book will lead perfectly into Advent.

May God shed light on our path as we journey together into his Word.

Pastor Andy



4 Dan Wells	19 Nancy Dreydoppel
6 Mark Lawson	19 Mark Wartes
7 Josephine Papp	20 Kil Whiteman
7 Shannon Riggs	21 Anarrakaq Hoak
9 Vern Canada	22 Debra Lynn Bush
9 Sherry Dudgeon	22 Kathryn Sorrels
10 Norman Klann	22 Adelaide Wietgreffe
10 John Purcell	22 Catherine Mathews
10 Ben Logan	24 Donald Putugook
10 Sarah Logan	26 Hannah Denton
11 Wanda Bowder	28 Meredith Nava
12 Alan Sims	28 Rachel Marney
13 Sandy Hoak	29 Scottie Klann
14 Rachel Perkins	29 Sage Gates
15 Qulvaq Hoak	29 Lorena Sims
17 Scott Marney	30 Julia Solomon
18 Patty Greimann	
18 Rick Stovarsky	
18 Jason Riggs	

First Light

A Monthly Newsletter Publication
Of First Presbyterian Church

547 Seventh Avenue, Fairbanks, AK 99701
Phone: (907) 452-2406
Fax: (907) 452-7205

Pastor:

Andrew Ekblad

Andrew.Ekblad@fpcfairbanks.com

Associate Pastor:

Dave Moody

David.Moody@fpcfairbanks.com

Office Manager:

Claire Cherniawski

Claire.Cherniawski@fpcfairbanks.com

Director of Youth Ministries:

David McConnell-Booher

David.Booher@fpcfairbanks.com

Director of Children's Ministry:

Vacant

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.



We Need Helpers!

Children's Church and Sunday School
teachers are in need of helpers! If you
are willing and able to help, there is no
preparation required! Please call
Stephanie Rozell with any questions (907) 687-3730

Teacher and Volunteer Training

Tuesday, September 5 from 6pm—
7:30pm. We will be meeting in the
3-4th Grade Classroom at First Pres.



Four

Reading the News With Eyes of Faith

By: Bob Ekblad (*with permission*)

For a number of years my daily prayer and study time includes reading online national and international news articles, preceded and followed by readings from the Psalms, Gospels and Epistles, and often from the Torah and Prophets as well. Reading the news, however, can become an addiction, especially in times of turmoil. The narrower path of seeking wisdom from above involves listening prayer, faith, intercession, and continual discernment--activities that require time and sometimes can't compete with carefully crafted and entertaining media propaganda.

Even the best news coverage of current events is always incomplete, leading me to read deeper to seek understanding. Since the news media rarely focuses on good news and never on testimonies from the front lines of ministries committed to advancing the Kingdom of God, deeper analysis can lead to negativity: anxiety, fear, despair, anger and cynicism.

For years I have sought to practice what Swiss theologian and resister to Nazism Karl Barth reputedly advised young theologians. 'Take your Bible and take your newspaper, and read both. But interpret newspapers from your Bible.' More than ever these days I am seeing the need to deliberately and prayerfully interpret current events from Scripture.

The first Psalm calls "blessed" the person who "does not walk according to counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers."

As I witness the USA (and other nations) severely divided, with people of opposing viewpoints citing their trusted sources and debunking others as under the sway of 'fake news' or propaganda, I've become convinced that Psalm 1 is highly relevant to our current national scene.

"What does it mean to walk according to the counsel of the ungodly?" I've been asking myself. The "ungodly," sometimes translated "wicked," is from the term *rasha* in Hebrew. Its opposites are "the righteous" and those who pursue justice and righteousness. The ungodly are not just obvious thugs, but designate people not following the ways of God, the proud and arrogant (Isa 13:11), rulers (Isa 14:5) and the rich (Isa 53:9).

The "counsel (*boule* in OT Greek) of the ungodly" refers to advice that is not coming from the righteous, or most importantly from God. The Greek Version of Isaiah 55:8-9 reads: "For my counsels (*boule*) are not as your counsels, nor are my ways as your ways, says the Lord. But as the heaven is distant from the earth, so is my way distant from your ways, and your thoughts from my mind."

Jesus spoke often about contrasting sources of intelligence. "He who comes from above is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth" (Jn. 3:31). "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world" (Jn. 8:23).

"Standing in the path of sinners" refers to agreeing and participating in policies and lifestyles informed by unrighteous counsel, which is "from the earth" and "speaks of the earth."

"Sitting in the seat of scoffers" is a popular pastime in America these days. In our highly po-

larized nation, the media and ordinary people daily pour contempt on opposing leaders and their followers. There is something almost irresistible about sitting in the seat of scoffers as hate and superiority can be intoxicating. Mocking or judging can give you a feeling of power and control, and the illusion that you are doing something rather than being stuck in paralysis, doing nothing.

But there is something positive and life-giving to be done! The Psalmist continues: “But their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night.” Don’t worry! “Law” here is not referring to laws or rules but comes from the Hebrew word *Torah*, referring to divine teaching- designating even the first five books of the Old Testament. Pursue delight day and night- the Psalmist is saying, which in times of negative media bombardment can help us “not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good” (Rom 12:21).

Delight in God’s teaching can be pursued through prayer, study, contemplative reading of Scripture and worship. Once we have tasted delight we will desire more. This can lead us into a continual, day and night pursuit of divine counsel leading to a blessed life. The one who meditates day and night will be “like a tree, planted by the streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season. And its leaf does not wither. And in whatever that one does they prosper” (Ps. 1:3). In contrast is the bleak prognosis for the wicked, who “are like the chaff that the wind drives away... The way of the wicked will perish” (Ps. 1:4-6).

So how do step deeper into a lifestyle of preparation? How do we meditate on the word day and night?

Interestingly the word for meditate in Hebrew is *haga*, meaning “moan, groan, murmur, utter.” *Haga* suggests deep engagement. Meditating is less an intellectual activity and more a deep vocal or silent ruminating, which seems more possible as a continuous activity.

Adding to this, the Apostle Paul writes: “pray in the Spirit at all times.” In Romans 8:23 the Apostle suggests a link to Psalm 1. He says that “we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons.” The term “groan” (*stenazo* in Greek) means “to sigh, murmur, pray inaudibly: — with grief, groan, grudge, sigh,” which is quite similar to the definition of the Hebrew verb *haga*. Later in Romans 8:26-27 Paul speaks about this even more explicitly:

In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

Praying in the Spirit then can be associated with a kind of internal groaning that overlaps with meditation. We can engage in a kind of ceaseless prayer and meditation “in the Spirit,” even when we are sleeping or working with our minds, as meditation and prayer can be done with our spirits apart from our minds.

I encourage you to try this out, deliberately seeking the wisdom that comes from above leading to abundant life, over the earthly wisdom and human counsel. See if this helps you tune into messages of hope leading to fruitful resistance to the encroaching darkness of these dangerous times.

Six

FPC Saints-

"I know you. I've visited your church before," the guy sitting at the picnic table across from me and down a ways said. And thus began a great conversation between strangers.

Before our new friend sat down and introduced himself- one of your elders and I were discussing the ever accelerating shifts our culture is going through, and particularly how church's are perceived (rightly or wrongly) by many 18-35 yr olds.

We introduced ourselves to our new friend and asked what he and his buddy did for a living, friends we had in common, we talked about Fairbanks- the culture, what we liked about this town. We even touched on - just a bit- what it meant to cultivate and create a culture where people flourished. It was truly enjoyable- and not a coincidence, given the subject of our prior conversation.

As we rightly attempt to understand broad trends in our culture- my new friends reminded me that people are people, regardless of their age. People want meaningful relationships, we all want - need- a purpose larger than ourselves, we need to make sense of the world around us- in the midst of it all, to hear that I have dignity and worth. We all want what we do- our vocations- to matter. And I firmly believe that the cry of the human heart is to have a first hand experience with Jesus, even though it scares us to death.

In a world where everyone is trying to sell us something- I'm learning- **learning**- to be a better listener. And I think those were some of the things I was hearing in our conversation.

Diane Henry has written an annotated bibliography on books she's been reading this past year. Beginning with this newsletter, we'll be highlighting two books every month. When one strikes your fancy, I encourage you to head over to Amazon, buy it and read it. Thanks Diane!

God's blessings to each of you!

Pastor Dave

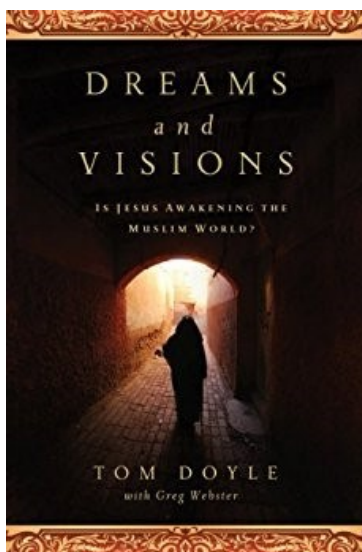
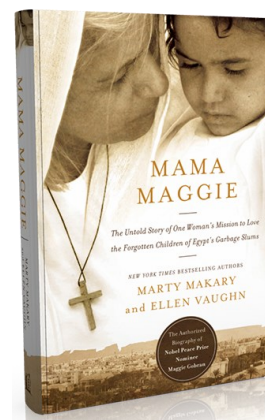
NEW! Book Reviews

“Mama Maggie: The Untold Story of One Woman’s Mission to Love the Forgotten Children of Egypt’s Garbage Slums”

By: Marty Makary & Ellen Santilli Vaughn

From marketing maven to angel of the garbage district, this book is an inspiring biography of Maggie Gobran, the ‘Mother Teresa of Egypt.’

“Since 1997, Maggie Gobran and her organization Stephen’s Children have been changing lives in Cairo’s notorious *zabala*, or garbage slums. Her innovative, transformational work has garnered worldwide fame and multiple Nobel Prize nominations. The authors chronicle Mama Maggie’s pilgrimage from privileged child to stylish businesswoman to college professor pondering God’s call to change. She answered the call by becoming the modest figure in white who daily navigates piles of stinking trash, bringing hope to the poorest of the poor.”



Dreams & Visions – Is Jesus Awakening the Muslim World? By: Tom Doyle

“What would you do if Jesus appeared to you in a dream? What if He came to you in a vision and told you to follow Him? What if these visions continued for over thirty days? Would you believe? Would you put your trust in Him? Would you devote your life to Him? Would you if you were Muslim?”

There are a staggering number of Muslims who were first introduced to Jesus through a vision or dream so powerful that they eventually turned from their lifelong religion of Islam and embraced Christ as their Savior. Despite living in a culture where converting to Christianity can result in execution, these former Muslims have found hope, peace, and inspiration that comes from knowing Christ. Their stories will amaze you. Jesus is reaching out to Muslims and they are responding.” (Excerpts)

Through his many years of serving on the front lines in the Middle East and North Africa, Tom has compiled these recent and genuine accounts of how the one true God is getting His message of love to a people that have been captives for centuries by a suffocating religious system. Jesus is reaching out to Muslims and they are responding. (Jason Elam, Israel, Director for E3 Partners)

Few groups are as misunderstood and misrepresented by today’s followers of Jesus as Muslims. They are often feared by Christians – and regrettably even hated. Thankfully, Jesus loves, and so does Tom Doyle. He unapologetically and irrevocably extends his hand to all. I have personally seen his ministry in the Middle East up close. It is quite possible that Muslims represent the greatest harvest of the Great Commission. This book shatters common misconceptions with a simple truth – Jesus is leading the way. (Dr. Roy L. Peterson, President & CEO of The Seed Company)



Invite

In August of 1997, Rev. Andrew Ekblad and his family moved to Fairbanks, answering God's call to become our 21st pastor at First Presbyterian Church. That was 20 years ago so plans are unfolding to gather together on **Friday night Sept. 15th to celebrate!** Since we want this to be an extra special evening and dinner, **please bring your most delicious potluck dish** to share. Cake and drinks will be provided, along with paper goods, etc.

Celebrate

If you would like to contribute toward **gifts** for Andy and his family, **please turn in your contributions** as soon as possible to Ted or Joan Riggs (1st service) or Donna Brewer or Terry Reichardt (2nd service). We will have a gift box available at church each Sunday to place your contributions in.

We will also be making a **20th Anniversary Memory Book** for the Ekblad's. Please bring photos, cards or other written messages of encouragement and appreciation **before Sept. 15th** to be placed in the gift collection box. If you have photos that could be used in a slide show, please give or forward them to Dave Dreydoppel as soon as possible. (ddreydoppel@mac.com)

Details

Mark your calendars & plan to attend the 20th Anniversary Celebration for the Ekblad's!

Date: FRIDAY, SEPT. 15

Time: 6:30PM

Venue: FPC FELLOWSHIP HALL

For more information please call Donna Brewer (479-4426)
or Ted Riggs (374-9394)





CANCER CARE MINISTRY AT FPC

Earlier this year our FPC Congregational Care Team felt led to inquire about an amazing opportunity to launch a cancer care ministry. With the support of our Pastors and our Session, arrangements were made for two of our elders, Ted Riggs and Donna Brewer to attend the “Our Journey of Hope” Cancer Care Ministry Leadership training event held May 11-12 in Newnan, GA. The training was free through Cancer Treatment Centers of America’s generous sponsorship.

The training was free through Cancer Treatment Centers of America’s generous sponsorship.

The need for cancer care ministry is great and grows every year. “Our Journey of Hope” (OJOH) is a Biblically-based cancer care ministry training, where people receive the tools needed to serve, comfort, and encourage men, women and families fighting cancer.

On September 25th, Donna and Ted will begin cancer care training here at FPC. After completion of eight sessions of training, we will be ready to launch our own FPC “Our Journey of Hope” ministry.

Please keep this ministry in your prayers. And seek how God may be leading you to support FPC’s “Our Journey of Hope”.

If you have any questions about this ministry, please contact Donna Brewer (378-3351) or Ted Riggs (371-9254).

Gardening Class

Hosted by Terry
@ First Presbyterian Church

8 WEEKS OF TIPS

\$20 PER PERSON



CALL (907) 452-2406 TO REGISTER!

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:

Pat Fink

(907) 457-4614

patriciafink12@gmail.com

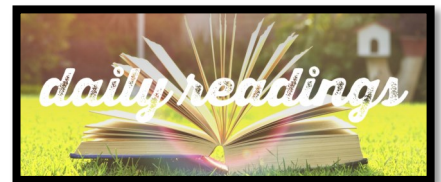
Joanne Klaver

(907) 479-7633

claudefjoanneklaver@gmail.com

Daily Lectionary Readings for September 2017

www.pcusa.org/devotions/lectionary/



Spicy Mustard Youth News!

Wednesday Hangouts are gone with the summer, But Eat. Pray. Serve. returns on September 27!

All youth are invited to come serve neighbors, hear God's word, and hang out and have fun every Wednesday from 4-7pm





One Homeless Night & 30 Hour Famine!

We will be participating in the One Homeless Night event (A Fundraiser for FYA and The Door) again this year and it looks to be the best yet! More information and registration is here - <http://www.fairbanksyouthadvocates.org/sleepout/>

Mark your calendars and plan on being downtown with us from Noon on Saturday, September 9 until church the next morning!



First Presbyterian Church
547 Seventh Ave. at Cushman St.
Fairbanks, AK 99701

Return Service Requested

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Fairbanks, AK
Permit No. 62

Elders on Session

**Terry Reichardt
Brian Rozell
Donna Brewer
Dave Moody
Joyce Tapper
Perry Schneider**

**Michelle Harpole
Bill Beaudoin
Ted Riggs, Sr.
Barb Page
Jim Williams
June Champlin**

Board of Deacons

**Kathi Stevens
Nancy Dreydoppel
Debra Foster
Kathy Rahmandar Halfhill
Michelle VanHatten
Charlotte Wilbur
Sarah Curtis**

**Linda Mullen
Barbara Nore
Keith Nore
Darlene Lundberg
Lonny Marney
Michele Marney
Logan Foster**