



JULY 2023

THE NEWSLETTER

A Publication of First Presbyterian Church, Brazoria, Texas

2028 – It's a new year!

Sometimes it seems like we struggle so much among ourselves right now that we don't have the time or the energy to plan for tomorrow. What do we think this church will look like in 5 years? Will we all just be older with no growth and shrinkage only by death? Will we be planning to build a new building or change and expand the current building because we are bursting at the seams?

What would you like to see in our church in 5 years? Would you like to see our feeding programs (the Food Pantry, the Blessings Box, the Community Garden) enlarged? Or is it just too much trouble to see the hungry and give them something to eat? We get mired down in one person taking a whole bag of food from the Blessings Box and we sabotage what it is meant to be. Who are we serving?

Perhaps part of the problem with the Blessings Box is that you're not there to hear a simple "thank you" when they are taking from the box, and we step out at that time. You don't hear the people saying, "this church has saved my life." You don't hear them say, "that peanut butter you had in there was awesome." Maybe you should hear it and maybe it should be from the pulpit. Maybe it's my fault for not telling you how grateful they are.

We have other neighbors too. We have neighbors who are obviously not homeless. Some who obviously have paycheck left at the end of their bills. Many of our neighbors are older people. But we have several who are still able to bring a covered dish for a fellowship lunch.

Information obtained from Mission Insights finds that within a one-mile radius of our church, *people believe that God is love and invites the world into a loving relationship. Fewer, but still a large number of people believe that they have a personal relationship with God.*

Unfortunately, a large number of people living in our one-mile radius believe that the people in the church don't act as Jesus would act. They feel that believing in Jesus does not require participation in the church. They also believe that Jesus was both divine and human.

Our neighbors believe the family is key to social stability. They believe that tolerance is necessary for social peace and well-being. They believe that America has a moral duty to be a force of good in the world. They believe that America is losing its place as a world leader.

73.4% in the one-mile radius do not participate in church. 3.1% are likely to become active in a church. 10.7% are likely to quit being active in a church. 86.2% are likely to make no change in their church activities.

So, what does this mean to us? We have a little growing room. Who's 3.1% that is likely to become active in a church and why couldn't that church be ours?

What else do you see our church being and doing in 5 years? Will we have children's programs? That's kind of like the chicken and the egg. You have to have children to have a children's program, and it seems that you have to have a children's program to get children in the church.

Will we have more involvement with the 55+ crowd? Will we take group trips to places around the area? Or maybe we could have a dinner club where a group got together and had dinner at someone's house, the fellowship hall, or a restaurant?

Our mission statement is to "share the love of Christ." How do you see that happening? It can't happen without us being willing to step outside the church and perhaps outside our comfort zone. Just take a hop of faith and see what God can do through you.

Love,
Tracy



What we prayed for in June:

Prayer Focus:

Keep in Prayer: Jesse Abbott, Chase Richburg, David McRae, Cheryl Bobbitt, Marbella Hooper, Alvis Jacks, Joey Welboan, John Devens, Terrell Lanier, Holly Chrysler, Shawn Scott, Pat Shadden, Leo Taylor, Steve White, Peggy Badders, Britney Shurtz, Bobby Harrington, Barbara Ferrell, McKenna Buchanan, Michael Cammack, David Marcum, Faith Peavler, John Jones and family, Lonnie Johnson, Brenda Jackson, Earl and Nelda Gragert, Michelle Ebinger, Barbara Sullivan, Thomas Kopecky, Beth Burke, Shawn LaBreck, Jamie LeBouef.

Comfort and Hope: Family and friends of Dixie Rodkey (at her husband passing). Family and friends of James McLaren (at his passing). Family and friends of Shirl Riccetti (at her husband passing). Families in Perryton, TX, Louin, MS, Moss Point, MS, loss of homes from tornadoes. Victims and families of recent mass shootings in 7 states. Families who lost loved ones in the migrant Greece shipwreck. Families in Odisha Balasore, India - 2 passenger trains accident due to electronic signaling system error. Peace where there is gun violence. Peace of Christ in our country and the world.

Other Prayers: Gail, Charlotte, Phoebe, Andrew, Timothy, Sue Ellen, Paula, those working in extreme heat, our environment - care for the earth, clean water and clean air, families traveling this summer, Feed My Lambs, elderly, hungry, homeless, mental health, city workers, elected leaders of our government, prisoners, military and our veterans, First Responders, EMT, firefighters, police officers and their families, our church and communities of faith.

Sharing the Joy: New Members: Kristen Gragert, Cole Buchanan, McKenna Buchanan. **"Welcome one another, ...just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."** Romans 15:7

How can we pray for you today? If you have a prayer request, please call the church office, Rev. Tracy Williams, Ginny Raska or Linda Matheson.



Angel Mini-Market

The Angel Mini-Market will be on November 4, 2023, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

We need volunteers to contact vendors.

Any questions, contact Nancy (R) McLaren 979-248-1283

TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY

Tuesday Bible Study is temporarily suspended for the summer. Summer Reading: Challenge yourself to read the Bible, it will strengthen your faith. I encourage you to continue Daily Bible reading as it maintains our connection with God through his written Word. It reminds us of his character, promises, our dependence on him, and our future together.

Linda Matheson
Christian Education



Presbyterian Women

Sunday, July 23, 2023

YOU are invited to spend an hour with us and share a light lunch.

We will study Lesson 9: Sabbath and Community

**Scripture:
Acts 2:42-47**

CHURCH DINNER

SUMMERTIME! SUMMERTIME! SUMMERTIME!

JULY CHURCH LUNCH

Hope everyone is enjoying their hot, hot summer so far. Please be careful outside in this heat. Do not want anyone getting sick.

Sorry I wasn't here for the June church dinner to follow through on the picnic style dinner. I do want to thank everyone who took care of the dinner in my absence. It was greatly appreciated.

So...July we will have a picnic style dinner, but will keep it inside away from the heat and bugs. This will be on our 3rd Sunday of the month, July 16th.

How about we have hamburgers and hot dogs with all the trimmings? Hamburger patties, hot dog wieners along with the buns will be provided. We will need some help with the trimmings and side dishes. Some of the things needed will be lettuce, tomatoes, onion, dill hamburger pickles, and sliced cheese. Also to go with the burgers, maybe some potato salad, baked beans, coleslaw, and chips. This is just suggestions to go with the burgers and dogs. Bring whatever you like or just bring your appetite and let's enjoy good food, fellowship, and America's Independence! Please notify Nelda if you plan on bringing something to go with the meal.

GOD BLESS AMERICA AND GOD BLESS THE WONDERFUL FOLKS OF THIS CHURCH,

Love to you all.

Nelda
979-799-7681

CARBON MONOXIDE/SMOKE DETECTORS

Carbon Monoxide/Smoke Detectors

Carbon Monoxide/Smoke Detectors have been installed—one in the Sanctuary and one in the Fellowship Hall.



Thank You So Much

To my church family for providing the lunch after James' memorial service. It was wonderful. And thanks to everyone that helped with his service. Thanks to each of you from the bottom of my heart.

Love,
Nancy (J.) McLaren



SUNDAY SCHOOL MATTERS

**You're Invited.
Sundays**

9:15-10:15 to study God's word.

**Please Join Us
Everyone is welcome (all ages).**

"For the word of God is alive and active..."
Hebrews 4:12



FEED MY LAMBS

Feed My Lambs began on June 5th, delivering lunches on Mondays and Thursdays, and we will continue through the end of July. We have had a good number of volunteers, 11 to 16 each day, doing a variety of tasks: preparing sandwiches and hot dogs, sacking lunches, folding agape, delivering meals. On June 22nd, we delivered 112 lunches, the most so far this summer. We welcome donations of your time and talents as well as monetary contributions. Please make out checks to Feed My Lambs. For any questions, please call Ginny Raska @ 798-1628.



Blessing Box

Our blessing box is visited daily, we are in need of bottled water, flip top items (i.e., Beanie Weenie, tuna, Vienna sausages...), packaged tuna, snack crackers, cookies, fruit cups... Food items that do not need to be cooked.

Every day we are blessed by God, life is not always easy to live, but YOU can share a blessing.

PRESBYTERY

Presbytery Meeting

Spring Branch Presbyterian Church
Saturday, July 15, 2023

Ginny Raska, Commissioner

PENTECOST

Pentecost Offering

Session approved our 40% share of Pentecost offering will be given to support the Brazoria Police Christmas gifts for children in our community. Thank you to everyone who gave a Pentecost Offering.

Lectionary Gospel Readings for July

Sunday's Date	Gospel Passage
July 2, 2023	Matthew 10:40-42
July 9, 2023	Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30
July 16, 2023	Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
July 23, 2023	Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43
July 30, 2023	Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

2024 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2024 General Assembly

2024 General Assembly applications are due July 31st - 2 of each Ruling and Teaching Elders so that the Nominating Committee can interview and recommend nominees. If you are interested in being a Commissioner, they are elected in November and the names are registered in December

Rev. Lynn Hargrove
General Presbyter and
Stated Clerk for Administrative Process
Presbytery of New Covenant
lhargrove@pbyofnewcovenant.org



Food Pantry

Currently, the Food Pantry is open 10-Noon on Friday. We would like to expand the food pantry hours more than one day a week. Please contact Jim Barnett to volunteer.
Thank you

ATTENDANCE

	Total	Elders	Facebook
6/4/23	18	3	91
6/11/23	20	5	86
6/18/23	18	4	124
6/25/23	21	5	153

***** TREASURER REPORT *****

May Income \$7,182.81
May Expenses \$5,803.99



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?

God's got you

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.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
Every Sunday 9:15 Breakfast 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship					Every Tuesday 10 a.m. Prayer Group 6 p.m. Game Night		1 © Nancy Boyd
2 Communion © HuNoMi Rodda	3 © Nelda Gragert	4 Independence Day Church Office Closed ♥Mike & Barbara Sullivan	5 © RJ Herrera	6 10:00 Feed My Lambs	6 10-Noon Food Pantry	8	
9 © Gene Raska	10 10:00 Feed My Lambs	11 ♥William & Mary Clarke © Owen Boyd	12	13 10:00 Feed My Lambs	14 10-Noon Food Pantry	15	
16 Church Dinner Session	17 10:00 Feed My Lambs	18	19 © Killian Tinnon	20 10:00 Feed My Lambs © Grady Gragert	21 10-Noon Food Pantry	22	
23 Presbyterian Women	24 10:00 Feed My Lambs © Alan Rodda	25	26	27 10:00 Feed My Lambs ♥Doug & Norma Peterson	28 10-Noon Food Pantry	29	
30 Rev. Lynn Hargrove Preaching	31 10:00 Feed My Lambs						



The church office will generally be open Monday - Thursday, 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. The exception will be holidays.