



# The Bell-Tower NEWS

**Florissant Presbyterian Church**

## MISSION STATEMENT

- \* Preaching and teaching the Bible with passion and love
- \* Bringing the unchurched to a trusting and redemptive relationship with Jesus Christ
- \* Nurturing our congregation
- \* Serving the needs of our community



As we stand at the threshold of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Luther starting the Reformation (November 1, 1517), I ask myself, “What is our call to create a greater sense of faithfulness and unity in Christ’s mission and ministry?” In the early 16<sup>th</sup> century there were questions about the centrality of authority and power, changes were occurring in labor and class relationships, and suspicions were growing about wealth and care for the “least of these” especially in the cathedrals of the church. With phones in our pockets that are quicker than 1960 rooms of computers; with cars that can almost drive themselves, certainly assist us, and even talk to us; with a 24/7 news cycle that bombards us with both useful and misleading information; and with an ever shrinking wide world of nation states into a global village of regional interest, our assumptions, understanding and relationships in almost all aspects of our lives are different than they were even 50 years ago, let alone 500. I suggest many of the angry divisiveness and wide divisions we are experiencing locally and nationally are the fruit of broad changes and that if we allow ourselves to be swept up in these divisions, we may find ourselves be twisted to the point of snapping.

Being the church is going to be different as we move forward in the 21st century. Will we be a church that will go through changes in our understanding of what it means to be the body of Christ to our neighbors, or how articulated our faith to a whole new generation and their values, or how we will witness in the context of our more diversified neighborhood? Because there is such disunity of reactions to our changing world, we are uncertain about how to move forward. As a pastor and leader, I sometimes become uncomfortable about what to share with a whole congregation regarding contemporary issues. It’s hard to reach a consensus among a congregation. Yet, my challenge and call is to speak with a humble, consistent, and loving voice on behalf of the Christ’s mission of reconciliation and peace. Being the Body of Christ to others means doing together what none of us can do as well alone. This humble unity is central to the future of our faith life together. It is about intentionally honoring those distinctively different qualities that make each of us who we are, but, at the same time,

not allowing differences to become impediments to our engaging in a conversation, deliberation and discernment in ways help us move forward on issues of quality of life, values and faith.

Just like in Luther's epoch 500 years ago, these great changes and questions of how to be faithful to God in our time will help us to hear our call to a need for unity of trust and a complete dependency on God's word to guide us. I'm hoping that one of the outcomes of this changing and challenging period will be a greater valuing of reading whole stories, chapters, books in the bible not just isolated verses. There can be a greater desire to engage each other in our understandings and uses of scripture for our 21<sup>st</sup> century world. That we will create safe spaces for dialog in which we can have open conversations about living faithfully together rather than bickering separately about politics and policies.

I appreciate the opportunity to be part of your church life and your faith journey that challenges us to read the Scriptures, to think about Christ's message, and that challenges how we then choose to not only live it out ourselves, but, also how we give guidance to others in respecting, obeying and honoring our loving God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We're not all going to believe the same thing. We're not all going to hold the exact same views or values. That is something which clearly is unattainable and not even biblical, but I think there is a certain center or heart of Christ that does exist at the core of all believers and that really does tie us together. Inside the walls of Florissant Presbyterian Church, I hope to dedicate myself to creating an accepting space where we can all sit down, we can all discuss, we can all engage, we can all stretch ourselves, we can all grow, and we can all find ways in which we can give expression to our common faith and to our different experiences or understandings, and we can all share our call to create a greater sense of faithfulness and unity in Christ's mission and ministry in our ever-changing world.

With Grace and Amazement,

Pastor Sean



## **CLERK'S CORNER** – *Barb Spurgeon, Clerk of Session*

The September Session meeting was held on Wednesday evening, September 13<sup>th</sup> and was opened with prayer by Rev. Sean Butler. The Study Time for the meeting was from Psalm 147. The regular opening items from the agenda were met.

**CHURCH LIFE** – Chris Mahurin reported that the Jesus Love Feast is coming on September 23. They hope to have about 200 volunteers to help with the event. Set-up will start on Thursday afternoon and continue through Friday and Saturday a.m. Volunteers will park at the old Sears building across the street. Breakdown will be on Saturday afternoon. There will be a band playing outside on Saturday. Campout on the church property will be held on Saturday evening, September 30<sup>th</sup>. World Communion Service will be in the pavilion on Sunday morning, October 1<sup>st</sup>. The Craft & Collectible Fair will be held on Saturday, November 18<sup>th</sup>. It is hoped to soon have FPC T-shirts on sale for any members who would like to buy them.

**CHURCH OPERATIONS** – Jim Moody reported on the phone system. We actually have three numbers – need more than one because of security system, etc.

**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION** – Carole Tumminia said they would be meeting soon.

**CONGREGATIONAL CARE** – Judy Shy shared that over the summer the commission did the following: Sent out 78 cards; made 114 calls; had 43 visits; served two luncheons and one memorial reception. They need some new members for this group and are looking toward the congregation for those members.

**GREEN COMMITTEE** – Dan Edwards has gotten a lot of information and will be passing it along to our members.

**NEW BUSINESS** – Ben Mahurin presented his Eagle project to the Session. On motion duly made, seconded and passed, the Project was approved and a \$100.00 donation would be made from the church.

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE** – Chris Mahurin reporting. On motion duly made, seconded and passed. A increase in pay was given to Paula Finke. At the beginning of the summer Charlie talked about having carpal tunnel surgery. She did not have it done and is unable to play for us anymore. On motion duly made, seconded and passed, Ellen Geerling will be hired as part-time Director of Music.

**PRESBYTERY MEETING** – Dick Lee attended the recent meeting in Washington, MO. Main action for the day was the announcement that the Presbytery office will be moving. It was approved to sell the old building in Tower Grove. A tentative move to a West County location is in the works.

**WORSHIP & MUSIC** – Stefanie Thobes announced that the Music Commission would be meeting after church on Sunday, September 17<sup>th</sup>. The FPCLC Board will meet on September 26<sup>th</sup>.

The next Session meeting will be on Wednesday, October 12.

Prayer concerns were shared and the meeting was closed at 8:14 p.m. with prayer by Pastor Sean.



# OCTOBER Birthdays

1 John Martin	20 Alan Wilkis	27 Robert Scudder*
5 Kevin Ruyle	23 Thelma Hollis*	27 Carol Parks
8 Janet Bolser	24 Stefanie Thoebes	27 Timothy Kaatman
18 Arlene Arseneau	25 Amanda Denno	28 Jacob Krohn

## Happy 90<sup>Plus</sup> Birthday!

Thelma Hollis  
Robert Scudder

If you would like to send birthday wishes, Thelma's address is 729 Teson Road, Hazelwood, MO 63042; Robert's is Bellefontaine Garden Nursing Home, 9500 Bellefontaine Road, St. Louis, MO 63137

## WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

*Carl & Dorothy Light, married 58 years on October 2*  
*David & Dorothy Gebhart, married 39 years on October 14*  
*Everett & Betty Flaker, married 62 years on October 15*  
*Fred & Marilyn Branstetter, married 60 years on October 18*  
*Andrew & Anne Taylor, married 66 years on October 19*  
*Mike & Trish Farano, married 12 years on October 22*

*From the desk of...*  
*Kay Laughlin*

“It is well with my soul.” One would think Horatio G. Stafford, the author of this line that serves as title and refrain of a hymn written in 1873, was peacefully in the midst of everyday life circumstances. Yet, just the opposite is true. After suffering deep personal loss at the death of his only son and financial setbacks, this successful lawyer took his wife and four daughters to Europe to lift their spirits and participate in an evangelistic campaign in Great Britain.

Before the return voyage, Mr. Stafford was detained by urgent business, so he sent his family back to Chicago, planning to follow them shortly. Their ship set out across the Atlantic; two British vessels struck the ship, and it sank in 12 minutes. His wife was among the few survivors, but his four daughters drowned along with 222 others.

“It is well with my soul.” This summed up his description of the sustaining comfort God supplied to him as he crossed the Atlantic to join his wife in Wales and passed over the approximate location where the previous ship had sunk. The first verse goes into even more detail of his actual circumstances and emotions:

When peace like a river attendeth my way  
When sorrows like sea billows roll—  
Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,  
It is well with my soul.”

It is well with my soul? How could this possibly be true after a father experiences such loss? How could any “blest assurance control” in the midst of one’s soul through his unimaginable loss? These were my questions about the title and lyrics of this old hymn until the sudden death of my husband on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017. On what he indicated would be a “short ride,” Jim suffered a massive heart attack as he was heading back home and died suddenly.

In the next week, I told a good friend from church that I now understood how the writer of this old hymn was able to pen such words, write such a refrain after experiencing such deep loss. I, too, had been given the assurance he spoke of that comes from a real, living faith in Christ and His promises of eternal life for those who believe. There was peace in knowing Jim had a saving faith, one that played itself out in so many ways each and every day.

“It is well with my soul.” This doesn’t mean I am not terribly sad or that I don’t miss him so many times throughout the day. I’ve never lived alone before, but then I am not really alone. The God of all comfort has ministered mightily to me. I am known by Him just as Jim was.



By/Betty Walters

### HOUSEWORK "PHOOEY"

It takes me all week to do what I use to do in one day.

Gets me tired just trying to think of a better way.

When I scrub my floors, I find they need it again in six months.

My list of things to do is obsolete in a month or two.

I'm asking you, what is a body to do?

Really I am trying to keep up.

But find out, I am wearing out.

Picking up after myself is really quite a chore.

The reason is, I don't feel like doing it anymore.

I can't wear dresses ever again because I have house maid knees.

Will someone show me an easier way? Please!

FLORISSANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
660 CHARBONIER ROAD  
FLORISSANT MO 63031

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## **OCTOBER 2017 Belltower**

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### **FLORISSANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy (PCUSA)  
660 Charbonier Road, Florissant, Missouri 63031  
(314)837-8555 Church Office (314)837-4073 fax  
E-mail: [flopresby@sbcglobal.net](mailto:flopresby@sbcglobal.net)  
Website: [www.flopresby.org](http://www.flopresby.org)  
Rev. Sean R. Butler  
Phone # 314-807-6877  
Email: [pastor.sean.fpc@gmail.com](mailto:pastor.sean.fpc@gmail.com)  
Office hours: Monday - Thursday 9am – 2:00 pm  
Paula Finke, Office Administrator  
Angela Rugger, Director, F.P.C.L.C.  
Ellen Geerling, Music Director



# Church News

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

**JESUS LOVE FEAST** - What a day! Close to 400 people filled Florissant Presbyterian Church with the spirit on Saturday 9/23. Over 200 guests were served lunch and given the opportunity to select clothing items, backpacks, luggage, blankets, stuffed animals, children's books, a special personal care bag and brand new underwear and socks.

Entertainment was plentiful: a live band, face painting, manicures, putt putt golf, balloon animals, snow cones and crafts for the kids.

A dedicated group of people, spearheaded by Steve Jackson, worked hard to prepare for the event and without volunteers it would not have happened. Thirty FPC friends and members turned out (joining over 125 other volunteers). Everyone had a job and did it with a smile. Thank you so much for sharing your time and talents!

Candy - P.S. Thanks again for the beautiful flowers.

## CHURCH LIFE

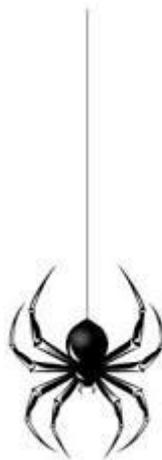
**CRAFT FAIR** - Do you like to do paper crafts, crochet or bead? The FPC craft fair will be on Saturday, November 18 and the Church will have a table. We need your handy work to fill that table. Let me know if you can make something. You can e-mail me at [suebradfordedwards@yahoo.com](mailto:suebradfordedwards@yahoo.com). And I'm talking to the men too. I've seen the work that some of you do. Let's all share our talents with the Florissant community! Thank you to everyone for their help. - Sue Bradford Edwards

**BOOK CLUB** - Are you a history buff? Maybe you just like to read. Consider joining us for our next Book Club meeting. Our October book is *Hero of the Empire* by Candice Millard. This book about Winston Churchill is available through the St. Louis County Library. Book club meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm and we'd love to have you join us for a lively discussion. If you are interested in coming, contact Sue Bradford Edwards (suebradfordedwards@yahoo.com). Our meeting periodically changes location!

**RUMMAGE SALE** - October 7<sup>th</sup> is the date for our fall rummage sale. Late drop offs on Wednesday, October 4 from 6-8 pm. Set-up is Friday, October 6 from 9-3 (lunch provided).

### **GREEN COMMITTEE**

**TIPS FOR LIVING GREEN.....See how many days per month you can be on a "car fast"**, enjoying your time at and around home or using other means of transportation such as bus, bike, or feet. ("TIPS" are provided by the Earth Care Action Team of presbytery, composed of the 7 certified Earth Care Congregations of the presbytery.



**Happy Halloween!**