



The Profile

JULY
AUGUST
2020

Pastor: Rev. Rodger Allen
Music Director: Susan Farris
Administrative Assistant; Jeanette Levellie
Custodian: Cheryl Clark

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Pastor's
Ponderings



“What A Long Strange Trip It’s Been”

As we prepare the July/August issue of the “Profile” in late June, we have been in various stages of COVID-19 regulations and adjustments for over three months, and now the guidelines are changing again, as we move into Illinois’ “Phase 4” June 26. So you will find in this issue our current “best guess” as to what is coming up in July and August, keeping in mind that things may change again any time.

1. “Phase 4” – A set of rules was released by the state of Illinois, regarding things like group gatherings, meetings, and social events. But a May 29 Guidance Memo from the Illinois Department of Health makes it clear that for places of worship, these are “strongly recommended guidelines,” not laws. So heading into the month of July, the “strongly recommended guidelines” we are following are:
 - Indoor gatherings (including worship) of up to 50 people
 - Continue social distancing of six feet space between people who do not live together, and the wearing of masks, especially when it is difficult to maintain that much distance
 - Avoid multiple people handling the same items (so no passing of offering plates or microphones, and please pick up and discard your own bulletin)
 - Continue to encourage frequent handwashing, and staying home if you don’t feel well
 - Discontinue group singing, as there is increased likelihood of transmission of contaminated exhaled droplets (with singing, they travel farther than six feet – up to fifteen, by some estimates).
2. Special Offerings – We normally collect the One Great Hour of Sharing at Easter, the Pentecost Offering at (surprise!) Pentecost, an annual offering to support the work of our Deacons in late August or early September, and the Peace Offering on World Communion/Peacemaking Sunday the first Sunday in October. Since we weren’t worshipping together for Easter and Pentecost, we might provide information and opportunities to give for all four of these between now and October 4, but please remember, as always, that we don’t expect everyone to give to everything, and you can choose whichever ones are most meaningful to you.
3. “Tentative” – You will find some dates and events in the other pages of this newsletter, but at least a couple of them were set before the virus came along, and others may be set once some of our groups begin meeting again, so please keep watching for changes in our calendar; we will keep you updated as best we can.
4. Some of our members fall into higher-risk categories for catching the virus, or having it take a serious toll, than others; and others will just not feel safe or comfortable coming back to group settings as soon as others, and that is fine. Expect that our gatherings may still be a little smaller for a little while longer, and please respect each individual’s decision. We will look forward to welcoming each of you back when you are ready!

--Rodger

SANCTUARY CHOIR NEWS

Choirs news? What choir news? I hope that—in your imaginations—you enjoyed our beautiful anthems for Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Easter. What an unusual year for all of us.

I do thank those who helped in any way with the three Wednesday Lenten services we were able to have. I missed the last two Wednesdays as much as I missed all the Sundays.

We will have a few special music guests over the next few weeks, but many people are not comfortable with performing just yet. So I hope you won't mind listening to yours truly on the piano or organ.

Whether worshipping together in the Sanctuary or worshipping at home alone with our thoughts, let's "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow!"

---Susan



SEND SOME GREETINGS

The Board of Parish Visitors lets us know that the following church members appreciate receiving cards:

Margie Taflinger
Paris Healthcare Center
1011 N. Main St, Room 300
Paris, IL 61944

Betty Dahlin
Life's Journey Sr. Living
705 Kenton St., Paris, IL 61944

Alice Sprague
305 S. Jefferson, Paris, IL 61944

Ilse Smilie
2 Crawford Ct., Paris, IL 61944



**First Paris Presbyterian Church Building
Watercolor Painting by Jane Bittner, 1974**

The first church building for the Paris Presbyterian Church was erected in 1834 on a lot donated by Samuel Vance at 114 East Washington Street. Church records stated, "it was decided to build a one-story brick building 30 feet wide, 50 feet long, set on sandstone foundation, the gable on the street side, a single entrance in that end and four windows on each side". Blocks of sandstone cut from Sugar Creek were hauled to the site for the foundation. Bushels of lime, burned in the North Arm neighborhood, were delivered and General Milton K. Alexander contributed ten thousand bricks made from a kiln in Springfield. Col. J. M Blackburn hauled the hand-hewn sills and beams by oxen. Back of the church was a large orchard and a rail fence ran north and south with a stile over the fence near the church and a path leading to Col. Washington Alexander's home.



July Birthdays

- 4 Kinsley Gough
- 8 David Hoff
Kenneth Ludington
- 11 Sarah Penczek
- 14 Elizabeth Gough
- 20 Rick Phillips
- 31 Misty Smith

July Anniversaries

- 14 Phil & Karen Scott
- 20 Rodger Allen/Laurie Williams
- 22 Jeff & Carolyn Hodge
- 25 Larry & Carol Jones



August Birthdays

- 3 Meredith Penczek
- 6 Jim McCulloch
- 10 Robert Howrey
Karen Scott
- 12 Autumn Lewis
- 13 Mike McCrocklin
- 14 Clark Piper
Jeanette Levellie
- 15 Mindy Lolie
- 16 Emma Scott
Skyler Davis
- 17 Kay McCulloch
- 21 Melfina McCollough
- 22 Lanee Pfeiffer
- 23 Gwyneth Blair
Logan Blair
- 24 Dodie Turner
- 25 Seth Gough
- 27 Alice Sprague

31 Tom Hebermehl

August Anniversaries

- 8 Kevin & Amber Farris
- 10 Karol Farris & Chris Schilling
- 26 Gaye & Dodie Turner
- 31 Jim & Susan Farris



"We are a welcoming congregation of dedicated believers who glorify and serve God through meaningful worship, caring for the needs of our congregation, reaching out as good stewards to others in need both locally and worldwide, and promoting Christian Education and spiritual development for all ages. We seek God's purpose and guidance in our lives through the Holy Spirit and in service to Christ Jesus."

"FOOD FOR KIDS - A BACKPACK PROGRAM"

"Thank you for your support of Food for Kids of Paris, IL. Your generosity helps us in our efforts to supply food for kids (120) each weekend of the school year."

*Thank you very much,
Kurt Speece*





AUGUST 2020

SUMMER CHURCH DATES TO REMEMBER:

JULY 2020

Every Sunday:
10:30 Worship,
11:30 Fellowship Time

July 4: Happy
Independence Day!



July 6: Church office closed in
honor of Independence Day

July 7: 5:30 VBS Planning Meeting,
at Otterbein Church

July 19–July 23: “Virtual Vacation
Bible School”: online sessions

Aug. 2: 10:30 Sacrament of the
Lord's Supper (if we follow original
schedule)

Aug. 18: 7–8 p.m. Session (if we
follow our usual schedule)

Aug. 20: 10 a.m. Presbytery
Meeting, at Charleston

Aug. 29: New Providence Fish Fry,
4 pm.–7 p.m. (if same hours as
last year)



*As of late June, we expect that
church committees and organizations
may be beginning to meet in July
and August, when they are ready,
and will keep you posted as to any
dates.*



TWO LETTERS RECEIVED THIS SPRING:

"Dear Friends:

In these busy days, I write simply to say thank you, for making Presbyterian Disaster Assistance a priority in the midst of many opportunities to give and serve. Your gifts to DR000194 Disaster Relief—Hurricane and Typhoon Relief-Hurricane Dorian relief are deeply needed and greatly appreciated, and I am privileged to speak this word of gratitude on behalf of those for whom your generosity brings renewed hope and joy in the wake of disaster and its aftermath.

From the Bahamas to Syria, from Texas to California, in South Sudan and in South Carolina, lives are being transformed and communities restored by your generous gifts to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. It is a privilege to serve together in a Church that works toward the vision of the tree of life in the midst of the City, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

In Christ's peace,

The Rev. Dr. Laurie A Kraus

Director, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance



"Dear Partner in ministry,

As the 2019 books close, there is much in the PC (USA) for which to be grateful. Congregations across the nation joined together in impressive ways to share the love of Christ through the four churchwide Special Offerings: One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost, Peace & Global Witness, and Christmas Joy.

The whole church has come together for this ministry. For the second year in a row, PC (USA) congregations, mid councils, and individuals gave more generously than the year before.



Wow! These efforts have extended and grown the household of God with people devastated by hurricanes, fires, and famines around the world, youth and young adults who received opportunities to grow in faith and service, students at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color, and with church workers and their families experiencing critical financial need. We at the Office of Special Offerings are grateful for your continued engagement in connectional, Presbyterian mission.

Faithfully yours,

Bryce Wiebe

Director, Special Offerings and Appeals

VIRTUAL VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Back in February, a five-church team (including Beth Ruff and Rodger Allen from our church) started planning a cooperative Vacation Bible School which would take place the evenings of July 12 to 17 at Otterbein Methodist Church, with the theme "Knights of North Castle." Much has changed since then. Fortunately, the "Knights" curriculum has a virtual version, which families can engage in together, watching their computer or smartphone screen – five 30-60 minute sessions, depending on what all the planners would like to include. So now we are planning a virtual "Knights" VBS, which will be available for your viewing on YouTube or Facebook the evenings of July 19 to 23, or whenever you would like to participate in it. We will include at least: an opening/welcome, skit, lesson, and music; and possibly other options families could do on their own. Our next planning meeting is July 7 at 5:30 at Otterbein (you are invited), and we will have more details available for you after that. Our target age group is Age 4 through Elementary School, plus their "helpers" at home.



KNIGHTS OF NORTH CASTLE VBS 2020

North Castle is hidden in a frozen land. The King's valiant Knights are on a quest in search of the King's Armor. But the armor isn't what they think it is.

VBS 2020, *Knights of North Castle: Quest for the King's Armor*, invites children to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power by exploring how we put on the armor of God. Kids will take on the role of brave Knights and begin their quest each session by opening the King's Book.

They'll explore Old and New Testament stories and discover different pieces of protective armor — the Belt of Truth, the Breastplate of Justice, the Shoes of Peace, the Shield of Faith, and the Helmet of Salvation — at work in the lives of familiar Bible characters, and explore how that armor works in their own lives as they follow and serve God.

Help kids take up the gauntlet this summer and accept the challenge to "armor up" and be strong by remaining with God.

A Letter from Jonathan and Emily Seitz, serving in Taiwan, May 2020

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8

Dear Friends,

Part of the introductory seminary courses I offer includes student reports. Seminarians share about the experiences that attracted them to their calls and the dreams they have for their ministry. I’m always amazed by the snapshots they give of Christian life in Taiwan:

- ✚ A 2nd career student shares about her 25 years working as a counselor in a Presbyterian middle school
- ✚ An Atayal (minority student) talks about his work with camps and summer youth mission
- ✚ A first-generation Christian talks about revivals led by a famous Chinese Indonesian pastor who has influenced him
- ✚ A student interested in tent-making style ministries shares about a Christian coffee shop near a university that she admires
- ✚ A student who had worked in two hospitals (one Christian, one government) shares how it was part of her call to ministry, developed her interest in chaplaincy and worked with the church’s senior population
- ✚ Several students share about “community ministry,” a mode of volunteer outreach in Taiwan that often includes safe spaces where students can do homework, senior universities, community choirs, and other efforts.

Part of what impresses me about this witness is the way it testifies to the individual’s call and their relationship to the community. “Mission” is famously hard to define, but many people can clearly identify a word or a sign by which God has given their life direction. They feel the Spirit’s presence through this call.

In my own seminary days, I came to know, in passing, the famous retired Korea missionary, Samuel Hugh Moffett, then in his nineties. Professor Moffett would still exercise in the school gym (very slowly and wearing a white shirt and tie), and he was well-known on campus, often greeting those he encountered. He would sometimes greet students with the words “Power to you!” I don’t know when or how he adopted this saying, but it resonated with me, with its overtones of Jesus’ words at the beginning of Acts to “receive power” from the Spirit.

These days, a virus has spread to the ends of the earth, and it can feel like there’s a constant hum of anxiety. People feel powerless—we no longer have control over so many areas of our life. Can we trust that the Spirit is with us in these times? The Holy Spirit is often said to be the forgotten, ignored or neglected member of the Trinity, but right now, perhaps we’ll feel the Spirit’s presence more strongly.

We remain grateful for PC(USA) World Mission’s continuing presence around the world. In a recent interview, our interim director, Sara Lisherness, talked about the tough decision many mission co-workers faced on whether to return to the U.S. in this interim period or whether to remain in our host country. In Taiwan, we have been especially grateful in these times for the ways the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan has cared for friends who recharge us and encourage us and pray for us.

Holy Spirit, at Pentecost, we are grateful to be part of your witness in the world. We thank you for your people in every place, especially for those who have supported and encouraged us through ups and downs. Distances seem especially far, but still, the Spirit draws us close. May we all continue to witness to your power and presence in the world today. Amen.

God’s Blessings, Jonathan

From the other mission worker family we support, who need more anonymity:

MAY 2020

Dear friends,

We hope this letter finds you all in good health.

We really appreciated the period of confinement, which allowed us to reunite our family. The forced retirement allowed us to pray more and to take time to reflect on our various commitments.

CHURCH

Our Pastor's departure at the end of December, followed by 3 months of sabbatical leave for our colleagues, put us on the front line at the start of the year, investing heavily in activities and relationships, and intervening more at weekly meetings. During this time the church has continued to grow, which continues to amaze us.

Our colleagues having returned to the task, we were able to take stock together. We decided to take a step back, and solicit others to get involved. We think September will bring a new season, and we will experience it more as supporters than frontline.

MINISTRY AMONG THE JEWS

We began some training online with the association Jews for Jesus – on the history of the Jewish people and missions among them.

At the same time, we began to gather via videoconference a small group of prayers made up of Jewish and non-Jewish people who are keen to be involved in a ministry among the Jews.

MEDIA MINISTRY

During confinement, multimedia work has assumed a global importance never seen before. We hope that this will also generate more calls in the Church to devote ministries to media – it is a vital ministry for our time.

We just completed basic training on video editing software, using it to produce Bible story videos. We also recently received the text for 18 Psalms from Bible Translators, and are preparing to record these and to create visual image slideshows to accompany the reading of the text. This will enable them to be broadcast and viewed on mobile devices instead of just read or listened to.

Our one site continues to attract over 10,000 visits per month.

OUR CHILDREN

Our son had an awful lot of homework which he conscientiously did every day during the confinement period. He has resumed school since May 25. For next year, we have decided to change his school. His new school will offer vocational training introducing him to carpentry, metalwork and electro-technology. He will thus be able to better choose his orientation for high school. He decided to be baptized. This is planned June 27, if the covid situation allows.

Our daughter has continued her courses by videoconference and is currently going through end-of-year exams online. She will return to school at the end of September, God willing. It is not sure that all the courses will resume face-to-face, but she will nevertheless go there to continue the university program as much as possible. Her first year will have gone very well. She is very involved in University, where she will take care of the praise and prayer department next year.

With Warm Greetings . . .