

The Alert First Central Presbyterian Church Abilene, Texas

June, 2019

Cliff's Notes



Pentecost is this coming Sunday, June 9...and I am sure you know by now that it is one of the church festivals I enjoy the most. Certainly it has been the most neglected.

One of my minister friends feels that Pentecost is problematic because it describes an experience where we seem to be somewhat out of control. After all...the Spirit took over the disciples. They were overwhelmed. They even appeared to be intoxicated (see Acts 2:15). And we don't like to be controlled by the Spirit or anyone else for that matter. Perhaps being overwhelmed by the Spirit is akin to being drunk and under the influence?!

A couple of things to notice about Pentecost. First, there were those who were there who "caught" the Spirit. Remember when you first learned to ride a bike? It was incredibly difficult and then, all of a sudden, you caught on. My earliest memory of riding a bike was in the back alley behind our home...with my dad chasing after me. I had no idea how to stop it *after* I got the bike going! Remember when you first learned to swim...you *caught on* all of sudden. Someone has said that the Christian faith is not so much taught as it is "caught"!

Not only did the first disciples catch the Spirit...the Spirit caught them! The Spirit catches us like the wind catches a sail. We call this enthusiasm or inspiration. "They are not drunk...they are simply carried away." Like the football team which goes into the locker room at half time and then emerges as a different team in the second half. They are carried away. What does it mean to be caught up by the Spirit? Ernest Hemingway wrote: "Most of the time I write as well as I can, sometimes I write better." This has something to do with what it means to be caught by the Spirit. There is nothing more exciting than being caught up something and then looking back later and saying: "Now where did that come from?"

Finally, I think it is important to realize the Spirit is "catching." I mean by this that it is contagious. Have you ever looked at a health special on the evening news that mapped out the spread of influenza across the United States. It started with one who gave the germ to another. Then each "infected" person gave their germ to another and then another. Blink your eye...and we have an epidemic! I hope there is something contagious about our worship this Sunday on Pentecost. Why don't you invite a friend or two? Wear **red**. *Come to the party!*



Around First Central

Pentecost Party!



This Sunday, June 9th, is Pentecost and we are going to have a Pentecost Party that begins with worship at 8:30 and 11:00 am. Be sure to wear

something **RED!** We pray that worship will have a sense of vibrancy that is unmistakable.

The reason for the color **RED** is that it symbolizes the Spirit of Pentecost. Do you remember reading in Acts Chapter 2 about what seemed like flames of fire over the heads of those who gathered in the upper room? They gathered to pray - and the Spirit of God descended - and life has never been the same since.

At noon on the 9th we are hosting a free lunch in Faith Hall which is meant to be fun as we fellowship together. Yes, the menu includes hot dogs and is sure to be enjoyed by all. No reservations necessary. Friends are invited.

Upcoming Baptism

This coming Sunday at 1:30 pm one of our confirmation class members, Fallon Gentry, is being baptized by immersion in the First Christian Church sanctuary. You are encouraged to attend.



FCPC Student Assistance

The student assistance fund at FCPC provides funding assistance to FCPC members that will allow them to pursue undergraduate or technical studies. These funds are open to all eligible church members who maintain a GPA of 2.0 or higher while attending any accredited college, university, junior college, nursing school, or trade school with a minimum 2-year graduation requirement. Forms are available in the church office. Please submit your application form by the deadline on August 15, 2019.

Christian Education News from Jacob Snowden

Choosing the theme "Callings" for Buffalo Gap Summer Camp this year was not hard. I have been thinking about what people might mean by God's calling for the last few years. Ordination is at least a two-year process in the PC(USA) that requires a graduate degree, online tests, in-person examinations, multiple statements of faith, and behind all of it is a sense that inquirers and candidates for ordination are called by God to continue the process.



In scripture, there are several stories of people being called by God. Samuel hears God's voice as a

child in the temple, but the priest, Eli, did not recognize God's voice at first. Isaiah hears God's voice and is eager to say, "Here I am, Lord. Send me!" Jonah is less eager. Though he senses he is to go to Nineveh, he takes a ship in the other direction until he is thrown overboard. He is as consumed by his call as he is by the monster that delivers him to where he knows he is supposed to go. Abraham is called to a strange land. And in a rare call story, the so-called "rich, young ruler" denies the call to sell his possessions and follow Jesus. Instead he goes away sad.

First Central has helped me immensely to be able to have a sense of calling. I came to FCPC after a very rough tenure as a very young youth minister at First Baptist Church of Rotan. Each week the pastor would question what I was doing with youth, what I was writing in seminary, and what my motivations were. When I met with Cliff at the encouragement of a friend, Cliff invited my questions, encouraged my curiosity, and motivated me to share joy with the students here. I have grown considerably at First Central, due to an excellent staff, wonderful members, and the sense that I was doing what God had called me to do.

I am excited about new opportunities at Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church in Maryland, but not by forgetting about the opportunities I have had at First Central. And as I am being called away, I am confident that God is calling for wonderful things in First Central's future. As students at camp learn what it might mean to listen for God's calling in their lives, I hope you will give it some thought as well.

Camp Registrations are available online and in-person at the door. I hope your students, neighbors, and friends, will consider what camp could mean as they seek to know and trust God's call for them.

A Letter from Jacob Snowden, DCE



To my church family and friends,

With mixed emotions I am resigning from the Director of Christian Education position at First Central Presbyterian, effective July 7th. I have accepted a call as the Associate Pastor of Christian Education at Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church in Severna Park, Maryland, in Baltimore Presbytery.

First Central has and will always have a special place in my heart. My introduction to the Presbyterian church was here. Gwyneth was baptized here. I still remember my first conversation with Cliff in the fellowship hall nearly eight years ago. I have been allowed to learn and grow here, and I will be ordained here. While I am excited for new opportunities that lie ahead,

leaving will be no easy task. I am deeply appreciative to First Central and all of its members for the opportunity to serve, and the ways Sara, Gwyneth, and I have been served in our time here.

Thank you to everyone for fond memories and excellent opportunities.

Sincerely,
Jacob Snowden

VBS in July

Save the date for Vacation Bible School at FCPC! This year, we'll be doing a weekend VBS on July 20-21 using the Yee-Haw Weekend curriculum. It'll be a real hoedown, so make sure and corral it into your calendar now so you don't miss out!



Youth and Emerging Adult Programming on Summer Break



All non-Sunday Youth and EA programming will take a pause for the summer. They will still meet on Sunday mornings for Church School.

Fear not! Youth and Emerging Adults will have plenty to do this summer with participating in Buffalo Gap Camp, the Mid-High Mission Trip here in Abilene, the Senior-High Mission Trip to Nederland Colorado, and the Emerging Adult Mission Trip to Romania.

Why should I become a Prayer Partner and/or a Financial Supporter for a young Presbyterian missionary?

Two mission trips involving extensive travel are occurring this summer. One is for the Senior-High members of the Youth Group to Nederland, Colorado from July 7-14, and the other is for Emerging Adults to Tulcea, Romania from July 25-August 6.



Our first need is for prayer. We need your prayers for safe travels, energy, good attitudes, open hearts ready to serve, and healthy bodies while these young Presbyterians are on their service trips.

Another need is for financial support. Not every Youth or Emerging Adult member can pay the full amount for the trip even after FCPC subsidizes the costs (\$300 to go to Colorado and between \$1000 and \$2000 for Romania). Both the Youth and Emerging Adults have mission trip scholarship funds from which we draw so that trip costs can be reduced for each participant.

What does being a Prayer Partner entail?

When you sign up as a Prayer Partner and/or

Financial Supporter, you will be assigned one of the young Presbyterian missionaries (YPM) via email. We are asking you to commit to pray for your assigned YPM everyday of his or her service trip. To help you do this, you will receive a photo of your YPM, a short bio letting you know a little more about the YPM you are supporting, and details about the service trip he or she is attending so you will know what days to pray and have some ideas of what to pray about.

To these ends, it is our goal to have at least 19 prayer partners (with the option of financial support towards scholarship funds) so that each Youth and Emerging Adult is lifted up in prayer while they are serving in Nederland and Tulcea.

If I am choosing to be a Financial Supporter along with being a Prayer Partner, how much should I give?

We would like each financial supporter to give at least \$100. Of course, larger or smaller sums are appreciated! Here is some information to help you decide how much you would like to give if you want to give more than \$100:

- The cost burden for an Emerging Adult to go to Romania is between \$1000 and \$2000 depending on where this person attends church. The actual cost per person for Camp Romania is around \$4000 leaving between \$3000 to \$2000 to be covered through fundraising and scholarships.
- The cost burden for a Senior-High Youth Group member to go to Nederland, Colorado is \$300. The actual cost per person is around \$600 leaving \$300 to be covered through the Youth Missions special giving account.

To sign up to be a Prayer Partner and/or Financial Supporter for a young Presbyterian missionary, visit www.fcpc.net/serve/prayerpartner.

Breakfast on Beech Street



B.O.B.S. continues to serve a need. In May, 2019, 1440 guests were served breakfast (60 being youth). Lunches included 2368 sandwiches.

That brings our year's total to 6634 breakfasts (270 being to youth). In addition, sack lunches including 10,425 sandwiches were made and disbursed.

Your monetary donations are always appreciated, and if you would like to be a part of a FCPC Thursday morning team, please contact the church office (677-3501)

Food Pantry News

Dear Friends of the Food Pantry, during the month of June, we would like to ask you to donate boxes of cereal. We distribute approximately 30 boxes of cereal each week. This is a large expense for us and some of our local stores are discontinuing their store brands which we purchased frequently. Please consider buying an extra box or two of cereal when shopping and donate it to the pantry by dropping it in the Food Pantry basket near the sanctuary.

We would like to thank the mid-high group at FCPC for volunteering at the pantry on Tuesday and Wednesday of this week. They worked along side our volunteers filling orders, stocking shelves, and repackaging. They returned the following day to clean windows. We appreciate these hard working mid-highs and Kristen very much.

In May, the Food Pantry served 118 families, for a total of 311 people – 174 adults, 45 senior citizens, and 92 children ages 1-18.

A Fond Farewell to Angela Wright



Angela Wright received a certificate naming her "Membership & Evangelism Committee Chairperson Emeritus". The committee expressed their thanks for Angela's leadership.

Both she and Clell will be missed.

Gratitude

Gladys Dillard and family want to thank FCPC for all the cards, flowers, visits and smiles you brought celebrating her 90th birthday at Silver Spring Nursing Center. She commented "So many lives have touched mine." Thank you.

Sympathy

We extend our sympathies to the family of Lavern Roeder, to James and Kristen Bridwell on the passing of James' grandmother, to Terry Grosvenor and family on the loss of her mother, and to the family of Joan Eyssen.

Congratulating our Graduates

We congratulate all students who have graduated from any level of education! Below are graduation notices we have received. If you know of another graduate you would like listed, please contact Kori in the church office and they will be listed in a future issue.

Congratulations to our FCPC High School Seniors, who were recently honored on Senior Sunday: Cody Fala, McKenzie Franklin, Baraka Kanayo, and Bruce Myers.

Congratulations to Dwight David Brisbin, son of FCPC member Dwight Brisbin. Dwight David graduated with honors from the University of Michigan.

Congratulations to Cassidy Reece Fala on her B.A. in psychology with a minor in Forensic Science from Texas Tech University.

Congratulations to Rachel Marie Lawson, granddaughter of Tom Howell, who graduated from high school in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and to Sara Rose Lawson, who received a B.S. from Western Washington State University.

Congratulations to Billy Lantrip, who received a Masters in Exercise Science from the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Congratulations to Symphorien Jean Angha on receiving his Master of Divinity degree from Hardin-Simmons University.

Celebrations

We would like to celebrate the birth of Kaleb Allan Wray born on May first to Jessica and Michael Wray. Big sister is Emily Wray and proud grandparents at FCPC are David & Ruth Stark.

We also celebrate our 2019 Confirmands, Claire King, Brock Maxwell, JT Partin, Tessa Sypert, Isabell Gebhart, Fallon Gentry and Lucas Sauvage.

We share in the celebration of marriage of Dwight McClay Brisbin and Nancy Louvernia Smith, who were married May 11th at FCPC. We also celebrate the marriage of Karen Lantrip and Glen Heard, who were married June 1st at FCPC.

New Members

We warmly welcome Mekil Hawkins and Alison Capko to the FCPC family!