

The First Edition

First Presbyterian Church, Ellerbe, NC

July 2020

www.pcanet.org
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From the Pastor:

In Psalm 33:12 the Psalmist writes, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!” (ESV) Old Testament Israel is no doubt first in the psalmist’s mind. As much can be discerned from the immediately preceding verses (vv. 11-2), as well as other passages in which such language is used (e.g. 2 Samuel 7:23). No modern nation can make the case that it is God’s chosen nation; that includes both Israel and the United States of America. That said, the psalmist also hits a principle which applies to a lesser or greater degree to any nation – “Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD.” That is to say, there are common grace blessings to be experienced by a nation and its people when the true and living God is acknowledged as such.

As we approach Independence Day, we do well to consider how our nation has experienced God’s blessing in the past, where we stand at the present, and where our present trajectory might take us. There is no question that the colonies were founded largely by devout Puritans. There is also little doubt that the founding of our nation was profoundly influenced by an incredible revival in the 1730’s and 40’s known as The Great Awakening. Furthermore, while all or even most of our nation’s founders may not have been sincere evangelical believers, there is ample evidence that almost all professed Christianity, that they saw their need for the Lord’s aid, and that they intended our nation to be governed by Biblical principles.

Yet is also clear that our nation we has largely turned its our back on God. The idea that our leaders are accountable to God and that their laws should somehow, even remotely, reflect his law is scoffed at in our culture. More and more Christians are being are being forced to choose between practicing their religion in the public sphere and facing serious consequences should their biblical convictions conflict with public policy. Justice is flouted when we allow hundreds of thousands of abortions each year; worse yet, when we support the abortion industry with public funds. As we increasingly mainstream homosexuality, we give preferential treatment to that which God abhors (Rom. 1:18-32).

History is clear that such nations and empires experience God’s judgment. For one thing, the Lord has built laws and principles into the very fabric of the universe that ensure the downfall of such nations. Nations which promote abortion and homosexuality do not produce healthy marriages and children, and when the home goes culture goes. Governments which allow anarchists to rule and disrespect for authority to reign cannot expect to long endure.

For another thing, God’s word teaches us over and over that he judges kings and nations. Study the prophets and you will see. Study once mighty Assyria. God had decreed that he would judge Assyria for its cruelty and injustice, lest they repent; yet in his mercy he sent to them a prophet named Jonah. However reluctantly, Jonah preached God’s message, the nation repented, and the Lord relented from his planned judgment (Jonah 3:1-10). Jonah preached to Assyria during the reign of Ashurbanipal from 722-721 BC. Yet this revival did not last and the nation soon reverted to its wicked ways. Fast forward some 100 years to the book of Nahum. Nahum prophesied that Assyria’s time had come to an end and indeed within fifty years the Lord used the Babylonians to overtake the Assyrians. Speaking of the impending downfall of Assyria as revealed in Nahum, Homer Hailey writes: “The prophet reveals the eternal principle of the omnipresent God that for a nation to survive it must be established upon and directed by principles of righteousness and truth” (*Ryken’s Bible Handbook* by Leland Ryken, Philip Ryken, and James Wilhot, 385).

So, what does that mean for our country? First, as a recent Supreme Court decision should remind us, we ought not place our trust in presidents, parties, and politicians. The psalmist writes, “Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation” (Psalm 146:3). Yet while *we* cannot change the course of our nation God can. More to the point, we need to see that if there is any hope for our

If you live within a few blocks of the church and would like to hear the sermon live, try tuning into radio station 87.9 FM at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday morning.

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country it will *not* begin in Washington; it will begin in the church. 2 Chronicles 7:14 states, “If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” Change must begin in the house of God, that is the church. As individual believers and particular churches, we need to begin to earnestly seek the Lord in repentance and prayer. The good news is that the future of the church of Jesus Christ is secure, no matter what happens to the United States of America. Our hope is that if the church in our country is revived and reformed, the Lord’s blessing might just spill over into our culture and our country might experience a measure of grace. As we celebrate our *independence* may we remember our *dependence* upon the Lord.

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Stan

From the Session

The Session held their regular monthly stated meeting Wednesday evening, June 3. Teaching Elder Mr. Layton gave his pastor’s report, including members who are hospitalized, their condition, and other information related to our church and church policies.

Final plans for Youth Sunday were discussed, confirmed for Sunday June 7, and held with Molly Greene being our only graduate. She was acknowledged with the presentation of a Bible, traditionally given by our church to all graduates. No special youth program was featured due to our limited outside services. Vacation Bible School has officially been cancelled due to the widespread virus. Timing and planning in “opening up” our church was discussed with no decision being made, taking into account the severity and contagiously this disease can be. Ruling Elder and Clerk of the Session Jimmy Wagers was commended for his orderly manner in keeping records of the Session including taking and recording all minutes of every meeting. His dedication to his work is appreciated by our church congregation and especially the Board of Elders.

A called meeting of the Session was held Wednesday, June 17 with Mr. Layton discussing information he received on cleaning churches with instructions on making virus eliminating solutions. Copies are available to anyone who may be interested. Ruling Elder Robert Mabe and former Treasurer, was approved and will be remembered for his 45 years of dedication with a plaque in his honor at a future date. Other business concerns and ideas were handled accordingly.

Ruling Elder Billy Carter



WIC Update

I would like to remind everyone to stay strong in God’s grace. Isaiah 43:5 says, “Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west.” I hope everyone is staying safe and that we will be together again soon.

Sandra Futrell, WIC President

Announcements

- Unless otherwise notified via the bulletin and/or One-Call-Now, all church activities and services (other than 11 a.m. Lord’s Day worship) are suspended.
- If anyone needs help with essentials (grocery shopping, transportation, etc.) during these extra-ordinary times, please call either the church (910-652-5231), Pastor Stan (910-206-9035), or your shepherding elder.
- While working full-time, Timm Dazey continues to pursue seminary studies at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte. The Session has set up a fund to help defray Timm’s seminary costs. Persons wishing to contribute to this fund should so designate on their checks.

Greeters

5 M/M Chris Meacham
12 M/M Richard Smith
19 M/M Ted Futrell
26 M/M Tom Covington

Anniversaries

4 M/M Garrett Yates
18 M/M Ron Wall
26 M/M Tripp Potterfield



Happy
Birthday!
July

3 Emma Russell
4 Mary Murdock
5 Mary Monroe
8 Buck Smith
9 Barbara Fulp
11 Gage Stewart
12 Macie Ward
13 Kevin Parsons
14 Dana Bowman
14 Richard Smith
17 Cathy Simpson
17 Jordan DeWitt
17 Janet Monroe
24 Julian Smith
29 Naomi Stutts
31 Jason Carter



Prayer List: Armed Forces and Families, Our President and national leaders, the Persecuted Church and Christians worldwide, Peace and Unity in our country, Coronavirus concerns, Harvey Almond, Jack Berry, Billy Bostick, Lori Boyer, Donna Buckeridge, Jerry Britt, Austin Bryant, James Callicutt, Carol Chappell, Virgie Clark, Kevin Conner, A. T. Covington, Evon Craven, Alli Cundy, Casey Dawkins, Perry and Lisa Dawkins, Rev. Billy Dennis, Sharon DeWitt, Christina Greene Eller, Ellerbe First Responders, Jack Fetter, Fred Fletcher, Mark Futrell, Libbie Haithcock, Kayla Hawkins, Becky Henderson, Doris Hill, Nancy Hunter, Melanie Johnson, Ronnie Lovin, Meredith McBride, Max McCormick, Dan McInnis, Shannon McNeil, Peyton Monroe, Mary Murdock, Jason Norton, Jewel Paul, Sami Poore, Sophia Potterfield, Dick Ransom, Cozette Rush, Carolyn Sellers, Mark Sellers, Jane Smith, Herman and Naomi Stutts, Jean Stutts, Clay Thomas, Katie Tyson, Hayley White, Colton Williams, Yvonne Witherspoon family, Unspoken Requests

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
July 2020			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 7:00 pm stated Session meeting	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	Worship service remains at 11:00 am Sunday mornings unless notified otherwise.		

Church Officers:

Ruling Elders

- Austin Bryant
- Bill Carter
- Tim Clark
- Timm Dazey
- Rickie DeWitt
- Robert Mabe
- Richard Smith
- Jimmy Wagers
- Tony Yates

WIC Officers

- Sandra Futrell, President
- Patricia McCormick, Vice-President
- Jan Stivers, Secretary
- Jane Carriker, Treasurer
- Barbara Wagers, Historian
- Beth Bryant, Mission to the World Chair
- Nancy Daugherty, Mission to North America Chair
- Lori Clark, Christian Growth Chair