



THE WITNESS

St. Stephen's Church Newsletter

Volume 28, Issue 7
The Rev. Mark Bradford, Pastor

July 2017
Church Phone (405) 843-5333

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The fourth commandment is: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work...therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." (Exodus 20:8-12)

The fourth commandment has always been a difficult one for me. Am I guilty of breaking this commandment or not? I often think about Eric Liddell and his refusal to run in the preliminaries of the 100 meter dash in the Olympics, even though it probably cost him a gold medal, because the preliminaries were held on Sunday. I have known many people who grew up in homes where there were certain things one did not do on Sundays including mowing the grass, washing the car, going out to eat, or going to a store of any kind. Basically, not doing anything that would be considered work or that would cause others to have to work. Taking this to its logical conclusion, one should not watch football on Sunday (or any TV at all for that matter).

In the PCA (Presbyterian Church of America) where they take very seriously holding to the Westminster Confession of Faith, what the confession says about the Sabbath has been a stumbling block for some seeking ordination. The confession states: "This Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their affairs beforehand, do not only observe a holy rest, all the day, from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations, but also are

taken up, the whole time, in the public and private exercise of His worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy." Who devotes their entire Sunday to the public and private exercise of worship or ceases from all recreations? I am not sure how strict the PCA is on this point.

I really appreciate the Heidelberg Catechism's approach to the fourth commandment. It is divided into two parts. As we look at it, notice that nowhere does it specify what cannot be done on the Sabbath (for us, Sunday).

The Heidelberg Catechism's question is: "What is God's will for us in the Fourth Commandment?" The answer is... "First, that the gospel ministry and education for it be maintained, and that, especially on the festive day of rest, I regularly attend the assembly of God's people to learn what God's Word teaches, to participate in the sacraments, to pray to God publicly, and to bring Christian offerings for the poor." Notice that rather than telling us what we cannot do, it tells us what we should do. All of the things that we are told to do here are things which the scripture tells us that we should do. Hebrews 10:24-25a says, "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another..." "Till I come, attend to the public reading of scripture, to preaching, to teaching." (1 Timothy 4:13) "Now concerning the contribution for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that

contributions need not be made when I come.” (I Corinthians 16:1-2) A side note: Notice that the early Christians were meeting on the first day of the week, Sunday, not on the seventh.

The Heidelberg Catechism goes on to say, “Second, that every day of my life I rest from my evil ways, let the Lord work in me though his Spirit, and so begin already in this life to eternal Sabbath.” In this part of the answer there is something we are told not to do, evil. We are to rest from our evil ways. But notice that we are told to do this every day of our life, not just on the Sabbath. In regards to the eternal Sabbath, the writer of Hebrews says, “So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God; for whoever enters God’s rest also ceases from his labors as God did from his. Let us therefore strive to enter that rest.” (Hebrews 4:9-11)

Jesus got in trouble during his earthly ministry because he healed on the Sabbath, something that some people considered work. But Jesus pointed out that if someone has an animal that falls into a pit on the Sabbath, they will help it out. He also pointed out that a priest will circumcise infants on the Sabbath if the eighth day after their birth falls on the Sabbath. The apostle Paul puts it this way, “One man esteems one day as better than another, while another man esteems all days alike. Let everyone be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord.” (Romans 14:5-6a)

Our desire should be to obey all of God’s commandments. Allow me to make a few observations about obeying the fourth commandment. First, we should avoid legalism and the idea that mere formality has anything to do with true religion. Second, we should seek to set aside time for both public and private worship, prayer and the gospel ministry and education. And third, every day of our lives we should rest from our evil ways.

May God our helper enable us to be obedient to the fourth commandment.

Yours in Christ, *Pastor Mark*

Worship Schedule

Every Sunday

9:30AM - Adult & Children’s Sunday School

11:00AM – Worship

July Sermon Topics

On July 2 we will be finishing our series on the book of Hebrews, a series I have truly enjoyed preaching. Rather than begin a new series just before two Sundays in which I will not be preaching, I have decided on July 9 to preach from Psalm 145, one of my favorite Psalms because of how much it reveals to us about God. On July 16 the children will be performing their musical following Drama Camp. Dr. Robert Foreman will be preaching for me on July 23 while I am on vacation. On July 30 I am going to begin a sermon series from the book of Jonah. For the past couple of years, I have used part of the year to preach through a book of the Old Testament. This year I have selected the book of Jonah.

July 2 Hebrews 13:18-24

Request for Prayer

July 9 Psalm 145

The Goodness of God

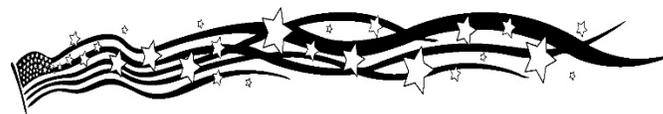
July 16 Children’s Musical

The Not So Terrible Parable

July 23 Guest Preacher: Dr. Robert Foreman

July 30 Jonah 1:1-3

Jonah Rebels against Yahweh’s Revelation



June Session Report

FINANCIAL REPORT: Fiscal YTD Disbursements (\$211,471) exceeded Receipts (\$203,159) by \$8,312. Both receipts and disbursements are short of projections for the first eleven months of this fiscal year, but based on a comparison of corresponding periods for the past three years the church’s fiscal position is considered sound.

FELLOWSHIP: There was no report on Fellowship other than announcing that the Father’s Day breakfast (being coordinated by Joan Miranda) will be held next Sunday, June 18.

NURTURE: Vacation Bible School will be held June 19-23.

WORSHIP: We are looking into establishing a lay readers program as part of our future worship services. Pastor Mark will be on vacation July 17-23; Robert Foreman will be serving as substitute

preacher on Sunday, July 23. The next regular communion service will be on Sunday, July 2.

OLD BUSINESS: COMMITTEE MEETINGS: Kent Larason provided a summary of the meetings held on May 31 by the Personnel Committee (Dwight Daub, Kent Larason, and Pastor Mark) with each church employee and summarized the recommendations for employee raises that were submitted to the Budget Committee. The Budget Committee (Robert Buswell, Dwight Daub, Frank Miranda, and Nelson Pickrell) met on June 10 to consider Personnel Committee recommendations and to develop a FY2017-2018 budget.

TELEPHONES: The review of our telephone needs and an assessment of the options/service costs of a contract with Cox Communications is still ongoing.

NEW BUSINESS: FY2017-2018 BUDGET: Robert Buswell, chair of the Budget Committee, presented a proposed budget for the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

SMALL GROUPS

Bible Study & Prayer – Sunday evening at Pastor Mark & Anne Bradford’s – July 9 at 5:30PM.

Monday Prayer Group – July 3, 10 & 31 at 12:30PM, church library.

Tuesday Bible Study – July 25 at 2:30PM.

Men’s Prayer Group – Saturday mornings at 7:30AM.

Prayer Requests

If you have missed prayers or would like to be added to the Women’s Fellowship prayer chain please call Doris Cornell 943-1732 or Treva Gullett 735-9908.



Ushers/Greeters

July Greeters: Chris & Ruby Ochoa

July Ushers:

July 2 – Michael Bassett, Nancy Spradling, Wendy Smith, Sandy Gifford

July 9 – Pat Robison, Kym Manning, Patsy Kuhn, Sandy Gifford

July 16 – Michael Bassett, Nancy Spradling, Wendy Smith, Sandy Gifford

July 23 – Pat Robison, Kym Manning, Patsy Kuhn, Sandy Gifford

July 30 – Youth

Fellowship Hour Treats

July 2 – Kari Kosanke, Wendy Smith

July 9 – Lori Pickrell, Sarah Welte

July 16 – Doris Cornell, Miss Butch Derrick

July 23 – Jim & Treva Gullett, Marilyn Hanson

June 30 – Joan & Frank Miranda, Pat Robison

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Thank you once again to **everyone** who made VBS 2017 happen. A special thank you to **Robin Page** who creatively decorated and directed this year’s *Passport to Peru*. (Did you know Peru has nearly 4,000 types of potatoes?)

Mmmmmmm Good!

A BIG thank you to all of the wonderful help for our 1st Annual (?) Father’s Day Brunch! We had wonderful cooks, servers, decoration team, prep and clean-up crew. What a church! Everyone was so generous with their time and talent. It is always so much fun to work with and celebrate with our church family.

Love my church! *Joan Miranda*

CONGRATULATIONS!

Abigail Larsen traveled to East Lansing, MI the week of May 23 to compete for a third consecutive year in the World Finals Odyssey of the Mind Competition held at Michigan State University. This year was also Shannon Larsen’s first year as a coach for the team. And Valerie Pulley also contributed some of her set-building expertise as a consultant for the team. Way to go Cleveland Elementary’s Odyssey of the Mind Team! Well done! You got through regional and state competition, and made it all the way to the international level for a third consecutive year. Great job!

COOKBOOKS



We have two Women’s Fellowship cookbooks: *Love, Laughter and Good Food* left if you would like one. They are \$20 each and may be purchased in the office.

Prescription Drugs Needed

If you have any prescription drugs to donate, please give them to Laurie.

Drama Camp July 10–14, 9^{AM}–12^{PM}

A Not So Terrible Parable

**the mysterious
whodunit
about the
good
Samaritan**

Performances are

Saturday, July 15 at 6:00PM

& Sunday, July 16 during worship.

UPCOMING MILESTONES

In the month of July we are celebrating two very special people and their birthdays.

Sunday, July 2 we will be celebrating **Elizabeth Garrett** (actual birthday is July 4) for her **90th** birthday. The family has asked you to join them following worship for a get-together honoring Elizabeth.

In honor of Elizabeth Garrett's 90th Birthday, her family would appreciate it if you could write a note to Elizabeth about a special memory you have with her or something that you appreciate about her. These letters can be left in the church office by July 2 or mailed to the attention of Paul Garrett, 700 Cedar Lake Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK 73114

Sunday, July 23 we will be recognizing **Dean Mikkelson** (actual birthday is July 25) for his **95th** birthday. The family requests everyone to return to church for a special birthday party from 2:00-4:00PM.

**When God Sends You Help,
Don't Question Him**

She hurried to the pharmacy to get medication, got back to her car and found that she had locked her keys inside. The woman found an old rusty coat hanger left on the ground. She looked at it and said, "I don't know how to use this."

She bowed her head and asked God to send her some help.

Within five minutes a beat-up old motorcycle pulled up, driven by a bearded man who was wearing an old

biker skull rag. He got off of his cycle and asked if he could help.

She said: "Yes, my daughter is sick. I've locked my keys in my car. I must get home. Please, can you use this hanger to unlock my car?"

He said, "Sure." He walked over to the car, and in less than a minute, the car door was open. She hugged the man and through tears, softly said, "Thank you, God, for sending me such a very nice man."

The man heard her little prayer and replied, "Lady, I am not a nice man. I just got out of prison yesterday; I was in prison for car theft."

The woman hugged the man again, sobbing, "Oh, thank you, God! You even sent me a professional."

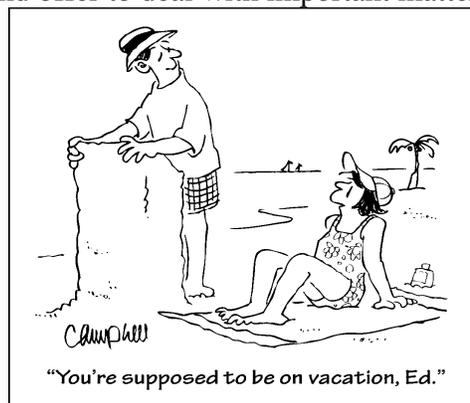
Is God great or what!?!

THE PASTOR IS IN

Every Tuesday morning on New York City's Upper East Side, Gregory Fryer sits in a *Peanuts*-style booth offering prayer and a listening ear to passersby. Initially the pastor wanted to draw attention to his church, but instead he ended up noticing all the "hungry hearts" in the neighborhood. Fryer has been pleasantly surprised by all the people who open up to him. "I think they like the idea of a pastor being on the sidewalk," he says.

Although a sign on the booth reads "Spiritual advice 5¢," the pastor keeps a plate of nickels handy if people want to put one in his jar. Some people donate much more — and some even pray for Fryer.

The pastor says he was inspired by *Peanuts* character Lucy van Pelt, who has the "audacity, the courage to brazenly sit there out in public and offer to deal with important matters."



CHURCH OFFICERS

Elders

Class of 2017

Frank Miranda	802-1731	Clerk/Stewardship & Memorials
Wendy Smith	691-8830	Fellowship

Class of 2018

Robert Buswell	426-7429	Treasurer
Jon Powell	470-0230	Outreach
Dana Wilson	706-3191	Nurture

Class of 2019

Dwight Daub	618-7497	President of Corporation/ Nominating
Kent Larason	808-3971	Worship

Deacons

Class of 2017

Michael Bassett	942-2074	Maintenance
Sandy Gifford	947-7226	Ushers/Greeters
Terianne Wood	657-2213	Flowers

Class of 2018

Lori Pickrell	503-9585	Clerk
Pat Robison	879-2762	Missions

Class of 2019

Jaquelyn Kuhn	424-2123	Church Work Days
Kym Manning	426-7298	Van/Transportation

WITNESS DEADLINE

July 24 is the deadline to submit articles for the August Witness. You may bring items to the church office or e-mail them to: secretary@ststephensokc.org.

Thanks! Laurie Daub, St. Stephen's Secretary

St. Stephen's Church

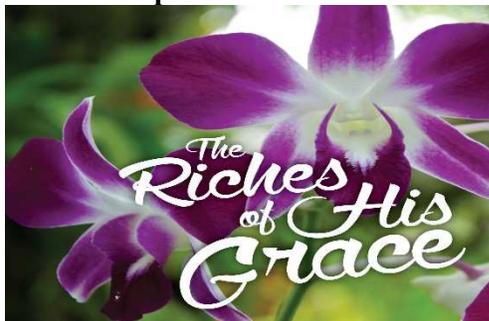
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3	Ivy O'Neil
4	Jean Collins Mighton
4	Austin Andrews
5	Elizabeth Garrett
6	Elizabeth Bradford
6	Joan Miranda
6	Dorothy Powell
7	Randy Felton
8	Branden Dillard
8	Margo Whiting
10	Glenda Leinbach
11	Nelson Pickrell
12	Gentrie Hinline
16	Micah Morgan
18	Christa Charlie
19	Mary Walker
21	Hunter Page
22	Cher Brooks
25	Hudson Von Tungeln
25	Dan Dutcher
25	Dean Mikkelson
25	Laurie Daub
26	Kari Kosanke
26	Kay Kosanke
29	Pat Tsoodle
29	Kym Manning
30	Mark Bradford
31	Peyton Hinline



7	Seth & Erin Von Tungeln
8	Aaron & Gentrie Hinline
26	Michael & Joy Bassett
29	Dan & Shelley Dutcher

***If we have missed your birthday or anniversary, please contact the church office.*

Special Date - 4th of July

