

FIRST PRES NEWS

monthly

August 2026 | Volume VIII

A note from pastor...

What I am most looking forward to in the month of August is tomatoes from my backyard (or anyone's backyard if I am honest). There is something full of goodness and grace about a tomato fresh from the garden. In honor of this delicious marvel of God's creation, I want to share this poem called, "Tomatoes" by Katrina Vandenberg that speaks of the simple fruit helping someone through heartache to the beginning of healing. Hope you get to enjoy some fresh tomatoes this month.

Tomatoes

The best ones
I ever ate I ate

that summer, him dead
six months, me not yet

forevered again
to anyone. Tomatoes

the only fever, many-
chambered, jelly-seeded

—probably slicers,
nothing rare. Dissected

into the same glass bowl
night after night for a dinner

date with the pulpy sun
on its way through

my yard. Fayetteville,
Arkansas, city of wreckage.

Mozzarella, basil, salt.
Oil, the August air

humid, nearly liquid.
One evening I sat

on my back stoop
in a puddle of light

and knew I could live
without him, and was.

I ate the same dinner
from the same bowl

until the decision
ceased to be a decision.



First Presbyterian Church

716 College Avenue
Racine, WI 53403
262.632.1686
firstpresracine.org

Pastor

Rev. Darren Utley
PastorDarren@firstpresracine.org

Parish Nurse

Peggy Taylor
PeggyParishNurse@yahoo.com

Organist & Chancel Choir Director

Alejandro Alumbrosos
piano3842@gmail.com

Handbell Choir Director

Fumi Nakayama
fnakayama@carthage.edu

Worship Music Leader

Mark Paffrath
mark@markpaffrath.com

Media Tech Specialist

Steve Comeau
steve@spliceaudio.com

Sexton

Gloria Zember
gcs.connects@gmail.com

Nursery

Patricia Peterson
triciapeterson13@yahoo.com

Financial Secretary

Theresa Revis
fsoffice@firstpresracine.org

Digital Media Coordinator

Shelley Maurer
shelley@firstpresracine.org

Greeters

- 2 Bev Eifert, Ginny Holle
- 9 Bud Eastman, Katie Humphrey
- 16 Nancy Reeser, Linda Schubert
- 23 Joe Boticki
- 30 Nancy Reeser, Linda Schubert

Ushers

- 2 John & Linnea Brooke
- 9 Larry Dickerson, Sharon Campbell
- 16 Steve Simpson, Ken Schacht
- 23 Dave Easley, Alan Galle
- 30 Steve Simpson, Ken Schacht

Liturgists

- 2 Alan Galle
- 9 Ko Kryger
- 16 Jeff Leavell
- 23 Ken Schacht
- 30 Angela Arnold

Fellowship

- 2 Ken Schacht, Jen Seversen
 - 9 John & Linnea Brooke
 - 16 Dave & Ginny Holle
 - 23 Dave & Ginny Holle
 - 30 Jeff Leavell & Georgia Herrera
- 



Happy
anniversary

Jason & Jessica Smith

August 3, 1996

Jerry & Nancy Ritter

August 5, 1961

Dave & Gayle Titus

August 6, 1993

Ben & Catherine Neal

August 10, 1973

Steve & Mary Bernstein

August 23, 1977



Happy Birthday!

3 Zachary Higgs

Janna Smith

5 Georgia Hall

6 Steve Fringer

12 Cody LaMarr

21 Steve Simpson

Theo Leavell

22 Mac MacCaughey

27 Evelyn Vanderheyden

28 Mary Johnson

Bud Eastman

Music & MORE
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Just two Music & More Concerts in August ...

Thurs. August 6 at Noon - Free

Cecilia Andersson (vocal)
Jessi Kolberg (organ)
Mary Skop (piano)

Fri. August 14 at 7:00 PM

Summer Series Finale

Early Bird Tickets \$15; \$20 after 8/7

The Jelly Rolls Ragtime Orchestra (10 musicians)

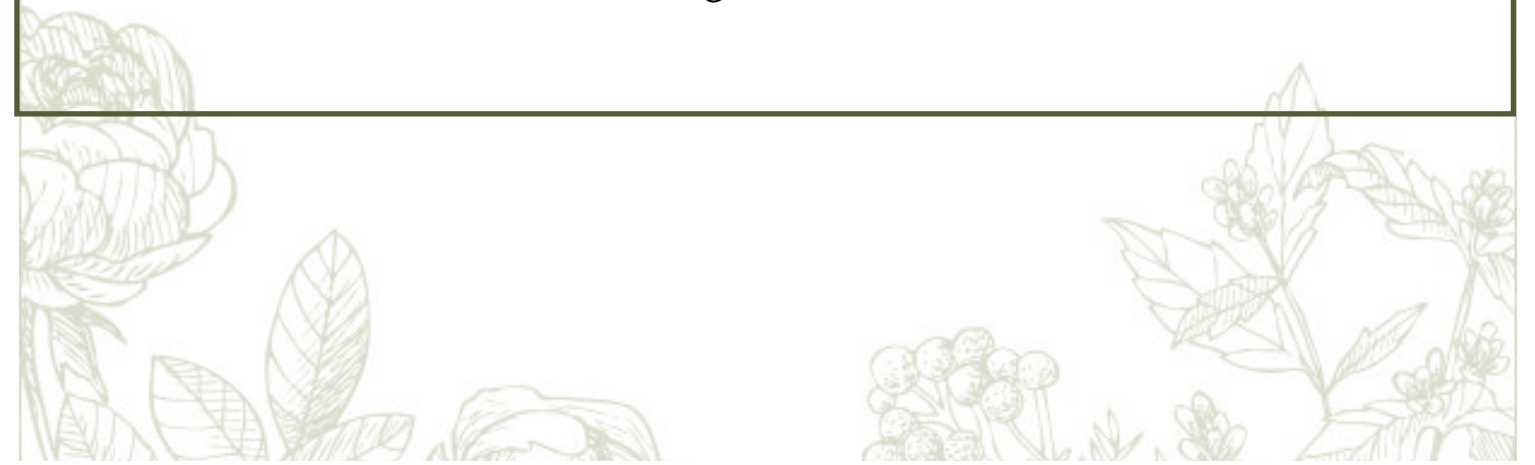
“Maple Leaf Ragged”

and

Bob Benson & Friends

Robbyn Wilks & Rob Kroes

“Broadway Favorites”





Overdue Notes from The Building Community Initiative

During 2025-26, there has been much going on at First Presbyterian Church that meets the goals of building community connections within our church family and others in the outside community. Our church has been the site for Olympia Brown United Universalist Church for their services and other events and for Restoration Ministries, a community organization that works with youth from the local neighborhoods and focuses on teaching them strong values and life skills. All outside groups do pay a rental fee based on the amount of usage. Of course, having a food pantry here must be included in this list. Thank you to all who have worked on this, both in the past and present, who provide the leadership and energy that this worthwhile ministry needs. The added benefit of this outreach into our downtown community is the connections we are making with others by opening our doors and welcoming them inside.

Within First Pres, we are happy to welcome visitors and new friends into our membership. They have willingly shared their talents and support of the ministries here in a variety of ways. Thanks go also to so many who worked on two recent events that made them enjoyable and successful, our joint fellowship time with OBUUC on May 31 and the visit from participants at the Presbyterian General Assembly on Sunday, June 28, where they attended our service followed by a tour and a delicious meal together. On both occasions, the response from our members and staff to provide their help and lots of the delicious additions for Fellowship time or the meal served was *truly appreciated!*



Music & More Summer Series Finale

Friday, August 14, 7:00^{PM}

You've certainly heard ragtime melodies incessantly as ice cream trucks patrol the summer streets. Or, maybe you recall it as the soundtrack for the 1973 heist movie, "The Sting."

First created by African American musicians after the Civil War, ragtime was the hit soundtrack in salons, clubs, bars, and brothels. Most often played on the piano, it blends improvisatory, syncopated rhythms in the right hand with a steady march-like bass in the left; it is a fusion of Black American bluesy harmonies and European-derived classical style.

Beginning in 1897, rags were transcribed and printed, bringing them to the white middle and upper classes. As a result, arrangements were made for small orchestras. Typical arrangements included: flute (piccolo), clarinet, trumpet, trombone, piano, drums, 1st and 2nd violin, cello and bass. The Jelly Rolls Ragtime Orchestra mirrors this historic instrumentation.

While some ragtime musicians compete in "cutting contests" with one another, playing rags at breakneck speed, composer and pianist Scott Joplin explicitly stated a warning about this practice: "It is never right to play ragtime fast." Savor the melodies and the moment. Rather like fine tea — or wine — or even Mozart.

Although Scott Joplin was, and is, the "King of Ragtime," other notable composers include Tom Turpin, Joseph Lamb, Jelly Roll Morton, May Aufderheide, George Botsford, and Hubert Bauersachs. The Music & More Summer Finale includes works by Joplin and the latter three.

The Jelly Rolls Ragtime Orchestra includes Kathy Ripley (Flute/Piccolo), Diane Kosmala (Clarinet), Pat Badger (Trumpet), Chuck Barnes (Trombone), Mary Olsen (Piano), Randy Maio (Drums), Nancy Maio (1st Violin), Darlene Rivest (2nd Violin and Viola), Ryan Andersen (Cello), and Gordy Smith (Bass).

You don't want to miss this high-energy musical extravaganza! Purchase your tickets now! Early Bird pricing is \$15; \$20 after Aug. 7.

~ Pat Badger



CELEBRATING 33 YEARS!



Music & MORE

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

716 College Avenue ❖ Racine, WI
262.632.1686

SUMMER SERIES FINALE

Friday, August 14 at 7:00PM

Early Bird Tickets \$15; \$20 after Aug. 7

THE JELLY ROLLS RAGTIME ORCHESTRA

*Kathy Ripley, Diane Kosmala, Pat Badger, Chuck Barnes,
Mary Olsen, Randy Maio, Nancy Maio, Darlene Rivest,
Ryan Andersen, and Gordy Smith*
"Maple Leaf Ragged"



BOB BENSON & FRIENDS

Rob Kroes and Robbyn Wilks
"Broadway Favorites"



Air-Conditioned & Handicap-Accessible



William Henry Johnstone, age 94, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, died on June 28, 2026. Bill was born on September 5, 1931, in Minnetonka, Minnesota, to parents William and Leona Johnstone, and grew up in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Deephaven, and Mound, Minnesota. He earned a Bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota (Minneapolis) in 1953. That fall he matriculated at Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey, in the Master of Divinity degree program and later transferred to Union Theological Seminary in New York City to complete the Master of Divinity degree in 1956. In 1985 Bill earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, Illinois. Bill's career as a parish minister spanned forty-one years, including three years as Assistant Pastor of Warren Avenue Presbyterian Church in Saginaw, Michigan; eight years as Pastor of Summit Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and twenty-eight years as Senior Pastor and then Co-Pastor of Immanuel Presbyterian Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he was named Pastor Emeritus upon his retirement in 1997.



It was at Union Seminary that Bill met his wife, Charlotte Patton. They married in June 1956, raised five children, and were devoted partners for sixty-seven years.

Bill's service to the church was extensive, not only as pastor to the congregations he served, but on numerous committees and commissions of the Philadelphia Presbytery, Milwaukee Presbytery, Synod of the Trinity, Synod of Lakes and Prairies, and national General Assembly. His sense of call to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love was steadfast and profound. He was an inquisitive and thoughtful scholar, accomplished preacher, effective administrator, and lifelong advocate for social and political justice.

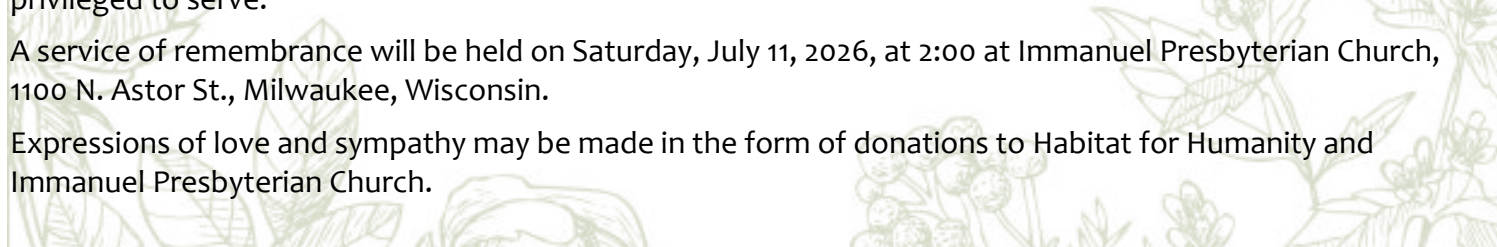
Avocationally, Bill was an avid woodworker and handyman, a longtime Habitat for Humanity volunteer and Chair of the Board, a small-plane pilot, and an enthusiastic supporter of his hometown sports teams. He welcomed friend and stranger alike without judgment, had a gift for befriending anyone, and was endlessly interested in how other people saw the world.

Bill was predeceased by his wife, Charlotte, and sister, Margaret Anderson. He is survived by his son David (Candice) Johnstone, daughter Margaret (Mark) McDonough, daughter Catherine (Peter) Latson, daughter Elizabeth (Randall) Bush, daughter Susan (Michael) Moderski; thirteen grandchildren; eight great grandchildren; and sisters Phyllis Taylor and Sylvia Cross.

Bill embraced life with fearless joy, profound gratitude, endearing humility, and unfailing good humor. He adored Charlotte and their children, and was deeply loved by family, friends, and the congregations he was privileged to serve.

A service of remembrance will be held on Saturday, July 11, 2026, at 2:00 at Immanuel Presbyterian Church, 1100 N. Astor St., Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Expressions of love and sympathy may be made in the form of donations to Habitat for Humanity and Immanuel Presbyterian Church.





Living in Place

I do not have to go
To Sacred Places
In far-off lands.
The ground I stand on
Is holy.
Here, in this little garden
I tend
My pilgrimage ends.
The wild honeybees
The hummingbird moths
The flickering fireflies at
dusk
Are a microcosm
Of the Universe.

Each seed that grows
Each spade of soil
Is full of miracles.
And I toil and sweat
And watch and wonder
And am full of love.
Living in place
In this place.
For truth and beauty
Dwell here.





Mission Initiative "Thank Yous" from Hand of Hope Recipients— Racine Royal Family KIDS Camp 2026

Meg and the First Presbyterian Church of Racine Mission Committee:

On behalf of 46 children who have experienced abusive trauma, resulting in the removal from their homes, Royal Family KIDS Camp (RFKC) would like to thank the First Presbyterian Church of Racine for their generous donation of \$2126.25. Your donation supported 7 - 11-year-old children who were given a week filled with safety, belonging, encouragement and hope. I thought I would follow up and let you know how camp went.

The true impact of Royal Family KIDS comes through relationships. Each trained counselor has only one or two campers, giving neglected children the attention and affirmation they need. Many campers arrive at camp guarded due to abuse, uncertain whether adults can be trusted again. However, through meaningful activities with their counselors, these walls begin to come down.

This year the girls enjoyed a Royal Tea Party where they dressed up and were treated like princesses. The boys participated in a Royal Knighting Ceremony, learning about courage, integrity, and faith through the stories of men who stood strong in difficult circumstances. Campers' lives were affirmed and they began to believe their lives mattered.

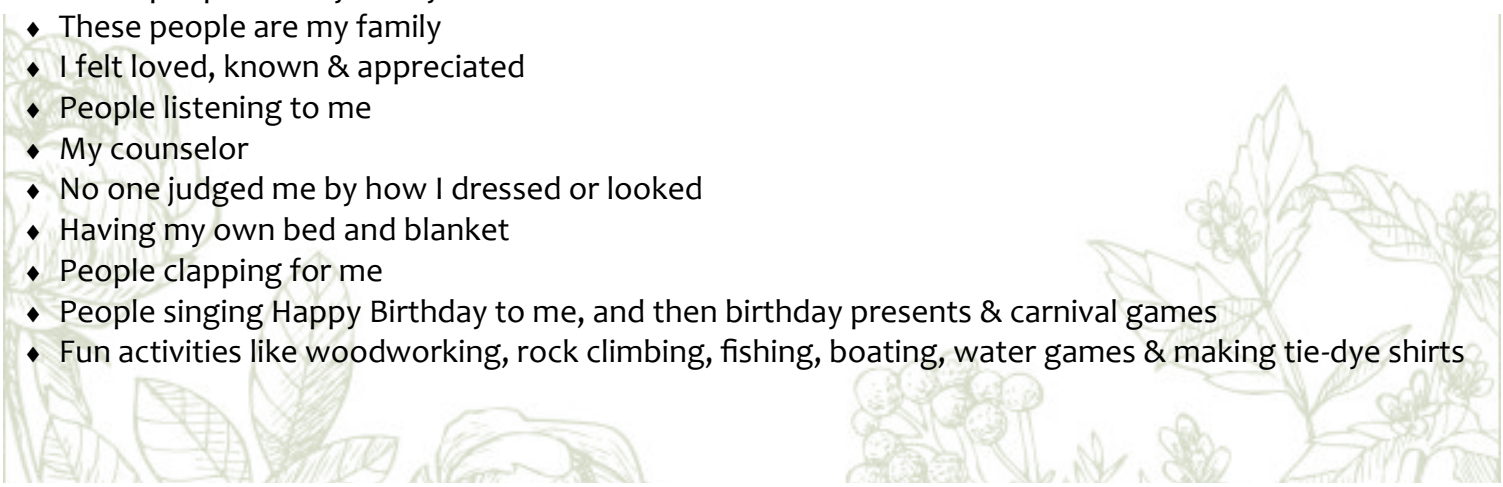
Campers also experience the joy of positive affirmation through the receiving of "Heart Notes", or notes of encouragement, from both peers and adults.

Finally, every child's life is celebrated through our annual birthday party, with presents, inflatables, a carnival, singing and cake.

RFKC Goal—Racine Royal Family KIDS Camp's goal is to help heal damaged childhoods, create positive memories and mentor children who are challenged by disabling abuse. Success of these goals is measured by the camper, guardian, counselor and staff evaluations. I have included comments from each below.

Camper Evaluations to Measure Success

Campers were asked, "What made you feel special? or "What did you like about camp?"

- ◆ These people are my family
 - ◆ These people are my family
 - ◆ I felt loved, known & appreciated
 - ◆ People listening to me
 - ◆ My counselor
 - ◆ No one judged me by how I dressed or looked
 - ◆ Having my own bed and blanket
 - ◆ People clapping for me
 - ◆ People singing Happy Birthday to me, and then birthday presents & carnival games
 - ◆ Fun activities like woodworking, rock climbing, fishing, boating, water games & making tie-dye shirts
- 

Guardian Evaluation Remarks:

- ◆ My child absolutely loved camp. He is diagnosed with separation anxiety, and this camp really helped him.
- ◆ She realized she doesn't want her old life, the new one allows her to have so many more different experiences instead of laying around. She also realized making changes is actually hard work.
- ◆ He enjoyed it very much and I believe it has given him better self-esteem.
- ◆ He loved camp. He talks about his counselor and the activities all the time.
- ◆ They felt supported being with other kids who are living without their parents.
- ◆ He came home excited, listening to his mp3 player and singing the camp songs.
- ◆ My child came back so happy! It was his 3rd year and this year he got up and sang!!

Counselor & Staff comments:

- ◆ Camp impacts me every year because of the kids. Being able to give them a place where they can simply be kids without worrying about everything else going on in their lives is what makes this week so meaningful to me.
- ◆ It's amazing to see 71 staff & RFK family working together to accomplish the same mission.
- ◆ I think the way the counselors supported each other this year was memorable.
- ◆ Even when the little things did not go as planned, everything still came together. I am grateful to have the opportunity to serve with this amazing team.

I personally would like to thank the First Presbyterian Church of Racine for partnering with Racine Royal Family KIDS Camp to heal damaged childhoods, create positive memories and mentor children who are challenged by abuse.

Sincerely,

Rick & Susan Toeller
Co-Directors





Mission Initiative "Thank Yous" from Hand of Hope Recipients—
(continued)

Cuba Partners Network (CPN) of the PC(USA)

Dear FPC Racine Members:

I'm writing to thank you for your gift of \$2,126.25 from your One Great Hour of Sharing offering made to the Cuba Partners Network (CPN) of the PC(USA). The CPN is an assembly of US churches that have partnerships with Presbyterian churches in Cuba (Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba, IPRC). Your gift is greatly appreciated and will go toward addressing the unprecedented crisis currently facing the IPRC.

The IPRC Synod recently requested support from the CPN to address the worsening crisis in Cuba, where electricity, fuel, medicines, and food are in limited supply or non-existent. Our goal this year is \$500,000, with IPRC priorities being solar power, food, and medicine, with solar first. Due to the frequent power outages (two were island-wide just last week) and electricity availability frequently being limited to two hours or less per day, their food rots, medicines spoil, children have been dying in hospitals, and the important Living Waters for the World water treatment systems cannot operate. Our first goal is to provide solar power systems to all IPRC churches, and we have almost completed that goal. Your gift will help us advance those goals.

Thank you for joining us in our faith journey with our Cuban brothers and sisters.

George M Strain, Chair
Partner Mentor Committee
Cuban Council of Churches

