

The Courier

Getting to know you.

When a new pastor comes to the church, we can assume that he/she wants to be a great pastor, serve a great church, and enjoy the fruits of his/her labor. We can assume that the congregation seeks a great pastor who will lead them to greatness so that they can enjoy the fruits of their labor. Sometimes we skip so quickly to our hopes and desires that we miss the beauty of this month - we get to meet each other.

His name was Jack Bramer. I know that, because on my first Sunday, he introduced himself. "I'm Jack Bramer." Got it. Next Sunday it was the same. "Jack Bramer." "Yes you are. You were Jack Bramer last week and you're still Jack Bramer."

You can probably guess what happened the week after that. "I'm Jack Bramer." "Hey, that's easy for me to remember because your initials are JB and so are mine." I'm a little slow, but I recognized a pattern developing. Finally, I figured out the fix. "Hey, you're Jack Bramer!" I said one Sunday, and he never introduced himself again. What a beautiful way of helping me with his name until I declared I didn't need help any more.

I'm going to need a lot of help. Not just names, but schedules, relationships, introductions in the community, backstories of people I meet for the first time, places to meet the community, events where I can meet folks, and on and on. Maybe I can offer some help as well. Why do we do things this way? Who do we need to consult about that decision? Here's an opportunity to impact our community for Jesus' sake.

My hope is that we'll start off like Jack Bramer, committed to helping each other, not expecting a whole lot until the other says they've got something under control, doing the work ourselves as we look forward to the day when we know each other well and are working well together as God calls and sends us. Until then, . . . I'm Jim Bell



Last call to sign up for the All Church Picnic! The sheets are out!

All-Church Picnic – Sign-Up Now!

The All-Church Picnic will be held on Sunday, July 15 from 1:00pm-3:00pm at the Church picnic-area. Enjoy a chance to relax, spend time with friends and get to know new people all while enjoying a fantastic pot-luck meal. There will be fun games for the kids as well as adults. Please bring a dish to pass and a lawn-chair. Fried chicken, your place-setting, and coffee & lemonade will be provided. So that we can properly plan for you, sign-ups are available in the Narthex until July 8th.

All Church Picnic

Mark your calendars! We're having an All Church Picnic on Sunday, July 15 @ 1pm!

First Church will be joining with the Emerge congregation to share food, fun, and fellowship. Bring a dish to pass – meat, drink, and table service will be provided. RSVPs will be needed so we can plan properly for you. Watch for sign-ups in the gathering area beginning in mid-June.



All Church BBQs will be held this summer on the first Friday of each month – June 1, July 6, and August 3. Can't wait to see you!

Bring your own meat, table service, drink, and a dish to pass. Nurture Committee will take care of the grilling for you. For more info, contact Sue Meyer.

Money Matters ~Sue Meyer

When you think about July 4th what comes to mind? Perhaps you think about a day off from work with picnics, parades, and most importantly fireworks!

Although it is not a religious holiday like Christmas or Easter, for many Americans July 4th is a time to reflect on God's goodness to us as a nation. Molded into the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia are these words from the Bible: "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof" (Leviticus 25:10, KJV). While we look with gratitude to the past on this July 4th, may we also look in faith to the future, and commit it and our lives to God and His will. The ancient words of the Psalmist are still true: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" (Psalm 33:12).

4th Of July Quotes

Those who will not be governed by God, will be ruled by tyrants. **William Penn**

I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth - God governs in the affairs of men, and if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it possible that an empire can rise without His aid? **Benjamin Franklin**

It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible. Do not ever let anyone claim to be a true American patriot if they ever attempt to separate religion from politics. **George Washington**

The reason that Christianity is the best friend of government is because Christianity is the only religion that changes the heart. **Thomas Jefferson**

Freedom prospers when religion is vibrant and the rule of law under God is acknowledged. **Ronald Reagan**

God grants liberty only to those who love it, and are always ready to guard and defend it. **Daniel Webster**

Liberty without virtue would be no blessing to us. **Benjamin Rush**

	2018 Financial Information		Financial Information	
May	Year-to-Date			
Income	\$28,084.21	\$148,930.41	Annual Apportionment	\$40,668.00
Expenses	\$31,001.62	\$164,591.48	Apportionment paid to date	\$14,467.41
Surplus	(\$2,917.41)	(\$15,661.07)	Mortgage principal balance	\$455,697.75

July 2018

SUNDAY EPISTLES	MONDAY THE LAW	TUESDAY HISTORY	WEDNESDAY PSALMS	THURSDAY POETRY	FRIDAY PROPHECY	SATURDAY GOSPELS
1 Philippians 3-4	2 Leviticus 10-12	3 2 Kings 1-5	4 Psalm 78-80	5 Proverbs 8-9	6 Ezekiel 19-24	7 Luke 17-18
8 Colossians 1-2	9 Leviticus 13-15	10 2 Kings 6-10	11 Psalm 81-83	12 Proverbs 10	13 Ezekiel 25-30	14 Luke 19-20
15 Colossians 3-4	16 Leviticus 16-18	17 2 Kings 11-15	18 Psalm 84-86	19 Proverbs 11-12	20 Ezekiel 31-36	21 Luke 21-22
22 1 Thessalonians 1-3	23 Leviticus 19-21	24 2 Kings 16-20	25 Psalm 87-89	26 Proverbs 13	27 Ezekiel 37-42	28 Luke 23-24
29 1 Thessalonians 4-6	30 Leviticus 22-24	31 2 Kings 21-25				

Fair Gate Sign Up!

It's the time of year to think about when you can work at the fair gates. Dates are August 7th through August 12th. Sign up sheets are in the gathering area. See you at gates!

Calling children of all ages! Join us this summer on Sunday mornings during 9am worship at

"THE PRAYER GROUND"!

What's "*The Prayer Ground*"?

It's a special place near the front of the church sanctuary, where children of all ages can gather after Children's Time, for various craft, coloring, and worship activities.

Big kids, little kids, tween kids, teen kids, even "adult kids", are welcome in this place (because we're all God's children!)

We ask that families do sit in the first four pews near "*The Prayer Ground*" in case a child wishes to return to their seat, and children under the age of 6 should have a responsible teen or adult sit in the front row. If a child does participate in "*The Prayer Ground*", families should pick them up at the end of the service from there.

Please note that we will *still* be providing nursery care during the summer months; "*The Prayer Ground*" is simply another place where children can feel welcome and included in the worship life of our church.

The Prayer Ground continues this summer, meeting right after Children's Time, during the 9:00am worship service. Come and join us!

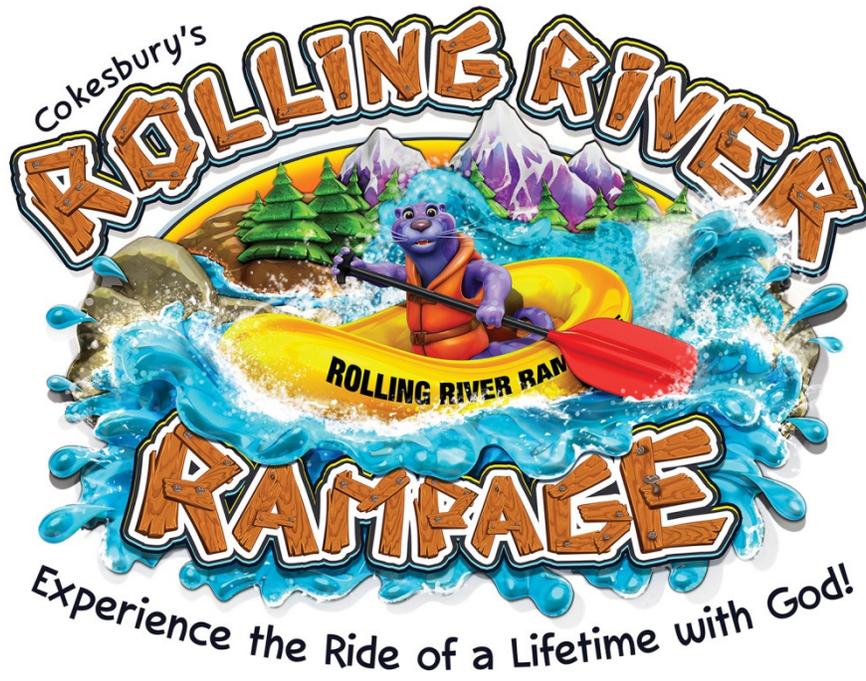
FAMILY ACTIVITY:

Vacation Bible School is happening later this summer (July 23 – July 27). Invite a friend or neighbor or even a relative who lives nearby to come and participate! It's ok if they go to a different church; ALL are welcome to VBS, so consider reaching out and doing just that!

On Sundays July 1 and 8, we're going to be making special VBS invitations in worship at *The Prayer Ground*! Children are welcome to join us with making them, but adults are also invited to pick one (or several) up and deliver them to people you know in your neighborhood.

Personal invitation has proven to be the best way to bring people to church celebrations, so take a step together as a family, and offer that invitation to someone this summer! You never know, maybe someone is looking for a church home but isn't sure how to go about finding one? Your invitation could mean the world to them, as well as bring to life Jesus' call to discipleship!

JOIN US THIS SUMMER AT...



It's Vacation Bible School season!
Monday, July 23 – Friday, July 27

5:00pm community dinner; 6:00-8:00pm VBS

Registration forms are now available!

Cost: \$10 per student, \$25 for a family of three or more!

(Scholarships available if needed; please contact Deacon Sharon at the church office)

VBS is for children age 3 (as of September 2017) thru those that have completed 5th grade.

Drop off your completed form (with money in an attached envelope) in the church office.

Questions? Interested in volunteering?

Contact Deacon Sharon: (815)-544-3479 or deacon_sharon@hotmail.com

IMPORTANT VBS VOLUNTEER DATES!

Wednesday, July 18—VBS Decoration Party (with pizza!) 6:00pm

Summer SN@C (part 2—July edition)

Our summer SN@C continue in July! Come and join us for some summertime fun!

Sunday, July 15, 1:30pm

“Church Summer Picnic and Games”

We're having a special all-church summer picnic on Sunday, July 15, at 1:30pm. YOU AND YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS ARE INVITED! There will also be various games, so come and help out with those, as well as participate!

“The Heart of the Matter” by Deacon Sharon

Last month I had the good fortune of joining our youth on their annual Appalachia Service Project mission trip to eastern Kentucky. As a college student I participated on ASP trips, but this was the first time I had done so since the early 2000's, as well as my first “summer trip”, as those previous ones had taken place in the late fall. Therefore, I very much felt like a first-timer, unsure what to expect in terms of our work project, the place we stayed, or even what the weather in early June would be like (turns out, it's not so different from what the weather is like up here in early June!) There was one thing I knew for certain though—our ASP trip would coincide with my birthday.

As children, we like to have these big birthday party celebrations, normally with a particular theme, like Disney princesses or Power Rangers, etc. And it's not uncommon for those parties to take place at fun venues, like a bowling alley or the ever-popular, Chuck E. Cheese. Lots of decorations, lots of presents, and of course, an elaborate cake. As we grow older, our tastes for theming and venues change. The guest list might vary, featuring more intimate friendships than our entire 1st grade class, and Chuck E. Cheese is traded in for a much nicer, and usually more “expensive” restaurant, one reserved just for this special occasion. The point is, it's easy to get caught up in the “trims and trappings” of a birthday celebration. Suddenly, if we aren't able to have that particular party at that particular place with that particular dessert and those particular people in attendance...it all falls apart. We lose sight of the heart of the matter.

I can't deny a part of this was going through my head when I realized early on that my birthday would be taking place while on ASP. The nice restaurant I would typically go to would have to wait until after I got back, which isn't a bad thing, but at the same time I found myself thinking, “But it won't be the same as it would if it were on the actual day.” Well I'm happy to say that I received a wake-up call.

One thing we are told while on ASP is that the work project is only half of the reason we're there. The other half, and dare I say the more important half, is to build relationships with the people we are serving. And one way to encourage that relationship building is to sit down and break bread with our families. So after our first day of work, I thought, “hey! How about we have pizza for lunch on Wednesday and invite our family to join us for this special meal?” So we did just that, we made arrangements to have the pizza delivered for our lunch period on my birthday and invited the family to join us for this special treat. But little did I realize how special the day would become.

As we worked outside, our family were busy inside, baking a huge brownie for all of us to share, as well as hanging streamers from the ceiling in their kitchen, and writing cards for each person on our work crew. I think that was the part that was the sweetest of all—my card was a specific birthday card, but everyone on our team received a card of appreciation which was completely unexpected but very, very much appreciated.

I thought we were just going to be having pizza, but our family went “above and beyond” my expectations in turning that day into a very special one. And it truly did remind me about the heart of the matter when it comes to any celebration, birthday or otherwise. It's the people—be they lifelong friends, close family members, or strangers who you have only recently met but who shine the love of God in their actions—this is what matters. This is what we should always remember and celebrate.

I hope and pray that the next time you gather for a celebration, you keep this close to your heart and give thanks for those gathered around you, whoever they may be.

THANK YOU to everyone who supported our ASP volunteers! Your donations and prayers are VERY much appreciated and our trip would not have been possible without you.



**FIRST
UNITED
METHODIST
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Friday 9-noon

find us on the web
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The anchor holds
though the ship
is battered.

The anchor holds
though the sails
are torn.

I have fallen on
my knees,
as I face the
raging seas.

The anchor holds
in spite of the
storm.

-Ray Boltz -
Submitted by Debbie
Peterson

**See you for dinner the week of VBS
July 23rd-27th.**

**Monday-Spaghetti
Tuesday-Fried Chicken
Wednesday-Meat Loaf
Thursday-Pulled Pork
Friday-Lasagna**