

Unity Presbyterian Church

Yoke Newsletter ~ July 2016

Church Calendar:

<http://unitypresbyterian.net/page/calendar>

Prayer Concerns:

<http://unitypresbyterian.net/prayer.php>

From Pastor Andrew :

Freedoms

“My country, 'tis of thee, Sweet land of liberty, Of thee I sing; Land where my fathers died, Land of the pilgrims' pride, From ev'ry mountainside Let freedom ring!”

Samuel Francis Smith wrote the lyrics to “My Country 'Tis of Thee” in 1831 and it is still a staple of our nations patriotic songs. It was first performed in public at a Fourth of July celebration commemorating the adoption of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. I am certain it will be played and sung with gusto again this year...Let freedom ring!

Does Freedom Ring?

It has been 240 years since the Declaration of Independence was penned by Thomas Jefferson with the help of John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert Livingston. Every year we celebrate Independence Day with fireworks, parades, and barbecues. There are ceremonies and political speeches that lift up our nation as the land of the free. This year, these celebrations will be held in the shadow of the worst mass shooting our country has seen. There is an epidemic of deaths related to gun violence affecting all Americans. If we are not safe in night clubs, movie theaters, schools, or churches how free are we?

The Declaration of Independence declares: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” When I read this I envision a nation where every human being regardless of their gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious view, age, or personal choice is allowed and encouraged to live fully and free. That sounds like the kingdom of God that Christ encourages us to build.

However, statistics show that every day, on average: 31 Americans are murdered, 55 people kill themselves with a fire arm, emergency rooms treat 151 gunshot victims, and 46 people are shot or killed by accident. What breaks my heart is the number of children and young people this epidemic affects; on average seven are killed by guns every day. All this senseless violence costs U.S. tax players billions of dollars each year. You can read these and more statistics on the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence website bradycampaign.org. These numbers do not reflect a nation where everyone is participating in Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness, nor do they describe the kingdom of God on earth. Something must be done so that freedom may ring.

I think it is obvious, if there were no guns there would be no gun related deaths. While this would be ideal, it is not a realistic solution. One of our basic freedoms is the 2nd Amendment and our right to bear arms. How then are Christian Americans going to respect and protect both the freedom afforded in the 2nd Amendment, and the freedoms of Life, Liberty, and Happiness? With prayer and a call for justice. While we long and pray for a day that violence and hate are no more, we must encourage our nation's leaders to seek common sense and realistic measures that will protect all within our borders from the many forms of gun violence. We need reforms that address the issues of poverty, education, and mental health, especially for our nation's children. You can learn more ways to help call for justice at childrensdefense.org. Until we reach a place where freedom rings for all people we continue to pray that God's presence is felt in the lives of victims and their families. We pray that God might stay the hands and calm the hearts of those who would choose violence as a solution to their struggles. We pray that the light of Christ would illuminate the conversation between the deeply divided sides of the issue until some much needed change occurs.

Samuel Francis Smith was a seminary student at Andover Theological Seminary when he wrote "My Country 'Tis of Thee" and the final verse seems fitting as our conflicted nation celebrates the Fourth of July this year:

"Our fathers' God to Thee, Author of liberty, To Thee we sing. Long may our land be bright, With freedom's holy light, Protect us by Thy might, Great God our King."

May the Peace of Christ be with you,
Rev. Andrew Black

Worship Schedule

July 3rd — Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
Service of Word and Table
Sermon: "Bombs Bursting in Air" Rev. Andrew Black
Inspired by Mathew 5:13-16

July 10th — Eighth Sunday after Pentecost
Sermon: "Shepherd or Sheep?" Rev. Andrew Black
Inspired Matthew 25:31-46 & Risk Taking Mission & Service

July 17th — Ninth Sunday after Pentecost
Sermon: "The Indescribable Gift" Rev. Andrew Black
Inspired by 2 Corinthians 9:11-15 & Extravagant Giving

July 24th — Tenth Sunday after Pentecost
Sermon: "Brought Into Fullness" Rev. Andrew Black
Inspired by Colossians 2:6-15

July 31st — Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost
Guest Preacher to be announced

Where in the World is Pastor Andrew?

July 25th - July 31st Family Vacation

Thanks for all you do for the Potts Food Pantry

It is amazing to see how generous and committed our congregation is to keeping the shelves of our food pantry full. Keep watching the weekly bulletin insert for suggestions on the items the Food Pantry needs most. During the summer the demand for help often increases while donations often decrease. If we work together we can share the love of Christ without letting this happen in our community.

Remember, we don't need to offer just tangible gifts, but also gifts of time and service. The pantry needs YOU. There is a great deal of time and effort that goes into operating the food pantry each month. There is food to purchase, stock, pack, and distribute. Our current dedicated group of volunteers is amazing, but they need YOUR help. There are many creative ways that you can offer your time to assist in this important work of the church. How is the Spirit calling you to aid in the efforts of this vital mission?

Please let Pastor Andrew, Dawn Chapman or Jan Buffington know if you are interested in doing something to help us continue to answer Christ's call to care for and love our neighbors. ~Pastor Andrew
Pastor Andrew's Summer Class

Pastor Andrew invites you to join him at 9:00 am on Sunday July 10, 17, & 24 and August 7th for a discussion class about what it means to be a Presbyterian, a member of Unity Presbyterian Church, and part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) denomination. This class is for anyone inquiring about membership with the church or anyone who just wants to learn more about our congregation's role in the wider church. New members will be welcomed into the congregation on August 14th.

FUN FAMILY NEIGHBORHOOD PARTY

Everyone is invited to join us on July 4th from 7pm till Dusk for Fellowship, Games, Sparklers, and S'mores. Bring the family, invite your neighbors, share it on Facebook and let's all join together and have some fun. We have a new 6 Hole Foot Golf course waiting to be played. We might even get a good glimpse of some local fireworks so bring your blankets and your lawn chairs too.

Anyone who wants to donate marshmallows, gram crackers, and chocolate bars can drop them at the church office or bring them along on the fourth. If you have soccer balls, frisbees, basket balls, or other outdoor games please bring them too.

BE SURE TO READ THE ATTACHMENT ABOUT VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Rev. Dawn Black, we thank you for taking on this fun project and heading the committee.

FISH FRY

Thank you, Paul Ellison, who supervised the Fish Fry and Bill Brett, who secured the desserts; without the help of the congregation this hard working project wouldn't have been so successful.

Took in	\$2,612.21
Fish cost	<u>\$776.55</u>
Total	<u>\$1,835.66</u>

Morning Glories

Join us on Tuesday, July 12, at Cracker Barrel for lunch (or breakfast) at 11:00 a.m. We will share food and fellowship during our summer break.



Save the front of your greeting cards as a mission/recycling project. There is a box in the back of the church where you can leave your cards. Remember to save the front of your greeting cards. We can't send American, Hallmark or Disney cards.



View from the Inside - by Camille Church Mouse

"In the good old summer time." Grab lemonade, find a shade tree, and get your lawn chair out. It's time to relax. That is what I'm doing! Our trip to the Rex game was fun. Hot, but fun! Our fish fry had a great crowd and great food. Everything tasted so good and I was stuffed. Vacation Bible School is coming and let's pray for good weather. There are lots of fun activities and crafts planned for all the kids. Our Bell tower will be up soon. I've been out to my garden plot several times. I'm not sure if the 10% of the crop will be much! Be sure to come to the 4th of July celebration. There will be games and lots of fun. Watch your bulletin and newsletter to keep up to date. Things are moving forward so come grow with us and be a part of our future. God's blessing and joy to all of you. Peace and love!!

The Community Garden

"I go to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses". This song often comes to mind when we go out to check on our garden plot even though I usually have someone with me and we have no roses. ☺

When I told Bill we would take a plot in the Community Garden I wondered if it would actually happen. Spring is such a busy time and the days were flying by. However, we made up our plans, made a trip to Lowe's and it actually happened!!! And, amazingly, it became our family plot!!! Luann, JR and I did the hoeing, weeding, and sowed the seeds. Grandma was there to help weed and supervise. Now, when we look at our plot, it is a family plot. I guess we need a sign that says "Brown/Modesitt Garden" on our section.

We are to the fun part now. We go out and check our "crops", water if needed and keep the weeds down. The hard part of getting the soil ready and seeds in is done. We watch the weather and aren't upset if it rains (that is really a change). And we actually have baby peppers coming on, everything is

coming up, and still growing. I don't know if our corn will be "knee high by the fourth of July" but it is still growing and that is a good sign!!

This has been a fun activity for our family. We are like most families with different activities pulling us in different directions. It's been fun to have this little piece of God's creation to concentrate on and cultivate together. We might even have a crop to give 10% to Unity, even if Grandma questions that we will! Either way we have enjoyed the experience and hopefully we will also be able to share our bounty with others.

There are several plots that didn't get planted which is sad. This is such a great opportunity for our congregation and I thank Bill and Judy Brett and their helpers for making this possible. Hopefully next year it will be full. This is a great activity to share as a family!

For now, take time some Sunday to visit our garden. You may get inspired to create your own!

GREEN CORNER

Green Corner

If the weather keeps going as it has we are in for a hot summer! We have already had more ninety degree days in June than we have had for several years and the years they are comparing June to have been hot ones. With all of this hot weather our energy usage will skyrocket as we try to stay cool. The following tips from PG&E are ones to help us all cope with this hot weather. Stay cool!!

- Avoid using the oven on hot days. Instead, cook on the stove, use a microwave oven, or grill outside.
- If possible, enjoy an afternoon out at the pool, park, or local library.
- Wait until cooler times of the day to do tasks that make your house warmer, like laundry and cooking.
- If you turn your ceiling fan on when using the air conditioner, you can raise your thermostat about 4°F to save on cooling costs with no reduction in comfort.
- Turn bathroom and kitchen ventilation fans off about 10 minutes after their job is done to keep them from pushing cooled air out of your house.
- Hang laundry outside. Take advantage of late sunsets and warm evenings to bypass your dryer and let your clothes air dry.
- Turn off lights. In addition to switching off lights when you're not using rooms, consider a summer tradition of candlelit dinners or dimly lit game nights. During the day, rely on natural light alone.
- Open your windows and let cooler air flow into your home in the morning and at night. Cover your windows during the day to block the hot sun.
- Use room fans to keep you cool, turning them off before you leave.
- Check the filter on your air conditioning system and clean or replace it if it's dirty. A dirty filter will slow air flow and cause your system to use more energy.
- Caulk gaps and cracks around drafty door frames and windows to prevent warm air from entering your home on hot summer days. Caulk is inexpensive and can be bought at most hardware stores where you can also learn you how to apply it.
- Get your air conditioner inspected to make sure your system is leak-free and operating efficiently.