2016 August Tidings Newsletter

• First Presbyterian Church
• 5 Court St., Towanda PA  570-265-5575
• Website—www.fpctowanda.com
• Email—fpchurch@comcast.net
• Facebook—Friends of First Presbyterian

From Pastor Rachel...

This week I am preparing my message on patience as part of our summer sermon series on the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Often impatience is a bad thing, but it can also be a good sign of a strong desire and excitement for something we hope will come to pass.

Throughout this year, I have written every month about how important it is for ALL of you to take part in a prayer group. Our elders have led these groups, and seen very modest attendance, to put it gently. So the Lord has been telling me (and them) to be patient. Sometimes it takes a while for a worthwhile thing to gain traction and become established. At the same time, my personal hope and prayer for excitement on your part has struggled with discouragement. How can our church grow spiritually if you are not involved in prayer with other believers? Why are you not more excited about this?

Traditions take a while to become traditions. It is true that more patience may be needed for me and the elders as we wait to see numerical growth in our prayer groups, and the spiritual growth that will flow from them. But now is the time, as fall quickly approaches, for you to make taking part in a prayer group a new part of your routine. God promises to bless you, so why would you not?

I’ll wrap up with this nice devotional piece titled “Sow Generously” by Henry T. and Richard Blackaby. Please take it to heart, and sow away!

But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. (2 Cor. 9:6)

You are called to be intentional about your Christianity. You must be determined to experience the fullness of God in every area of your Christian life and never to settle for a shallow, lackadaisical relationship with Almighty God. God will bless you according to how you respond to His invitations. If He finds in you a generous heart that willingly and freely gives what it has to others, then God responds to you in like manner.

(Cont’d. on next page)
When the apostle Paul encouraged the believers in Corinth to help the Christians in Jerusalem, he promised them that if they would sow generously, they would reap a generous return from God.

This truth holds life-changing potential for us. If we invest everything we have in our relationship with God, we will experience the full dimensions of being children of God. If our desire is to know God more intimately, and if we spend ample time studying His word, God will generously enrich our relationship with Him. If we discipline ourselves to remain in prayer even when praying is difficult, He will reward us with a deeper, more powerful prayer life. If we reconcile broken relationships and prepare our hearts for worship, and if we participate fully and reverently in every part of worship, God promises that we will meet Him and our lives will be changed.

Why is it that some Christians grow rapidly in their Christian faith and others remain unchanged year after year? Our Christian maturity is deeply affected by what we sow. Let us choose to sow generously in everything we do in our Christian lives. The harvest we reap will be Christlikeness.

Chow for Children Gearing up for the Fall

Sylvia Abrams and Dr. Joan Hudyncia from our sister church in Rome thank us for our past generosity in support of Chow for Children. They are now focusing on the fall, when they will provide nonperishable food for 2 weekend meals to 25 Head Start families through the coming school year. The families come from all over Bradford County. A generous donation of $340 will cover one family, but they certainly welcome anything you can give. If you would like to help, please send a check (no cash, please) to Chow for Children, c/o Dr. Joan Hudyncia, PO Box 189, Rome 18837. If you have any questions you may call her at 265-8382 or Sylvia at 247-2609. Thank you!
Our Outreach Team is “in training” for another season of caring for young people after our 5 home football games. In the past, we have hosted 50-70 youth in JFK Hall, providing food, refreshments, and fun in a safe environment. This year, we are exploring having the 5th Quarter in the old high school gym. We are also going to be expanding our witness of Christ during each event to make the Gospel message more obvious. And we have been blessed with a generous grant from Sheetz, which includes 10 cases of water and $250.

We continue to look for people who can help with this very important outreach. If you or your business would like to make a donation to cover the cost of food and the hall rental, please see Pastor Rachel or Craig Wollenberg. If you would like to volunteer your time, supervising the event is easy and enjoyable. All you need to do is like kids!

Please see Rachel or Craig for that as well.

We appreciate your prayers for this outreach and for all the young people we hope to impact for the sake of their salvation in Christ. If you cannot volunteer in person, prayers are very helpful. Thank you!

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Confirmation Class To Be Offered

Pastor Rachel is excited to once again be offering a confirmation program for youth in grades 7-12. Anyone is welcome to take part. If a young person wishes, he or she can apply for church membership at the conclusion of the series next spring. The program is free except for a $16 book fee. The meeting time and day will be determined to fit the schedules of those who sign up. Please contact Pastor Rachel if you would like your young person to take part!
“Prayers to Allah Offered at PCUSAs General Assembly” by Paula Kincaid

“Allah bless us and bless our families and bless our Lord. Lead us on the straight path – the path of all the prophets: Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad,” and so went the prayer offered up by Wajidi Said, from the Portland [Oregon] Muslim Community, as part of the “first order of business” during the opening plenary session of the 222nd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Wajidi was taking part in the assembly’s scheduled time of remembrance for those killed in the recent Orlando terrorist attack and those killed last year in the shooting at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in downtown Charleston, S.C.

“In the days leading up to this assembly we all know that our nation’s peace has once again been ripped apart by an act of mass violence,” said Heath Rada, moderator of the 221st General Assembly, when introducing it.

Rada said that Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons requested the staff leadership of the PCUSA’s ecumenical and interfaith ministries — Robina Winbush, Laurie Anderson, Rick Ufford-Chase and Laurie Kraus — “to provide for us as a first order of business an opportunity to lift up these tragedies that are so much on our minds.”

Beginning in Arabic, Said then switched to English and prayed: “Allah bless us and bless our families and bless our Lord. Lead us on the straight path – the path of all the prophets: Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. Peace be upon them all. Amen.

“In the name of Allah, the beneficent, the merciful, let us praise the Lord. The creator of the universe, the most merciful, the most compassionate and the Lord of the universe who has created us and made us into nations and tribes, from male and females that we may know each other, not that we might despise each other, or may despise each other. Incline towards peace and justice and trust in God, for the Lord is one that hears and knows everything and the servants of God, the most compassionate, the most merciful, gracious are those who walk in the earth in humility and when bigots and hateful and Islamaphobes address them, they say peace. Peace be upon them and peace be upon Allah.”

At the conclusion of the afternoon plenary on Wednesday, June 22, the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, Rev. Gradye Parsons, offered an apology. He said that he had become aware that some had found the prayer on Saturday offensive. Parsons said that sometimes mistakes can be made in ecumenical relationships and stated it was not intentional. “It was never the intention to offend anyone, and we offer an apology to those who were offended.”
Day of Prayer - August 3

1. For the conclusion of our summer to be safe and fun, and the beginning of the school year to go smoothly
2. For our friends and loved ones who are homebound, chronically ill, and mentally ill to experience God's peace and healing
3. For our state and nation as election day approaches; may God's holy will be done
4. That the Lord will guide and bless our ministries that will restart in the coming weeks
5. For us to hunger for spiritual growth in knowing God and His ways

THE FOLLOWING BOOKS HAVE BEEN ADDED TO THE CHURCH LIBRARY:

The following books have been added to the church library:
“Sent” How One Ordinary Family Traded the American Dream for God’s Greater Purpose by Hilary Alan
“Rush of Heaven” One Woman’s Miraculous Encounter with Jesus by Ema McKinley
“In the Field of Grace” a novel by Tessa Afshar
“Land of Silence” a novel by Tessa Afshar
“The O’Malley Series” by Dee Henderson

Donations include:
“I Found Jesus in the Stock Market” by Cassandra Laymon (Linda Ferrario’s daughter)
“A Place of Grace” A Resurrected Church’s Journey to Vitality
“Because He Lives” Scripture and Pastoral Reflections on the Cross and the Empty Tomb
“In the Beginning” an Easy Reader book

A CD entitled “Psalms Hyssop & Snow” has been donated to the church library. The CD contains music that was composed, arranged and performed on the piano by Hugh Sung, son of Baik and Grace Sung. Nineteen of the 23 songs are Psalms sung by various vocalists. Hugh has performed in major cities throughout the world and has been featured in the Philadelphia Orchestra’s Chamber Music series.
The Long Wait Is Almost Over!

After many months of research, the installation of a stairlift for the church is planned for late August. The lift, which will be located at the Pine Street stairway, will enable those with mobility issues to safely move from the main floor to the lower level and return. Some individuals have been unable to participate in activities in Patterson Hall or Sunday School classes located on the lower level because they cannot use the stairs. An individual using the lift will sit in a chair which will move along a track from one floor to the other.

The total cost for the stairlift and the required permits is $16,000. Stairlifts, such as the one for our church, are expensive because of the bend necessary in the track at the midway landing. To date, we have received approximately $8,000 in donations specifically for the stairlift. An additional $8,000 is needed to complete the funding of the project. To those who have already contributed, thank you for your generosity. If you feel led to contribute, or make an additional contribution, please put your donation in an envelope with your name and the word stairlift written on the outside. Place the envelope in the offering plate on Sunday morning or drop it off at the church office. Checks should be made payable to the First Presbyterian Church with the word stairlift written on the memo line. Donations need to be received by the end of September.

The likelihood of this project becoming a reality seemed impossible two years ago. Thanks to prayer and generous contributors, the “impossible” has become a reality.

Strong Families Program To Start

Beginning in September, a free 7 session program titled "Strengthening Families" will be offered by Towanda's Partners in Family and Community Development. Parents take part with their children, ages 10-14. Childcare for younger children is provided during the program. Families eat a provided meal together from 5:30-6, then the program runs from 6-8. Topics for parents include showing love in setting limits, house rules, encouraging good behavior, using consequences, protecting against substance abuse, and using community resources. Youth sessions address setting goals and dreams, appreciating parents, dealing with stress, following rules, handling peer pressure, and reaching others.

The program is currently looking for leaders who will be trained and compensated. The program is also accepting registration for interested families. Pastor Rachel and Deb Wollenberg have brochures with more information. Feel free to contact PFCD's office with any questions at 265-6246.
"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:1-2).

God has prepared work He wants us to do, and our delays in carrying out His plan constitute disobedience. That makes habitual procrastination a serious problem. Praying, tithing, and daily Bible reading aren’t the only things Christians can put off. We can also delay:

**Serving in the church.** We volunteer to serve, but when the call comes, we say no. If asked, we might reply it is the length of the commitment that doesn’t suit us. At other times we say the position itself is not a good fit. In both cases, if we examine our feelings, we will find we are dodging what we do not like or feel inadequate to do.

**Sharing our faith.** We can get very anxious about how to express ourselves, what reaction we’ll get, and whether we’ll be able to give adequate answers. When insecurity threatens us, we often choose inactivity over obedience.

**Surrendering our will to the Lord’s.** Just thinking about giving God control in certain areas makes many of us feel fearful. So we cling to our way and avoid His. True submission says, “Lord, I am willing to do whatever You want in this situation. I will obey Your Word.”

After a while, because of our procrastinating ways, our spiritual growth is inhibited. Then our usefulness to God and our sense of joy in Him diminish. The Lord has asked us to be His ambassadors, who represent Him to a hurting world according to His plan and timetable (2 Cor. 5:20). Therefore, procrastination has no place in the life of a believer. Which areas of your life does this bring to mind? (From Intouch.org, June 27, 2016)

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**Memorials Received...**

- From Nancy Dayton & Deborah Malone, Robert Cooper in memory of **Esther Dayton**.
- From Phil & Margaret Durnin in memory of **George Lovell**.
- From Lee Ann Wolfe, Jack Thomas, Mark & Peg Henery, John & Patricia Goodwin, Phil & Peg Durnin, Reg & Judy Douglas, Jean & Wilson Crawford, David & Brenda Houck, Alison Wolfe, Gladys Abell and James & Donna Thompson in memory of **Jamie McPherson**.
“You Have Purpose” by Cindy Hess Kasper

“If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 4:11)

On a hot day in western Texas, my niece Vania saw a woman standing by a stoplight and holding up a sign. As she drove closer, she tried to read what the sign said, assuming it was a request for food or money. Instead, she was surprised to see these three words: “You Have Purpose.”

God has created each of us for a specific purpose. Primarily that purpose is to bring honor to Him, and one way we do that is by meeting the needs of others (1 Peter 4:10-11).

A mother of young children may find purpose in wiping runny noses and telling her kids about Jesus. An employee in an unsatisfying job might find his purpose in doing his work conscientiously, remembering it is the Lord he is serving (Col. 3:23-24). A woman who has lost her sight still finds purpose in praying for her children and grandchildren and influencing them to trust God.

Psalm 139 says that before we were born “all the days ordained for [us] were written in [His] book” (v. 16). We are “fearfully and wonderfully made” to bring glory to our Creator (v. 14).

Never forget: You have purpose! Even when everything seems meaningless, God still has a purpose for your life.

Lord, it often seems that our lives swing from drudgery to challenges we don’t want. Today help us to see You in the midst of whatever faces us. Show us a small glimpse of the purpose and meaning You bring to everything. Amen.

August Birthdays

2 - Dick Walsh
3 - Dave Guffey, Henry Dunn
5 - Rowena Kuhn
7 - Jean Hall-Kafes
8 - Dixie Cabucci, Bailey Carey, Deb Wollenberg
9 - Lois Smith
24 - Matthew Smith
28 - Roger Horton Jr.
29 - Sally Rohrer
30 - Dave Pavey, Zanetta Tewksbury
at KIDS CLUB!

Thoughts from Deb Fuller, CEC

It’s been a hot summer so cooling off at SUMMER KIDS CLUB has been a lot of fun. Water balloons, water guns, sponges and cups have all made an appearance on the church lawn as have 18-25 children! The story of Jonah has been the Bible focus.

The final summer event will be a Pool Party at the home of Linda Ferrario on August 17. We are so grateful for her hospitality!

LOOKING AHEAD TO SEPTEMBER....

**Ladies Sunday School Class** will return this fall.

**Children’s Church** will resume on Sunday, September 11. This is a once-a-month rotation and several new leaders are needed.

**KIDS CLUB WEEKLY** will begin Wednesday, September 7 for children K-7 grade.
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<td></td>
<td>1PM Worship Team</td>
<td>9AM Prayer Group at Fox Home</td>
<td>“Day of Prayer”</td>
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<td>5PM Trustees</td>
<td>9:45 Prayer Group at Fox Home</td>
<td>8AM Hezekiah’s Hands</td>
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<td>5:30PM Outreach</td>
<td>Pastor Rachel at F.L.E.A. Camp</td>
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<td>10AM Worship</td>
<td>Pastor</td>
<td>9AM Prayer Group at Fox Home</td>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>1PM Fellowship</td>
<td>10:30AM Praise Team practice</td>
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<td>11AM Weight Loss Prayer Group</td>
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<td>6:30PM Scouts</td>
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<td>10AM Worship</td>
<td>Pastor Rachel on vacation</td>
<td>9AM Prayer Group at Fox Home</td>
<td>1PM Prayer Group at Richards Home</td>
<td>Riverfest</td>
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<td>11AM Weight Loss Prayer Group</td>
<td>9:45 Prayer Group at Fox Home</td>
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<td>7PM Choir practice</td>
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<td>10AM Worship - Infant Baptism</td>
<td>9AM Prayer Group at Fox Home</td>
<td>7PM Choir practice</td>
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<td>10:30 Praise Team Practice</td>
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