

The Focus

Forest Grove Presbyterian Church

August/September 2019

• Pastor's Notes

- *Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.*"

Romans 12:16-18

This past Sunday I took the opportunity to watch my eldest grandson play soccer. It is amazing to me how these boys were able to run and run and run in the 93 degree heat! I guess I was young, once. Obviously they wouldn't do it if they didn't love the game which is why I think it is so very important that when the final whistle blows all the boys line up and give the opposing team a "high 5" and say, "good game." At nine and ten years old (and even younger and older) isn't that what recreational sports should be all about – a good game, win or lose. Of course it is more fun to win, but winning isn't everything, or at least isn't that the message we want our children to receive? They aren't being paid. Their lives aren't on the lines like it was some sort of "Hunger Games" kind of competition and we live in a day and age when everyone gets a medal just for competing!

Unfortunately, my grandson's team lost by two goals. They gave it their all even in the heat. The parents on the sidelines seemed to agree that the Ref made some unfair calls that contributed to that loss including more than usual rough play by the other team. Ok, they lost and that could be brushed off. What stuck in my grandson's craw was the attitude of the other team. Derogatory remarks were apparently being made throughout the game by the other team's players – the game winning players! Maybe it was a psychological thing trying to get an edge so the other team would be rattled by their remarks. But when it came time for the end-of-the-game "high 5," the winning team's players' remarks to the losers were, "good game, butt-head." Now, why?

Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can break my heart. We live in a time when civility toward each other seems to be in a downhill spiral. I suppose there have always been children who have been cruel towards their peers, but that attitude seems to be extending more and more beyond the “high 5, end of game” remarks and more and more to “mature” adults. Paul reminds us in the letter to the Romans of the teachings of Jesus who taught that we are to care for those who are the losers in life by lifting up, not tearing down.

I was very proud of my grandson who didn't repay evil for evil but chose to live peaceably by sticking with the simple, “good game” attitude and comment, period. Maybe that's because he just came off of a week of Vacation Bible School where the lesson for the week was that when life isn't fair, God is good and so should we. As Paul said, “as far as it is depends on you, live peaceably with all.”

So I say, “Good game, boys. You are winners in God's eyes and in the eyes of many of us.” Isn't that what really matters?

Yours in Christ's service,

Pastor Su

THANKS FOR A GREAT ALL CHURCH PICNIC

Once again, the congregation broke bread together and shared fellowship at the home of Maggie and Steve Rash. Thanks to the Parish Life Committee and other helpers for providing the set up, hot dogs, lemonade and ice tea. Thanks everyone who brought a delicious side dish or dessert. It was a fun and relaxing time for all on a beautiful Sunday afternoon.



SUMMER PREACHING AND PASTORAL CARE SCHEDULE

Pastor Su will be away for summer vacation on August 5 – September 2. During this time the congregation will enjoy a variety of guest preachers whose faces are familiar. The Sunday preaching schedule will be as follow:

August 11 and 18: Former Seminary Intern, Will Myers.

Will Myers grew up in rural Illinois, and went to undergrad at Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa. He graduated with Bachelor of Arts in Peace and Justice Studies before heading to Princeton Theological Seminary. In September, Will begins his senior year of seminary, continuing on the ordination track in the PC(USA). Will is feeling called to rural ministry and so his hope is to return to the Midwest after graduation to serve as a parish pastor in such a setting.

August 25: Rev. Susan Wonderland, Transitional Executive of the Synod of the Trinity. Ordained in 1983 at the Philadelphia Presbytery, Susan served for eight years in the Adirondacks as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Warrensburg, N.Y., 15 years as co-pastor of the Webb Horton Memorial Presbyterian Church in Middletown, N.Y. (with husband Ken) and 13 years on the staff of Hudson River Presbytery, serving in various areas of congregational resourcing and networking, particularly for education and youth ministry. In the past, Susan was also engaged in leadership and training ministries relating to Congregational Transformation and Missional Church. She also served as the Interim Executive Presbyter for Lackawanna Presbytery. She is married to Ken Wonderland, pastor of the BenSalem Presbyterian Church. They have three children, one grandson and two cats.

September 1: Former Seminary Intern, Nate Brantingham.

Nate graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary this past spring. During this past summer Nate has been a CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) program at Trenton Psychiatric Hospital where he served as a student chaplain. In November Nate, his wife Antonia and cat Nova will be moving to Illinois where Antonia will begin her work as a faculty member of the Univ. of Illinois. Meanwhile Nate is prayerfully waiting for God's call to some form of ministry in that area. With his pastoral skills and background in business, entrepreneurships and start-ups, God will surely put Nate to work for the Kingdom!

While Pastor Su is away, the session members and Deacons will be on call for pastoral care. Please contact Maggie Rash 215-543-4451, Missi Dell'Orefice 267-240-6222 or Susan Flanagan in the church office 215-794-8575. For emergencies call Rev. Debbie Heffernan 267-342-0089. Please leave a message and you will be called back quickly.



What's happening with the Capital Campaign?

There is lots going on behind the scenes. Check this list...

Construction loan: As you will recall, we are borrowing \$215,000 from the Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program (PILP). As required by PILP, work on our project cannot begin until the loan is closed. We gathered more than 30 pages of documents and submitted them to PILP on June 20th. The title insurance company hired by PILP recently requested additional documents. The last of those was submitted on July 29th. We're now waiting to hear from PILP with a loan closing date.

Demolition & site work: The manse is cleaned out and all utilities have been disconnected. As soon as the loan closes, A.H. Cornell & Son will be notified that demolition and site work can begin.

Rear entrance: The preliminary plans for the new rear entrance have been sent out to several contractors for bid. We're hoping for construction of the new entrance in September/October.

Sanctuary windows & painting: The detailed specifications have been prepared and will be sent out for bid at the beginning of August. We're planning for this work to also be done in September/October.