
Raeford Presbyterian Church
128 W. Edinborough Ave. Raeford, NC
Church Office (910) 875-2101
July 2017

The Link



The Raeford Presbyterian Church is committed to worshipping God, proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, nurturing the faithful, and showing compassion for those in need.

This month is not thought of without considering Independence Day, July 4th. Freedom is surely on our minds, and what that means for us individually and corporately.

A lady from England accosted George Beverly Shea after a Billy Graham Crusade in London. She felt it was in poor taste for him to sing an American patriotic song as part of the crusade while there. He wondered what in the world she was talking about. She said she heard him sing, "It took America to put the stars in place..." Of course he sang, "It took a miracle..." but that is not what she heard.

What do you hear when you hear someone talk about "freedom" in this country? We sure hear different things. Little kids are shown a model of the Statue of Liberty and are asked what she is doing. One child said, "She was taking a shower." Another said, "She was raising her hand because she knew the right answer, but she was cheating because she had a book of answers in the other hand." (Candid Camera)

We raise our hands for many reasons, but one may be that we know the answer — His name is Jesus the Christ. He is the leader of the church! He is the Savior! He is God with us! Jesus said this about freedom and truth:

"For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." Galatians 5:13 ESV

"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come." John 16:13 ESV

What do you hear when you hear someone talking about "freedom"?

I hear Jesus call me to freely choose to share the love, life and light of Christ through reciprocal relationships of mutual respect and honor:

"Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor." Romans 12:9-10 ESV

"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves." Philippians 2:3 ESV

What has made this country great is the freedoms availed to all people, regardless of nation of origin, religion, gender or socioeconomic class. We are a country of immigrants and we need to never forget that! We have fought hard to preserve and promote our ideals. I have served churches now in cities where three branches of military were primary; one was Navy, the other Marine, and now Army. God, for some reason, has called me to locations where I have been blessed to worship with and learn from those who dedicate their lives to fighting for us to have the freedoms we take for granted. I do not count lightly those others who fight for these same freedoms, taxpayers, teachers, fast food workers, skilled laborers, lawyers, bankers and those in the retail business. All teach me of the blessings of freedom, when I am centered in God's freedom to listen, learn and link to God and neighbor.

This July, I hope you will hear about our many opportunities to serve God and neighbor, in the church, community and country. We will have Theological Thursdays to focus on a spiritually disciplined life. We will have another "Dinner and a Movie." We will have a "Mystery Dinner" night. Be grateful for God's blessings and take nothing for granted! We are blessed! Happy July.

Dr. Steve Fitzgerald

SESSION MEETING

The session will not meet this month.

MOTHER'S DAY/FATHER'S DAY OFFERING

We would like to thank everyone who participated in the Mother's Day/Father's Day Offering. This offering is for The Presbyterian Homes of NC Benevolence Fund, assisting senior residents whose funds have been depleted or who have emergencies of great need. Contributions total \$150.00.

ANNUAL FAN PROJECT

Through your generosity, Raeford Presbyterian Church donated 34 fans to Hoke County Senior Services. We have been a long-standing partner in this annual project. Thanks to the John Knox Class, the Sam Morris Class and all individuals who supported this community mission.

CHRISTMAS CHEER

The Raeford Police Department has launched a GoFundMe page to support their Christmas Cheer Program. They will purchase toys, clothes and other appropriate gifts for children this Christmas. If you would like to participate you can go to GoFundMe.com/p/15ps. Information will be posted on the bulletin board outside the church office.

THEOLOGICAL THURSDAYS

Beginning Thursday, June 1, at 11:00 a.m., Dr. Fitzgerald will begin a summer series called *Theological Thursdays*. He will be using Richard Foster's book, "Spiritual Classics: Selected Readings on the Twelve Spiritual Disciplines." This book has excerpts from Christian classical writings that deal with Inward Disciplines (Meditation, Prayer, Fasting and Study), Outward Disciplines (Simplicity, Solitude, Submission and Service), and Corporate Disciplines (Confession, Worship, Guidance and Celebration). It will not be possible to review and discuss all sections due to limitations of time, but you may purchase the book if you so desire, although it is not necessary. Dr. Fitzgerald will be letting you know in advance which topic will be reviewed each week and will provide a handout of primary material to be discussed. There will be a brief review of material related to topic and author, and then guided conversation. Great preparation is not needed prior to attending! Come and listen, learn and link to God and neighbor in ways that will enhance your experience of God!

PRAYERS AND SYMPATHY

The session and congregation wish to express our prayers and sympathy to Lynn Hendrix, upon the death of her mother, Joye McNeill.

MEN OF THE CHURCH

The Men of the Church will have breakfast on Sunday, July 16, at 8:00 am. All men are encouraged to attend. .

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

The Circles will not meet in July. The PW Council will meet on Sunday, July 30, following the morning worship service.

PRAYER MEETING

Elders, deacons, and members of the congregation are invited to meet each Tuesday morning at 7:30 am in the Russell Smith classroom for a time of prayer and reflection. And for those who cannot come on Tuesdays...we will meet on Sunday mornings at 9:15 am in the same classroom.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNER AND BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday Night Dinner and Bible Study have ended for the program year. We will take the months of July and August off.

FLOWER CALENDAR

The 2017 Flower Calendar is located on the bulletin board outside the office complex. Please sign up if you wish to place flowers in the sanctuary on a particular Sunday.

OFFICE HOURS

The church office is open from 8:30 am to 12:00 pm and from 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday. The office will close at noon the first and third Friday of each month. Please be reminded that the office is closed briefly on Monday mornings for the bank deposit to be made.

The church office will be closed on Tuesday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day.



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If you are hospitalized, seriously ill, or having surgery, please notify the church office at 875-2101 or lmaxwell@raefordpres.org. Your church wants to minister to you whenever you are ill. We can do that only if you or your family informs us of your needs. Thank you for your calls and e-mail.

WELCOME!

We would like to welcome Debbie L Fitzgerald as our interim Organist and Music Director beginning July 2, 2017. Debbie has graciously agreed to fill both positions until our music program can be reorganized after the departure of our previous musicians. Debbie comes to us with an extensive background in music beginning at the age of four. She was instructed in organ at a young age by Dr. Harry Cooper of Meredith College and holds an Associates Degree in music, a Bachelor Degree in Business, and a Masters Degree in Career Tech. Before coming to Raeford, Debbie was Organist and Music Director at Pollocksville Presbyterian Church, Pollocksville NC for 9 years. Debbie is also employed with the Hoke County School system. We ask that you pray our music ministry will continue to touch those who volunteer, all others who hear the sounds swelling from our organ and melodious choir members. Please encourage, thank, and welcome Debbie to our Music Department!

Must We Be Baptized In Order To Be Saved?

Christian baptism is ordinarily a part of Christian salvation. Baptism is a sign of salvation, of the incorporation of believers into Jesus Christ through faith. This union with Christ by faith is testified to by our baptism, which points to the spiritual reality of our being identified with Jesus Christ (Romans 6:1-4). The rite of baptism is the important outward expression of this inward reality.

There are two extremes to avoid in answering whether or not we must be baptized in order to be saved. One is thinking that by participating in a ceremony of baptism, we are automatically guaranteed to be saved. The emphasis is on the rite administered by the church rather than on the characteristic of faith in those who are baptized.

The other extreme is the view that baptism is a dispensable act that has no role to play in salvation. Here, one does not need to be committed to the church or its sacraments. Salvation is seen as a wholly private activity. The life of faith may be lived apart from the community of faith in the church.

A Presbyterian perspective stresses the need for baptism as a key part of salvation and the life of faith, but stresses the need for personal faith as the crucial ingredient for the sacrament of baptism to have effect. Participating in the sacrament alone is no guarantee of salvation. We are saved solely by our personal faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 1:16; I Peter 1:9). Yet true faith in Christ propels us into the church to seek baptism as an outward expression of this genuine faith. Baptism is a sign for the world to see, indicating we belong to Christ, are identified with him, and are committed to live a Christ's followers and disciples. It is God's sign to us of God's electing love, which has brought us to faith. In baptism we acknowledge our election and commit ourselves to repentance and living lives of faith and obedience. So baptism is a vital part of our salvation experience. It is the crucial expression of our response to God's loving grace. It sets us on a life of discipleship as we are "baptized into one body" in the "one Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:13) as we move toward the "unity of the faith" (Ephesians 4:13).

*from Presbyterian Questions, Presbyterian Answers
By Donald K. McKim*

??MYSTERY DINNER?? JULY 26

To support the Mexico Mission project the Spiritual Development and Congregational Care Committee invites you to attend one of the Mystery Dinners on July 26. Enjoy dinner out with your church family. There is limited seating, so don't delay.

Choose a menu and reserve your seat. The location of the dinners will be revealed on July 16. Your donation for the dinner will be used to buy tables and chairs for a community center, built by our mission team, in Miguel, Aleman. Information is posted in Ropp Hall.



PRAYER CONCERNS

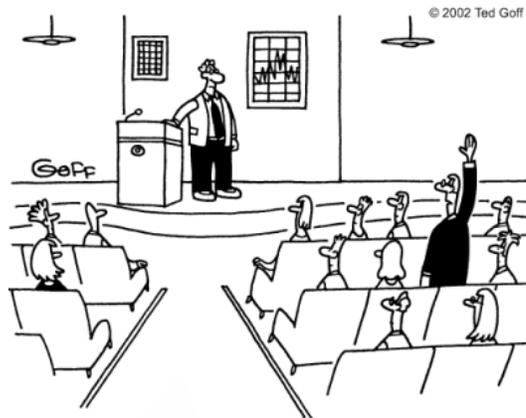
Lois Austin, Edith Averette, Bobby Britt, Letitia Conoly, Charlie Davis, David Dombkowski, Shirley Gibson, Julian Johnson, Susan McColl, Wayne Mills, Kay Norris, Bill Poole, Becky Smith, our missionaries: Dan and Elizabeth Turk; and members of the United States Armed Forces.

Door Duty: John K. McNeill, Dale Teal, Johnny Smith, Delia McNeill

Nursery Duty: Kevin and Lisa Davis, Jay and Jill Johnson, Linda McLeod and Linda Williams, Evan and Cortney Hendrix, Elizabeth and Katharine McNeill.

July Meetings

The will be no regular committee meetings during the month of July.



“Could we extend the annual meeting? I still have a lot of complaining to do!”

MUSIC NOTES

WANTED: Looking for: Basses, Tenors, Altos, and Sopranos - OR just “melodic” singers!!! If you love (or like) to sing and cannot commit to year-round singing, this is a great opportunity to participate in our choral ministries. Practice will take place every Sunday @ 10:30am downstairs in the choir room - so come on and join the fun and fellowship to make this summer special by adding your talent to the current talent of the RPC Choir. Hope to see YOU there!

I would like take this opportunity to thank you for allowing me to serve as your Choir Director and Organist for this summer! I am very excited about working together to continue God’s plan for this ministry in this special church!
Debbie Fitzgerald



When you can't be with us in person, listen to the live broadcast of the 11:00 am worship service each Sunday on WMFA 1400

Pledges:

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| Rec'd. in June | \$14,483.00 |
| Needed Monthly | \$21,868.00 |
| Required to date | \$131,207.00 |
| Received to date | \$104,346.00 |
| Shortage | \$26,861.00 |

