



# First Presbyterian Church

## The Cross and Crown



September 2017

Extending God's Grace throughout Northeast

### **CONTRIBUTOR'S PEN: REV. DR. JULIE ADKINS**

I can tell that the last few weeks have been busy ones – not by looking at my calendar, although that's also a pretty good clue – but by the fact that it's been weeks since I read a murder mystery! Lately, I've been limiting myself to collections of short stories, precisely because they are short. I can finish one in 10-15 minutes, and then go on to something else that I need to be doing. But a mystery – well, that's going to take at least a two-hour chunk of time, because once I start one I can't stand to put it down until I finish it.

I've often wondered what it is about mysteries that I find so appealing. It's more than just escapism; there's lots of other stuff I read as well that's just "brain candy," but nothing that I enjoy quite so much, or have read quite so many of, as a good murder mystery. (I've also read a fair number of bad ones, but that's a different matter altogether!)

One thing that's sort of comforting about mysteries: By the end of the book, everything is neatly wrapped up and solved. My life never works like that! It seems like I don't ever get to finish one project before starting in on another. Some things never seem to be finished at all; they just keep growing and changing. It's awfully nice to escape for a while to a world where details get neatly wrapped up and questions are answered. It's kind of like the 30-minute TV sitcom format: There is nothing that can happen to any of the characters that can't be solved or concluded within 30 minutes or 300 pages, give or take a few.

But my suspicion is that the main thing which keeps pulling me back to the mystery section of the (used-)bookstore is that, in the fictional world, right and wrong are so easy to identify. The lines are clearly drawn between good and evil. Someone was killed; we must find the perpetrator. The solution and the plot may be complex, but there is very little moral ambiguity.

It's never that simple in real life. None of us is purely evil or purely good. Few of our actions can be categorized so easily (although, I'll make an exception for taking part in neo-Nazi activities...there is no ambiguity about that). Our motives are mixed. We are surrounded by problems which admit of no easy solutions. Sometimes the innocent are harmed, and the guilty go free. Sometimes there is no right answer. Sometimes, even if you know the right answer, there's nothing you can do about it. Sometimes, your "right answer" and my "right answer" contradict one another.

I can only wish that my life were as simple as the world of the murder mystery! But God's ways are not my ways (which is a very good thing for the rest of humankind), and I have to trust that God is in control, even when I can't see it; and that God will make things clear to me when the time comes that I need to do something about them. And until then . . . see you in the mystery aisle!

## **ATTENTION: NEW PRAYER REQUESTS MONTHLY**

**In order to keep our prayer requests current, our prayer list will start fresh at the beginning of each month. To keep your prayer request in the bulletin, write it on the back of an offering envelope, the attendance sheet or a piece of paper (please make sure your name is on it) or contact the church office, [firstpres@peoplescom.net](mailto:firstpres@peoplescom.net) or 903-342-3011. We do not need the reason, unless it is death or an accomplishment, which go under a different heading. Also, please give relationship to you so others know who they are praying for. And PLEASE WRITE LEGIBLY.**

**As our prayers are answered, we give God thanks. For those with continued needs, we continue to pray.**

### **Pastor**

#### **Session members:**

Class of 2017  
Bob Kelm and Armel Crocker  
Class of 2018  
Rick Drennan and Becky Poe  
Class of 2019  
John Clark and Rhonda Thomas  
Treasurer  
Jerry Poe

#### **Contact us:**

Tina Hammer, Secretary  
**PO Box 493**  
301 S. Walnut St.  
Winnsboro, TX 75404  
Office: 903-342-3011  
Fax: 903-342-3011  
Email: [firstpres@peoplescom.net](mailto:firstpres@peoplescom.net)  
Office hours: M-Th, 9-noon

#### **FPC Website:**

[www.easttexasgrace.org](http://www.easttexasgrace.org)

**Cross and Crown articles:**  
[firstpres@peoplescom.net](mailto:firstpres@peoplescom.net)

### **Attendance:**

**August 6—30**  
**August 13—28**  
**August 20—38**  
**August 27—33**



**Noisy Offering**  
**September: Presbyterian**  
**Disaster Assistance**  
**October: WHS cheerleaders**  
**breast cancer awareness**



# From the Desk of Ruth Shelton

## A House on the Rock

"Whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, and it fell. And great was its fall." Matt. 7: 24 - 27

Not far from where I used to live in Oregon is an island that hides a secret---of a town that fell into the sea.

The island is all that remains of a peninsula that looked like prime real estate in the early part of the twentieth century. Developers laid out the streets for a town and named it Bayocean. Families built homes. A three-story hotel went up on the top of a bluff 140 feet above the ocean. Picnickers from Portland crowded the beaches.

But the town was built on sand, and winter storms started taking their toll. One house at a time, Bayocean tumbled into the waves. By 1952, the town---including the hotel, the bluff, and most of the peninsula---had washed away.

Stories like this leave us with a hollow feeling, don't they? All those hopes vanishing without a trace.

In today's text, Jesus teaches about the importance of building our life on what will last---through this life and for eternity.

But how do you build a "house" that will survive? Jesus put it in very direct terms. The person whose house rests on a rock is "whoever" hears these sayings of Mine and does them" (v. 24).

Jesus pointed out the importance of doing, not just knowing, the truth in a similar story in Luke's Gospel.. In this instance, Jesus used the image of building on a foundation:

"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord' and not do the things which I say....? But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of the house was great."

Obedience---doing the truth---may be the most important rule for building a storm-proof life. "The evidence of knowing God is obeying God." writes one commentator. How easy it is for us to listen to Jesus' words, fit them into our beliefs, nod our heads in agreement ...and take no action. Yet this response---so recognizable and common---is as dangerous as staking our future on a hill of sand. James wrote, "But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves," (James 1: 22). . .

Amazing, isn't it? God's blueprint for a life that endures is simple for anyone to understand: Listen to the truth and do it!

"No other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid,  
which is Jesus Christ." I Corinthians 3: 11.

Taken from: A Life God Rewards, by Bruce Wilkinson, "Day 12."



Presbyterian Women are ready to begin their new year of Bible Study. On Saturday, August 26<sup>th</sup>, the new year was kicked off with a luncheon in the Reid Building. Good fun, fellowship, and food!! The first PW meeting will be Monday, September 11<sup>th</sup> at 10am at the Church Annex. (PW is scheduled to meet the first Monday of each month, however due to Labor Day, we will meet on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September.) Everyone is welcome and if you can't attend each meeting, please come when you can. The teacher is Jane Els, who promises to bring energy and enlightenment as we go through the study together.

This year's study is called *Cloud of Witnesses, the Community of Christ in Hebrews*, by Melissa Bane Sevier. According to Ms. Sevier, "We will explore nine major themes, relate those themes to other parts of our faith tradition, and tie them together with the overarching motif of community..... The community in which you study and worship,

your family and friends, social and therapy groups . . . all are part of you. Our prayer is that the study of community in Hebrews will help us strengthen our own communities."

And don't forget the "birthday offering" which is collected at the family luncheons. The birthday offering is a donation for Presbyterian Women for use in their missions. It's a great way for you to donate money by either recognizing your own birthday that certain month, or giving *in honor* of someone else's birthday. On luncheon Sundays, the containers will be available on the tables in the Reid Building. Your generous donations are appreciated.

<b>Noisy Offering!</b>	<b>Sunday, September 24<sup>th</sup></b>
Our Youth have designated the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance program ( <a href="http://pda.pcusa.org">pda.pcusa.org</a> ) as their Noisy Offering recipient for September. Round up all your loose change and help support this group who will go to south Texas and help people rebuild their damaged homes. Checks can be mailed to the church all month (PO Box 493, Winnsboro, 75494)...please indicate on your check that it is for the Noisy Offering.	



**Ringers and Singers - Both chime and sanctuary choirs will start rehearsals on Sunday, September 10. If you want to chime, please let Tricia or Patricia know if you haven't already; music has to be marked for each person. If you want to sing, just show up! Both choirs have new music, and we're eager to make a joyful noise.**

**Ringers - 9:00 a.m.**

**Singers - 9:45 a.m.**

## General Fund Summary - Jan - July 2017

	Actual	Budget	Variance
<b>Income</b>	\$43,733.35	\$50,446.65	\$6,713.30
<b>Expense</b>	\$ 31,129.62	\$49,016.76	\$17,887.14
<b>Net</b>	\$12,603.73		

**Note: Bank balance 7/31/2017 was \$71,420.68.**

**Restricted funds totaled \$17,832.16, while unrestricted funds totaled \$53,588.52 (which includes \$20,873.03 uncleared checks).**




**PROOF OF PURCHASE**  
1 Community 1  
ONE Coffee ONE

**PROOF OF PURCHASE**  
3 Community 3  
THREE Coffee THREE

Our church will be collecting Box Tops for Education and Community Coffee Proofs of Purchase this year for the Winnsboro Elementary School.

NOTE: For an updated calendar, please go to [easttexasgrace.org](http://easttexasgrace.org)

First Presbyterian, **Contacts, Holidays in United States**

Sep 2017 (Central Time)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27 Nolsy Offering 12pm - Session	28 9am - Cross & Crown 2pm - Bible study	29	30 6pm - Supper &	31 Ed Russell	1	2 12pm - Al-Anon
3 Annv. Kettieson Communion 9:30am - Sunday	4 Labor Day OFFICE CLOSED	5	6 6pm - Supper &	7	8 Carolyn Hylton Staci Vander	9 Annv. Poe 12pm - Al-Anon
10 Guest preacher Rev. 9am - Chime 9:30am - Sunday 9:45am - Choir	11 10am - Presbyteri 2pm - Bible study	12	13 6pm - Supper &	14	15 Elizabeth Drennan Hazel Taylor	16 12pm - Al-Anon
17 Family Lunch 9am - Chime 9:30am - Sunday 9:45am - Choir	18 2pm - Bible study	19 9am - Session	20 6pm - Supper &	21 Lou Murley	22	23 Hurschel Thomas 12pm - Al-Anon
24 Nolsy Offering 9am - Chime 9:30am - Sunday 9:45am - Choir 12pm - Session	25 Corrie Vander 2pm - Bible study	26 Katelyn Drennan	27 6pm - Supper &	28 Molly Lennon	29	30 12pm - Al-Anon