



First Presbyterian Church

The Cross and Crown



September 2016

Extending God's Grace throughout Northeast Texas

CONTRIBUTORS PEN: JULIE ADKINS

An old farmer went to the city one weekend and attended the big city church. He came home, and his wife asked him how it was. "Well," said the farmer, "it was good. They did something different, however. They sang praise choruses instead of hymns."

"Praise choruses?" said his wife. "What are those?"

"Oh, they're OK. They are sort of like hymns, only different," said the farmer.

"Well, what's the difference?" asked his wife.

The farmer said, "Well, it's like this – If I were to say to you 'Martha, the cows are in the corn' – well, that would be a hymn. If on the other hand, I were to say to you:

*Martha, Martha, Martha,
Oh Martha, MARTHA, MARTHA,
the cows, the big cows, the brown cows, the black cows
the white cows, the black and white cows,
the COWS, COWS, COWS
are in the corn,
are in the corn, are in the corn, are in the corn,
the CORN, CORN, CORN.*

Then, if I were to repeat the whole thing two or three times, well, that would be a praise chorus."

The next weekend, his nephew, a young, new Christian from the city, came to visit and attended the local church of the small town. He went home, and his wife asked him how it was. "Well," said the young man, "it was good. They did something different, however. They sang hymns instead of regular songs."

"Hymns?" asked his wife. "What are those?"

"Oh, they're OK. They are sort of like regular songs, only different," said the young man.

"Well, what's the difference?"

The young man said, "Well, it's like this – If I were to say to you 'Martha, the cows are in the corn' – well, that would be a regular song. If on the other hand, I were to say to you:

*Oh Martha, dear Martha, hear thou my cry
Inclinest thine ear to the words of my mouth
Turn thou thy whole wondrous ear by and by
To the righteous, inimitable, glorious truth.*

*For the way of the animals who can explain
There in their heads is no shadow of sense
Hearkenest they in God's sun or His rain
Unless from the mild, tempting corn they are fenced.*

*Yea, those cows in glad bovine, rebellious delight
Have broke free their shackles, their warm pens eschewed
Then goaded by minions of darkness and night
They all my mild Chilliwack sweet corn have chewed.*

*'So look to the bright shining day by and by
Where all foul corruptions of earth are reborn
Where no vicious animals make my soul cry
And I no longer see those foul cows in the corn.'*

Then if I were to do only verses one, three and four and do a key change on the last verse, well that would be a hymn."

Yes, of course, it's a JOKE. Although, if the truth be told, it's a pretty accurate description of the difference between BAD praise music and BAD hymns. (Don't you love the cows "goaded by minions of darkness and night," though?!)

Most of us enjoy a number of different kinds of music. I used to freak out my seminary dorm-mates because they'd hear Bach coming from my stereo one night, and Waylon Jennings the next. That was a combination they couldn't quite fathom. Nevertheless, few among us listen to only classical, only rock, only folk, only hip-hop, only country-western, etc. We like variety.

Except when it comes to church music. ☺ Those of us who have spent most of our lives in the church often act as if we think that the hymn format of congregational singing was handed down from on high along with the ten commandments. Actually, however, it originated with the Reformation. Luther, Calvin, and others wanted a format for singing that was easy for the congregation ("easy," that is, compared to the Gregorian chant that was the approved music of the Catholic church of the time, and required musical training and rehearsal to be sung properly). So – guess what – the Reformers borrowed the styles of popular music of the time and set sacred texts to it. A tune with a meter is easier to remember than one that's free-form, and a rhyme pattern makes for easier memorization. Recall, of course, that in the 15th century no congregation had printed hymnals! So when Martin Luther penned the text for "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," he borrowed the tune from a well-known drinking song of his day.

All of which is to say, there is no style of music that's more "sacred" than any other. It's the text that matters, and the artistry of the music. (Badly written music of any genre is hardly an acceptable offering to God!) If you want to see "praise music" well done, albeit of borrowed tunes, check out "Sister Act" and the choir of nuns rocking out to "I Will Follow Him" and "My Guy" (edited, of course, to "My God").

There's good and bad music out there in every style and genre. There's good and bad sacred music in every style and genre. While I suspect we're not yet ready for Christian rap (yes, there is such a thing), it probably would be a good idea for us to learn a little more of what's out there beyond the familiar pages of our blue hymnals. Stay tuned ...

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, either write it on the back of your offering envelope (please make sure your name is on the envelope) or contact the church office, 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 2016
Jane Els, Larry Pendergrass
Class of 2017
Bob Kelm and Chris Holloman
Class of 2018
Rick Drennan, Ralph Gore and Leeann Moos
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
Office hours: M-Th, 9-noon

FPC Website:

www.easttexasgrace.org

Cross and Crown articles:
firstpres@peoplescom.net

Attendance:

July 31—39
August 7—28
August 14—31
August 21—39



Noisy Offering

September: Harley's Helping Hands

October: Morgan's Mercy Mansion

November: American Legion



From the Desk of Ruth Shelton

WALKING WARM-UP: GENESIS 6

Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. (Genesis 6: 9)

Noah had a special way of living because he “walked with God” (Genesis 6: 9). To walk with someone signifies intimacy and companionship. Noah’s walk with God was extraordinary among the people of his time.

Noah had his ordinary days--like Monday mornings when he didn’t want to go to work. The ark was a drag, taking up space in his driveway, trashing up the neighborhood, amusing and offending his friends. Furthermore, tremendous practical and logistical problems had to be solved. No one ever tackled an ark before. But Noah stayed on the project, building his boat on dry land, far away from rivers or lakes, while the sun continued to shine, waiting for one hundred and twenty years for a rainy day. For this was what God wanted him to do.

Noah not only heard God tell him to build an ark, but he also “did everything just the way God said” (Genesis 6: 22, paraphrase). But I don’t think God handed him a list of things to do each morning. That’s just not God’s way, giving us His specs and expectations and demanding that we grind them out. That viewpoint of God badly misses the metaphor of “walking.” When in doubt, I think Noah just took a walk with God and talked things over with Him.

Every day Noah took his cares and complaints to God--his big concern over impending catastrophe and his fear for his family and friends. But he also talked with God about the little things--the length of the planks, the height of the partitions, and the pitch with which he made his super ship watertight. And later on when he set sail, he and his Friend must have taken a few turns around the deck and talked about the duty roster, the leaks in the hold, and the rations of food and fodder with which he fed his motley boatload of hungry mouths--all the things that might have stressed him out and made him anxious and too intense. No topic was too banal to be brought to God. They walked and talked together about everything. That’s what set Noah apart from others.

St. John of the Cross says that walking with God produces three distinguishing characteristics in people--tranquility, gentleness, and strength. When He’s by our side all our actions can be peaceful, gentle and strong. Which suggests an immense depth of relationship that comes from time spent with our Lord, who “works always in tranquility.” Anxiety, intensity, intolerance, instability, pessimism, and every kind of hurry and worry--even on the highest levels, are signs of one who walks alone, the self-made and self-acting soul. God’s own are seldom of that order. They share the quiet and noble qualities of the One with whom they walk.

The Strength of a Man, by David Roper; Discovery House Publishers;

(Used with permission.)



Music Notes

The sanctuary choir will start up rehearsals again on September 11. We will practice at 9:45 on Sunday mornings in the sanctuary and prepare for the fall season and for Advent and Christmas.

The chime choir will continue to practice. At the time of this writing, we have not settled on a practice time. But by the time you read this, a decision will have been made. Listen for announcements in church.

Neither the sanctuary choir nor the chime choir is a closed organization! We welcome anyone who would like to ring or sing. We really need more ringers and singers! Please contact Patricia Fields (chimes) or Tricia Clark (sanctuary) for more information.



Pastor Search Update

There is not much of an update to report in our pastor search. So just what is the committee doing?

- Studying the PIFs (Personal Information Form filled out by potential pastors) which have been matched to us by Presbytery based on very general information. These forms are anywhere from 5 - 12 pages long.
- Sorting the PIFs into “yes,” “maybe,” and “no” piles. When studying the PIFs, we talk about how these people might be a good fit for us, and us for them. There are 5 opinions going into this process. Sometimes we are surprised at each other’s responses, and sometimes we immediately have the same opinions.
- Contacting potential pastors. At this point, we are beginning to contact the “yes” pile to see if they might be interested in a further conversation with us. They would do this by looking at our MIF (Ministry Information Form) and community links that we listed. This has JUST begun, so we have no feedback on this yet.
- Praying! We start and end each meeting in prayer. We go home and pray. We wake up and pray. We ask *you* to pray. Continue to pray for endurance and wisdom for the PNC, for the pastor who is to come to us, and for the congregation’s hearts to welcome this pastor whom God has chosen for us.

Thank You: I want to thank everyone for remembering me with cards & calls, and prayers. And I want to thank the Wednesday Night Bible Study for coming my way with so much wonderful food, as well as the blessings of your prayer-time with me! This was so helpful and a real lift to my spirit.

Love, and God's blessings, Ruth



PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN

Who is Jesus? We will be looking for Jesus in the gospel of Mark. What lens does Mark use?? What lenses do you see, learn, experience Jesus through?

Stained glass windows gave me views of Jesus and also the hymns we sang every Sunday. Join us as we explore these ideas, Monday, Sept. 12th at 10 am.



General Fund Summary Jan -July 2016			
	Actual	Budget	Variance
Income	\$44,816.35	\$50,003.33	\$5,186.98
Expense	\$ 38,520.36	\$50,003.33	\$11,482.97
Net	\$6,295.99		

Note: Bank balance 7/31/2016 was \$24,861.25 Restricted funds totaled \$8,358.45 while unrestricted funds totaled \$16,502.80.

We welcome Molly Lennon as a new member

(Her husband, Allen has not yet joined)

147 CR 1555

Alba, TX 75410

903-638-9592

mlennon147@gmail.com

Please add her to your directory

New address:
 Betty & Gene Ash
 4209 Ridgewood Rd.
 Melissa, TX 75454
 Cell number is still good.



FPC Youth members Charlie and Christian England and Lynn Van present their \$200 July Noisy Offering check to Officer Kincaid and his K-9 partner Aja.

First Presbyterian Church

Birthdays/Anniversaries

September 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Note: Chime practice will continue with a new time on Sunday's (to be announced) once Choir practice begins Sept. 11,</p>				1	2	3 Noon Al-Anon Annv. Kettleson Annv. Russell
4 9:30 Bible study begins 9:45 Hand Chime practice COMMUNION	5 Labor Day Office closed	6	7 6 pm Supper & Bible basics	8 Carolyn Hylton Staci Vander Schaaf	9 Annv. Poe	10 Noon Al-Anon
11 9:45 AM Choir practice begins	12 2-4 pm Bible Study	13	14 1:30 PM Finance Comm. Mtg.	15	16	17 Noon Al-Anon
Secretary will be on vacation (9/9-9/18)						
			6 pm Supper & Bible basics	Elizabeth Drennan Hazel Taylor		Jimmy Spurgeon
18 9:45 AM Choir practice Family Lunch SESSION	19 2-4 pm Bible Study	20	21 6 pm Supper & Bible basics Lou Murley	22	23 Hurschel Thomas	24 Noon Al-Anon
25 9:45 AM Choir practice Noisy Offering: Harley's Helping Hands Corrie Vander Schaaf	26 <i>Cross & Crown articles due by 9 AM</i> 2-4 pm Bible Study Katelyn Drennan	27	28 6 pm Supper & Bible basics	29	30	