FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
410 Second Ave, Box 441
Sterling, IL 61081
Rev. Dr. Christina Berry

July

First Presbyterian Church
410 Second Ave.
P.O. Box 441
Sterling, IL 61081
(815) 625-0452

A heart for God in the heart of Sterling.
FirstPresbyterianSterling@live.com
www.firstpresbyteriansterling.org
Look for us on Facebook!

First Presbyterian Church
STERLING ILLINOIS

Inside This Issue:	
Christina's Letter	2
Grads	3
Nan's Letter	4
VBS	5
Volunteer	6
Devotions	7
Birthdays & Anniversaries	9
Calendar	10

I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. ~ Isaiah 43:19

Dear Friends,

I'm about to go on vacation and as I pack, I'm downloading a book I want to read again. It's called **How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going.** The very first chapter is about something called "liminality." Author Susan Beaumont writes, "Liminality refers to a quality of ambiguity or disorientation that occurs during transition, when a person or group of people is in between something that has ended and something else that is not yet ready to begin. Transition experiences follow a predictable pattern that involves separation, liminality, and reorientation."

Gosh, that is a mouthful of huge words, but what I understand it to mean is that there are seasons in which we are waiting to perceive the new thing that God is doing. In those seasons, we are in the wilderness, and God is making a way for us, but we haven't seen it yet. As Beaumont says, something has ended and something else is going to begin, but we do not yet understand what it will look like.

In this time that people are calling "post-pandemic," we are truly in a liminal season. Things are different: the way we work, the way we worship, the way we gather – all of these are in transition. Some old things are passing away, and new ways are coming into being. God is doing a new thing among us! And I admit that I do not yet fully perceive all of it. Here is what I do know:

1. Change can sometimes make us anxious. Jesus said "So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today." (Matthew 6:24)
2. Sometimes when we are in a season of transition and feeling anxious, we want to go back to the way things were. That's normal. Going backwards won't fix anything. Plus, it is impossible unless you have a Wayback Machine. In liminal seasons, we hold fast to God and trust that God will make a way. (Isaiah 43:19)

(Continued on page 3)

3. Whatever is in store for us in this new season will be wonderful! It may take some getting used to, but it *will* be wonderful. The promise of a new creation is not just in us as individuals, but for our faith community as well! "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Knowing we are in a liminal season can help us see our lives in a new way. When we are in transition, we have the opportunity to open our hearts and minds to new ways of being, new people, and new opportunities. What if we also name our feelings in new ways? Maybe that anxious fluttery feeling we are experiencing is not all fear, but also excitement to see what God is going to do next!

Grace and Peace
Pastor Christina

We have 2 college grads and 1 high school!

- Maggie McPherson is off to become an interior designer.
- Kinsey Zacharski will be teaching High School.
- Will Boze is headed to North Central.

Congrats and Good Luck!

Top Ten Reasons I LOVE Vacation Bible School:

1. I Love that VBS was one of the first "gifts" FPC gave to me. Really! Shortly after we started visiting FPC, my daughters were invited to attend VBS. The girls had a blast! They made new friends, and as a result of that experience, encouraged us to join the church.

2. I Love it when our members try something new. When I first started directing VBS, I asked a very young Kayla Hemminger to help. She was unsure. She'd never done it before and was afraid she'd not do as well as the seasoned VBS "pros". She did a great job, and in a few short years, *SHE was the director!*

3. I Love watching our children grow from excited participants to eager volunteers.

4. I Love making Bible stories come to life.

5. I Love singing "Who's the King of the Jungle" and all the other fun VBS songs!

6. I Love the enthusiasm and energy from everybody involved with VBS.

7. I Love worshiping and sharing the good news with children.

8. I Love the way we all pitch in sharing our time, talents, and treasures.

9. I Love that we have partnered with other churches, sharing our resources and making new friends along the way!

10. I Love working alongside my friends, as we reach out to share God's great love, creating a space for children to feel accepted, cared for, and welcomed into God's great story.

Friends, this is a "replay" of an article I wrote eight years ago. I encouraged you to join us for **Everywhere Fun Fair,** our 2013 CommUNITY VBS. Turns out, we loved this VBS so much that we are using it again this year**!** During our ONE DAY 2021 CommUNITY VBS, our children will discover how people from all over the world can be friends and neighbors to one another. And, as always, we will also meet welcoming neighbors from the Bible! Our **CommUnity** VBS goal is all about becoming friends with neighbors near and far. Friends, be sure to check out the flyer in this newsletter, the time to register is NOW! We've made it super simple by including our very own QR code. If you would like to volunteer to help, (we would love to have you!) sign up using the QR code or register online.

Peace,
Nan

CommUNITY Vacation Bible School is BACK!

Vacation Bible School will be a bit different this year as we ease into our post-pandemic world. *Everywhere Fun Fair* is where our children will discover how people from all over the world can be friends and neighbors to one another. The children will meet welcoming neighbors from the Bible and also meet neighbors from our community.

Children pre-school - fifth grade are invited to First Christian Church on Saturday July 10th. Registration starts @ 9:00 a.m. and our one day VBS concludes @ 11:30 a.m.

This one day event will be packed with all the fun things our kids know and love about VBS; singing, dancing, engaging Bible stories, creative crafts, wild and crazy games and learning about our amazing God!

Friends, if you'd like to be a part of this wonderful ONE day VBS, register here:
https://tinyurl.com/CommunityVBS2021

Or scan this QR code!

PADS Volunteers Needed

PADS is the local agency that provides temporary housing for the homeless of the Sauk Valley. They are open year-round. The guests are provided with a dinner and breakfast meal. There are bathroom facilities where they can clean up. Laundry facilities to clean clothes and a sleeping area. The shelters hours are from 7 pm to 7 am.

First Presbyterian Church staffs the shelter on the 1st Saturday of the month. The volunteers hours are 6pm to 11pm.There also is a volunteer that prepares the dinner meal and delivers it before 7 pm. Volunteers serve the meal and do the dishes.

There is a sign-up sheet for volunteers in the Church narthex.

First Presbyterian PADS Coordinator
Bryan Etter

Men's Prayer Breakfast will be July 15 at Benny's Red Apple in Sterling, but in the interests of the pastor's well-being, we will convene at 8:00 AM.

Wednesday Morning Bible Study
All people are welcome to either gathering, and we especially encourage everyone to bring spouses, friends and neighbors to our gatherings in the park.
July 7 - on Zoom
July 21 - Sinnissippi
August 4 - on Zoom

I am Ben Boze, Life Scout at Troop 305. I am asking you all if you would please save your bottle caps for my Eagle Project. My project is collecting bottle caps and turning them into benches. I am replacing the old benches at Redfield Park. I need 400 pounds of bottle caps for 2 benches, but luckily I already have 200 pounds.

Little Free Pantry
The Little Free Pantry on our church corner seems to be getting a lot of traffic. All that was left on Friday was pasta and pancake mix. As you do your shopping, consider picking up a few non-perishable items to put into the pantry for those who might need it. Canned tuna and chicken, peanut butter, canned fruit, shelf-stable milk, and cereal are a few items that might be welcome.

Weekly Devotions

We continue our "Spirited Characters" in which we meet and get to know some of the Spirited characters from the Book of Acts, and consider how their lives reflect the fruits of the Spirit. Galatians 3: 22-23 says "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things."

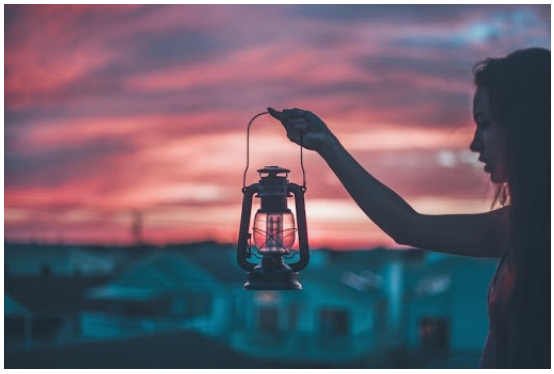
July 4—Spirited Characters: Lydia

Theme	Kindness: Lydia's hospitality was a ministry of kindness.
Text	Acts 16:11-16; Acts 16: 40 Lydia welcomed the apostles to her home, and then welcomed them back after they had been imprisoned.
Context	As the Apostle Paul traveled on his missionary journeys, he sought out the places and people who might be receptive to the message.
Challenge	What does this story tell you about hospitality?
Prayer	God, help us to open our hearts to your gospel and in hospitality to others. Amen.

July 11—Spirited Characters: Tabitha

Theme	Generosity: Tabitha was a model of generosity, giving not just clothing but her own time and caring.
Text	Acts 9:36-42 Peter is called to the household where Tabitha has died. Her friends are heartbroken, and the poor for whom she cared are most certainly grieving too. But God does something amazing – and generous!
Context	There were no social services or systems to help those who were in need, so the newly established church was there to help.
Challenge	How does generosity work in your own life?
Prayer	God, teach us deep generosity, as you are so generous to us. Amen.

July 18—Spirited Characters: Stephen

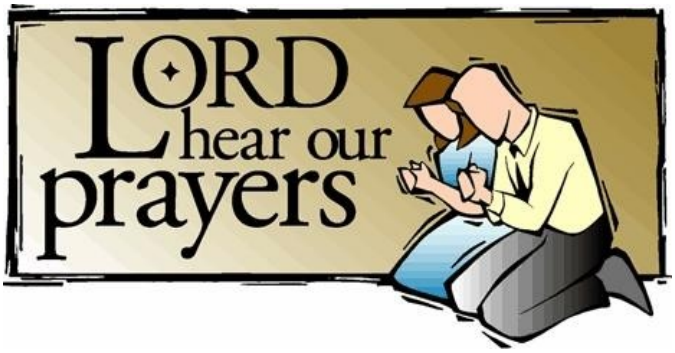


Theme	Faithfulness: Stephen was faithful, even to the point of death
Text	Acts 6: 8-15; Acts 7: 1, 51-60 Stephen is martyred for his faith, and Saul (who would later become Paul) approves of their killing him.
Context	The new community formed by the Holy Spirit in Jesus Christ is a threat to the powers that be. Saul and others were intent on eradicating these followers of Jesus.
Challenge	For what would you be willing to give your life?
Prayer	God, you are faithful to us through every generation. Help us to be strong in our faith. Amen.

July 25—Spirited Characters: Priscilla

Theme	Gentleness: Priscilla was a gentle witness to God's love in Christ.
Text	Acts 18:18-21, 24-27; Romans 16:3 Priscilla and her husband Aquila worked alongside Paul to share the gospel. They gently corrected one who was bold but not fully informed: "when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the Way of God to him more accurately."
Context	As the community was forming, there were new people joining in who were in need of gentle direction and instruction.
Challenge	How are you at gently correcting someone else? How are you at being gently corrected?
Prayer	Gentle God, help us have gentle spirits and gentle words, especially for those who are still learning. Amen.

Please pray for:
At Parkway Center - Bill Griswold
At Resthave - Ann Musgrove
In the Service - Brad Gericke, Brandon Shultz, Payton Lowe
Prayers for - Phil Sinroll, Jessie Witt, Lucy Ettinger, Pat Conklen, Barb Stern, Mickey Gage, Debbie Musgrove, Ross & Marlene Jennings, Mary-Terrie Snavely, Ron & Jackie Williams, Elijah Flint



We have a guest preacher July 4th, so let's all wear our nametags!

We're back, and so are flowers! The sign up is out in the narthex.

July
07/01 Hilary (Osborn) Wahlheim
07/05 Sol Sapha
07/06 Joe Anderson
07/09 *Steve & Lindsay (Davidson) Ebersole(A*
07/10 Lois Grimm
07/11 Christina (Yemm) Duffy
Segue Lawrence Doering
Glenn & Gail Dancey (A)
07/12 *Kevin & Samantha O'Keefe (A)*
07/13 Sheryl Pace
07/15 Barbara Van Osdol
07/16 Mary Flint
David & Meli Cangahuala (A)
07/20 Kyle Knutsen
07/21 Jacob Conklen
07/22 Sarah Adell
Alan & Carla Connelly (A)
07/23 Brooke (Cox) Dir
Brad & Lisa Zacharski (A)
07/24 Betsy Adell
Melissa Etter
Alison Burkhalter
07/26 Rachel Pashon
Betty Pratt
Ann Camp
Dave & Judy Lowe (A)
07/28 Michael Dowell
Mary Lynn Tedrick
Jeff & Tarah Brown (A)
07/29 Amy Boze
Allen & Brooke Dir (A)
07/30 Dane Neidermann
Stephanie (Conklen) & Jacob Porter(A)

July 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 **6:00p**-Youth Outlook **7:00p**-NA	2	3
4 **9:30a-**Worship **10:30a**-Bible Study **6:00p**-NA **6:30p**-Scouts 	5 **Office Closed**	6 **6:00p**-AA	7 **10:00a**-Bible Study on Zoom	8 **6:00p**-Youth Outlook **7:00p**-NA	9	10
11 **9:30a-**Worship **After**-Congregational Meeting **10:30a**-Bible Study **6:00p**-NA **6:30p**-Scouts	12	13 **6:00p**-AA	14	15 **8:00a**-Men's Prayer Breakfast **6:00p**-Youth Outlook **7:00p**-NA	16	17
18 **9:30a-**Worship **10:30a**-Bible Study **6:00p**-NA **6:30p**-Scouts	19	20 **6:00p**-AA	21 **10:00a**-Bible Study @ Sinnissippi	22 **6:00p**-Youth Outlook **7:00p**-NA	23	24
25 **9:30a-**Worship **10:30a**-Bible Study **6:00p**-NA **6:30p**-Scouts	26 **Office Closed**	27 **6:00p**-AA	28	29	30	31 10

Office Closed