

PULASKI HEIGHTS HERALD

MAY/JUNE 2019 EDITION

*“So we can say with confidence,
“The Lord is my helper;
I will not be afraid.
What can anyone do to me?”
Hebrews 13:6*

Church Office Closings of 2018

The church office will be closed on Memorial Day (Monday, May 27).

Attention Session Members

The stated Session meetings are scheduled for the 3rd Sunday of each month, immediately following worship. The next stated Session meeting will be May 19, immediately following worship in room 303. The June stated Session meeting has been cancelled.

Lunch Bunch

The Lunch Bunch gathers at 11:15 a.m., the first Thursday of each month, to eat together in a local restaurant of the host or hostess’s choice. All are welcome to come be part of this fellowship time. Our next Lunch Bunch will be on May 2 and Bill Shumaker is host. He has chosen Cajun’s Wharf at 2400 Cantrell Rd. Contact Bill at 412-9460 with your reservation. Alex Gray will be host in June and he has chosen Homer’s West. Watch the announcements in the Sunday bulletin for information regarding the Lunch Bunch gathering.



A Word From Ruskin

I have addressed the following question before in our newsletter, but it’s a good question that is worth continuing consideration. So I’m bringing it up again and inviting you to give it thought and maybe even let it provoke a good conversation. The question is this: Why do secular holidays receive so little mention from me in Sunday morning worship?

The question is well-taken. I have, for example, been known to preach on the second Sunday in May with nary a mention of Mother’s Day; on the third Sunday in June without a word regarding Father’s Day; on the last Sunday of May without talking about Memorial Day; on the first Sunday in July without referring to Independence Day; and so on, and so on. It’s not that I have some rule against mentioning secular holidays in worship, or against preaching sermons having to do with them; but it is true that I don’t do much to tout secular holidays in Sunday worship. So let me here explain my thinking on this matter and invite your responses.

Liturgically (which means: with respect to matters of worship), I tend to follow the broad strokes of the Christian Year. The Christian Year is

Sunday mornings begin with Sunday School at 9:30 a.m., followed by worship at 10:45 a.m.

a calendar of annual commemorations that, when celebrated throughout the churches, unite Christians around certain significant moments in the history of God=s redeeming work in the world through Jesus Christ. The Christian Calendar invites us to order our worship services around an annual cycle of occasions whose purpose is to root us more soundly, over time, in the life of redemption.

The seasons on that calendar include Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and something called Ordinary Time (or: the Sunday=s after Epiphany and the Sunday=s after Pentecost). Along the way there are particular commemorations such as Christmas Day, Epiphany, Baptism of the Lord Sunday, Transfiguration of the Lord Sunday, Ash Wednesday, Easter Sunday, Pentecost Sunday, Trinity Sunday, Reign of Christ Sunday, and others.

The Christian Calendar as an aid to ordering worship over the course of each year, was broadly in place by the 4th century. Over the ensuing centuries, more and more commemorations were added to it, including a large number of feast days for saints and martyrs of the church. By the time of the 16th century Protestant Reformation, the church=s worship calendar was very, very full. And, one of the things the Reformers did in distinguishing Protestantism from Roman Catholicism, was to remove everything from the worship calendar that, in the opinion of the Reformers, wasn=t warranted by Scripture.

For some Reformers, that meant paring down the number of commemorations considerably. For others, it even meant getting rid of almost all of them. When Protestantism reached America in its Puritan form, the focus was on the Lord=s Day (Sunday) each week, without a whole lot being regularly commemorated beyond that. Up until the 20th Century, few American Protestants went beyond the Lord=s Day, Christmas, and Easter as regular commemorations. Anything more, the argument went, would be **A**too Roman Catholic. @

A curious thing happened however, in Protestant churches in America. Paring the Christian Year down to Sundays, Christmas, and Easter, seems to have created a void that Protestants gradually began trying to fill. However, they did not desire to restore Christian commemorations that earlier had been removed, since, again, that would seem **A**too Roman Catholic. @ So, instead, they introduced *new* observances. And the new observances that were introduced were mostly borrowed from *civic holidays*, from *member recruitment programs*, and from *charity drives*. The Christian Worship Calendar began to include such commemorations as: Mother=s Day, Father=s Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, New Year=s Eve, Rally Day (Sunday School Recruitment Sunday), Mission Sunday, and so on and so on.

Only during the latter half of the 20th Century did large numbers of Protestants begin calling into question what they were doing. The basic question was: What does it say about our Christian priorities, that we emptied the Christian Year of one traditional *Christian* commemoration after another, and then replaced them all with a number of holidays from the *secular* world that have little or nothing to do with the history of Jesus Christ.

The result of this questioning has been a (very gradual!) Protestant shift away from focusing worship on secular holidays, and back toward focusing worship on traditionally significant moments in the history of God=s work of redemption through Jesus Christ.

I don=t agree with everything this new shift has brought about. I do agree, however, with the slow move *toward* ordering worship around the *history of Jesus Christ*, and *away* from ordering it around *secular holidays*. **B** even though I do recognize how wonderful, important, and moving many of these secular occasions can be for Americans, as civic holidays. (On the other hand, I=m also always intensely aware of the fact that the *church* is not American but *Christian* and, so, beyond nationality and nationalism.)

Of course, what we do in worship, including what is preached in worship, *is* intended to help us live in the so-called secular world in ways that bear genuine witness to the gospel of Jesus. Therefore it makes good sense, when I plan a worship service or prepare a sermon, to do so with an eye to the secular calendar. It=s important for us to reflect on our secular ordering of time, in light of what the gospel of Jesus tells us about the ordering of time in this world. Preaching and worship, it seems to me, are to help us *interpret* life in the secular world in terms of the world of the *gospel of Jesus*. And that should mean, among other things, taking our cue for ordering Sunday morning *worship* first and foremost, not from the ways the world orders and celebrates time, but from God=s way of making time for us through the history of Jesus Christ.

I hope this is a helpful first response to the question. I will look forward to hearing what others think!

The Liturgical Calendar: An Outline of the Christian Year

Advent Season

Four Sundays of Advent (starts 4 Sundays before December 25)

Christmas Season and Epiphany

Christmas Day (December 25)

Two Sundays after Christmas (one, if Christmas is a Sunday)

Epiphany (January 6)

Ordinary Time After Epiphany

Baptism of the Lord Sunday (Sunday after Epiphany)

Two to seven more Sundays

Transfiguration of the Lord Sunday (last Sunday before Lent)

Lenten Season

Ash Wednesday (Wed. before the 6th Sunday before Easter)

Five Sundays in Lent

Holy Week

Passion/Palm Sunday (the 6th Sunday in Lent)

Maundy Thursday

Good Friday

Easter Season

Easter Sunday (1st Sun. after 1st full moon after spring equinox)

Five more Sundays of Easter

Ascension Day (40th day after Easter Sunday)

Seventh Sunday of Easter

Pentecost (50th day after Easter Sunday)

Ordinary Time After Pentecost

Trinity Sunday (First Sunday after Pentecost)

Sundays after Pentecost

All Saints' Day (November 1 or 1st Sunday in November)

Christ the King/Reign of Christ Sunday
(Final Sunday of the Christian Year)

Pentecost Offering

Pentecost Sunday is June 9, which also is the day designated for receiving the Pentecost Offering. Its focus is to assist children and youth whose present living conditions do more to hinder than to promote good growth and development, and to train young adults for special work with youth. Of the donations we receive, 60% will go to General Assembly for use at the national level, and 40% will be retained and put to local use by our Session. The Session has chosen for our 40% to be donated to Vera Lloyd Presbyterian Family Services. Donations also can be made any Sunday before June 9, or by mail.

Sunday School

Sunday School meets Sunday mornings from 9:30 to 10:15. Youth meet in the classroom at the end of the downstairs hallway. The adult class meets in the upstairs classroom between the parlor and the choir room.

The youth class teachers are Marian Dyer and LaWanda Harris. The adult class ordinarily is led by Ruskin Falls. On the first Sunday of each month and sometimes on other Sundays, one of the adult class's other participants serves as teacher, leading the class in a discussion of some topic or subject matter of particular interest to him or her. Serving as teachers the next two months in addition to Ruskin are: May 5: Ray Alexander; June 2: Charles Gray; June 16: Marian Dyer; June 23, Pam Peterson; and June 30: Ray Alexander.

Most recently, the classes taught by Ruskin have been discussing matters pertaining to religious pluralism and interreligious dialog. In mid-May, his classes will begin exploring a variety of new theological topics each Sunday.

Our Sunday School presentations and discussions are inquiring, instructive, edifying, and thought-provoking. New and different voices are always a welcome part of the conversation. If you're not already participating, consider doing so soon!

Pulpit Supplies and Pastoral Care

Our minister, Ruskin Falls, will be away from the pulpit from June 16 through July 14. Our Worship Committee has invited guest preachers to join us for worship and fill the pulpit the while he is away. Preaching on June 16, will be the Rev. David King; June 23, will be Presbyterian minister and good friend of our congregation, the Rev. Gordon Garlington; preaching on June 30, will be PHPC member and University of Dubuque Theological Seminary student, LaWanda Harris; preaching July 7, will be General Presbyter Rev. Stewart Smith; and July 14, will be philosophy professor at Hendrix College and ruling elder at First Presbyterian Church, Conway, Peg Falls-Corbitt, who is also Ruskin's sister. As Ruskin regularly notes, it is good and even important over the course of each year, to have more than just one voice – and, so, on occasion, to have voices other than his -- coming from the pulpit to help us hear and heed the voice of God in our lives. We look forward to having David, Gordon, LaWanda, Stewart, and Peg lend their respective voices to our work of worship this coming June and July!

Should a pastoral emergency arise during Ruskin's absence, he has made arrangements for pastoral care to be provided. The church secretary will be able to put you in touch with a pastoral care-giver.

Friday Bible Study

The summer session of Friday Bible Study will meet for 4 weeks starting June 7 and go through June 28. Dr. David Dyer is teaching. This session is on 20 Psalms to Live By. Come at 9:30 a.m. for refreshments and fellowship, with lesson from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. All are welcome to join the Friday Bible Study, and all are welcome to bring a friend.

Reaching Our Church Staff

Regular church office hours are Mondays through Fridays, 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The office phone is 663-8361. If you call during regular office hours and we are either temporarily away from the office or already on the telephone, you will get the voice mail. *Please leave a message* and we will return your call. Now that you know how and when and where to reach our church staff, *do stay in touch!*

The PHPC Choirs

Our choir practices each Wednesday evening at 7:15 p.m., and also on Sunday mornings at 10:15 a.m. New voices and instruments are always welcome to come join us in making a joyful noise to the Lord. If you would like to participate in the work of our choir, please consider yourself invited to do just that!

May Birthdays

Mitzi Cole-5	Todd Gates-6
Becky Lewis-7	Lesley Jones-9
Ray Ella Fleming-10	Annie McMillan-11
Iza Calixto-12	Bobbye Nixon 18
Eli Falls-18	Dave O'Neel-18
David Harper-25	

June Birthdays

Bill May-4	Bo Lewis-6
Sally Todd-13	Pam Peterson-23

Working at Stewpot

The third Tuesday of every month is Pulaski Heights Presbyterian day at Stewpot. This is the day that PHPC members are responsible for feeding the hungry at the Stewpot, which is located on the second floor of First Presbyterian, Little Rock. If you would like to volunteer to help, please contact Jane Anne in the church office.

Food Manger

In the narthex you will find the "Food Manger," through which we fill our church's food pantry and strive to help those in our community whose home pantries are too meager for their family's needs. You are invited, Sundays (or any other day!) to contribute non-perishable goods to this cause. Monetary gifts are also appreciated. Please label

your check “food pantry”. Also personal items such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, bar soap, shampoo, deodorant, toilet paper, etc. are needed and appreciated. A suggestion list can be found in the manger or in the church office.

Potluck/Fellowship Meal

Our next two potluck/fellowship meals are set for Sunday, May 26, and June 30, immediately following worship. Members are asked to bring a dish to share. All are invited and welcomed to join in and enjoy good company and a wonderful meal in the fellowship hall. At the June 24 meal, we will kick off our Back to School supply drive for Vera Lloyd Presbyterian Family Services. All supplies will be either delivered or picked-up the second week in August.

141st Stated Presbytery Meeting

The 141st meeting of the Presbytery of Arkansas will be a one day event. It will be Saturday, June 9 at 2nd Presbyterian Church. Marian Dyer is our elected Elder Commissioner, but anyone that would like to attend is welcomed. Watch the announcements in the Sunday bulletin for information regarding the Presbytery Meeting.

*This is a publication of Pulaski Heights Presbyterian Church
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Sunday mornings begin with Sunday School at 9:30 a.m., followed by worship at 10:45 a.m.

**Vera Lloyd's
 Back-to-School
 Drive**

- Loose leaf notebook paper
- Binders
- Composition notebooks
- Spiral notebooks
- Mechanical pencils
- Kleenex
- Basketballs, footballs, nerf baseballs
- Electric pencil sharpeners
- DVD Player
- Funds to cover extracurricular activities
- Walmart gift cards (for back-to-school clothes)
- Backpacks for older youth (ages 15-17) in solid colors
- Big pink erasers
- Fiskars scissors