Soon after you receive this newsletter you will be done with school, and summer will be here!

The unofficial start of summer is the Memorial Day weekend (which is the last Monday in May), and the unofficial end of summer is the Labor Day weekend (which is the first Monday in September). As you may know, summer for the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church will be a little different this year. Most ministries will take a break over the summer. So, there will be no Sunday school for children, no Adult Christian Education & Fellowship for adults, no Growth Groups, no Wednesday Prayer Meetings, and so on. We will, of course, continue with our regular Worship Services! And some ministries, such as the Youth Ministry, will continue with some meetings as the youth are actually more available during the summers for activities.

One of the main reasons for most of the ministries taking off for the summer is so that our members may be refreshed. Ministry is hard work, and it is good to take a break and catch one’s breath. In fact, when God gave laws to his people about the Sabbath, he said in Exodus 23:12, “Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your servant woman, and the alien, may be refreshed.” The Hebrew word for the phrase “may be refreshed” carries the idea of “catching one’s breath.” There is a very real sense in which we do that every Lord’s day when we rest from our work and worship God. We “catch our breath” so that we can begin a new week with fresh energy to work. (Continued page 2)
Well, it is good to take time off and be refreshed, not only one day a week, but also for a longer time (such as over the summer).

Let me encourage you to take time off and rest so that you can catch your breath and be refreshed. Spend time with the Lord in his Word and in prayer. Spend time in worship with God’s people (for we never take time off from worshiping God). Spend time with family and friends in relaxed fun and laughter.

And then come back after the summer refreshed and renewed to serve the Lord!

![Ocean Commotion Vacation Bible School Logo]

**Vacation Bible School**

*By Holly Hawkes*

Dive into Ocean Commotion

Vacation Bible School

July 18 – 22, 2016

Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church

Vacation Bible School will reach over 100 kids, making it one of the largest outreach events in the life of Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church. Covenant children as well as those without a church home will experience God’s love and hear his word through the Ocean Commotion program centering around the story of Noah. Vacation Bible School is a short term missions opportunity. And, as veteran VBS volunteers know - it is a lot of fun as well.

From the preparation, planning, and on-site events, over sixty volunteers are needed for Vacation Bible School.

Would you prayerfully consider serving in VBS? Join our team by registering online at: [https://answersvbs.com/vbs/tbpc-vbs-2016/volunteer/](https://answersvbs.com/vbs/tbpc-vbs-2016/volunteer/)

Or contact Holly Hawkes at [hollacej@gmail.com](mailto:hollacej@gmail.com) or 813-360-2077 for more information.
Women’s Ministry Update
By Suzanne Swenson

Jess Hensley, Coordinator for Purses with a Purpose (PWP), and her team would like to thank everyone who contributed purses and/or products. Jess held the PWP packing party on Saturday, May 14, when over 100 purses were packed with products and made ready for delivery to the Sunrise of Pasco County, Inc. Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Center. A card with Jeremiah 29:11 on one side and an invitation to join us for worship at TBPC on the other side was included in each purse.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11

Holly Hawkes is leading our next project, Father’s Day Diaper Drive for the Assure Women’s Center. The Assure Women’s Center provides answers and help for women with unintended pregnancies. Services include free pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, dependable information and life-saving solutions.

Bring new and gently used baby items to the crib set up in the west wing hallway. Needed products include diapers (newborn to 5), baby clothing, baby bath products, baby gear and bottled water for the many clients who walk to the clinic. The last day for donations is Father’s Day, June 19.

Eileen Fritz joined us for our WM15 on May 16 to update us on what she is learning as she pursues a ministry in the Tampa Bay area for the rescue, restoration and redemption of those who are being held as slaves, especially women and children. Eileen is encouraged that Lucia Campbell will be partnering with her in arranging for a speaker for the SW Florida Presbytery Women’s Ministry who will share this vision, and challenge us to join together in asking God how we can provide help for these victims. Please email her at EileenFritz@verizon.net if you would like to pray for this effort and receive updates.
Back in 2000, Dr. Bruce H. Wilkinson wrote a small book entitled, "The Prayer of Jabez." It was to become a literary sensation that lasted over 6 months on the New York Times top ten best seller list. It was basically a commentary on two verses in I Chronicles, Chapter 4, verses 9 and 10 regarding petitions made by a man named Jabez to God for certain blessings concerning areas of his life as they relate to God Himself and his fellow man.

What was so unusual about this man is that his name and prayer appears among a genealogy that spans the first 9 chapters of I Chronicles and includes nearly 500 names from Adam to Saul. Nothing prepares one for the spectacular intrusion of these two outstanding verses, refreshing and thought provoking as they are.

The same can be said about another man whose name appears initially in the 5th chapter of Genesis. Although the list containing his name is not as extensive as that which appears in I Chronicles, it none the less covers the time period from Adam to Noah. He is the father of the oldest man who ever lived, Methuselah, and it is recorded that he was a man who walked with God. His name is Enoch, and he is unique in biblical history in that, along with Elijah, he never died; instead God took him.

Hebrews, chapter 11, verse 5, further elaborates of this man, “By faith, Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.” Further, Jude remarks in verse 14, "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints.” Additionally, Enoch is genealogically referred in Luke, chapter 3.

Even though it is among the briefest of biographies - one sentence revealing the history of 365 years, 300 of which were spent believing, being humble and holy, walking with God - Enoch shines forth as an example of what is required of each of us as we, too, seek God's favor and direction in life. Here we see the absolute necessity of faith and the secret of pleasing God.

Finally, although it is not the official position of the Presbyterian Church PCA, it is recognized in the commentary section of the ESV Bible, referring to the 70 Weeks prophesy of Daniel 9, that some Bible scholars espouse and equate the translation of Enoch (not seeing death) with the translation of believers prior to the Lord's return to earth with His saints in the latter days. That being said, however, the main thrust of Enoch's life experience was to honor God and to anticipate the One who would bruise the serpent's head while he (the serpent) would bruise (the coming One’s) heel. We today, in turn, must honor God by believing on His Son, in whom we have life and have it more abundantly.

“Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.” I John 5:12.
Ligonier Conference – Fall 2016

Ligonier Ministries, will host their fall conference The Dawn of the Reformation on September 16 – 17, 2016, in Sanford, FL. Drs. R.C. Sproul, Al Mohler, and Steve Nichols will be present to explore the lessons of the Reformation and their continual relevance for today.

Bill Jeffries, coordinator of TBPC’s Missions Ministry, his wife Nora, and a number of other church members have attended Ligonier Ministry events over the years. The Jeffries shared that they have always found the events to be a blessing in their lives. For more information, visit: www.ligonier.org/events

June Anniversaries

2 — John & Melissa McNulty 16 - James & Jena Barber
8 — Eric & Jennifer Isaac 16 - Richard & Ginny Becker
14 — Bert & Cheryl Barber 19 - Ed & Debbie Jordan
15 — Garry & Keri Gawrych 26 - Bob & Dale Moore

June Birthdays

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Missionaries Supported by TBPC

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Esaie & Natacha Etienne
Ken & Tammie Matlack
Carla Stevens

Reformed University Fellowship
Peter & Lauren Dishman
Jeff & Jenny Lee

New Harvest Missions International
Nathaniel & Cherita Adawonu

Serving In Missions
Rene & Lilli Palacio

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Let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion.

Noah Webster, 1828 Dictionary (as part of the definition of “religion”)

Despair. Some days things the devolution of our culture can tempt us mightily to succumb to it.

We live in a country that was born of revolutionary concepts outlined in our Declaration of Independence—self-evident truth, unalienable rights proceeding from our creator God, equality among all men—yet we see and hear daily evidence we are moving quickly away from those devotions that have sustained and prospered us for nearly two-and-a-half centuries.

So there’s certainly reason for concern. But despair? Let’s not. Listen to the wisdom of fictional character Marilla Cuthbert in a scene from Disney Home Video’s movie version of Anne of Green Gables, the classic 1908 novel by Lucy Maud Montgomery. Marilla’s recently adoptive teenage daughter sighs that she is in the depths of despair, to which Marilla replies in a stern and forceful voice “to be in the depths of despair is to turn your back on God!”

Good point. We can’t simply shake our heads and sigh out purposeless laments about how our country is beyond help. The stakes are too high for us to simply fold. What we must do is consider recent seminal and seismic shifts in American law and policy and contemplate how we should respond.

Consider legalization of homosexual marriage, the catalyst for some very-recent cultural skirmishes. Our forefathers probably didn’t see that on the nation’s two-and-a-quarter-century horizon when they crafted the Constitution. No matter. Our Supreme Court decided it was, in fact, a Constitutional right in spite of that oversight. At least two bakers, i and one florist, ii did not consider the Court’s ruling supreme to their own convictions of conscience. Based on their religious beliefs that homosexuality is sinful, they chose not to affirm it by providing their services for marriage ceremonies of same-sex fiancés. Their decisions ignited fire-and-brimstone style condemnation followed by lawsuits resulting in legal expenses and fines as high as the six-digit level against such conscientious objectors. iii The florist is still fighting in the courts for her right to live according to her convictions, conscience and existing laws without losing her house and/or business as a result.iv

These alarming developments prompted several state legislatures to craft legislation to ensure Americans would not have to compromise “sincerely held religious beliefs” v in order to avoid similar fates. Their efforts were met with vitriol and scorn in the media and by supporters of homosexual marriage. Columnist Joe Henderson said this about the Georgia bill: “[they’re] using religion to justify state-sanctioned bigotry, [these measures enable] faith-based organizations to deny services to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.” Oh, he also compared those opposed to his view as “Neanderthal.” vi

Fortunately for Mr. Henderson, Governor Nathan Deal vetoed the Georgia First Amendment Defense Act that inspired Mr. Henderson’s ire. Unfortunately for Georgians, it appears one principal reason he did was the threats from corporations like Disney and Coca-Cola to “rain financial calamity down on the state like pestilence.” vii There goes that love-of-money thing again. Governor Deal identified an equally disturbing motivation: “I do not think we have to discriminate against anyone to protect the faith-based community in Georgia, which I and my family have been a part of for generations.” viii (Continued page 7)
Discriminate? Following the dictates of sincerely held religious beliefs is discrimination? Yet Homosexuals (nor Lesbians, Bisexuals, Transgenders, etc…aka LGBT) have not been told to sit in the back of busses, drink from different water fountains, or sit at different lunch counters than heterosexuals. Nor are there bathrooms excluding anyone whose biological gender at birth corresponds with that displayed on restroom doors.

By the way, the case of Barronelle Stutzman (the 71-year-old Richland, Washington florist who was sued for declining to provide flowers for her homosexual friend’s wedding) undermines the discrimination narrative by the undisputed fact she created bouquets for the plaintiff destined for his homosexual partner during her strong friendship with him over the 9 years before his nuptials. Nevertheless, she drew the line when he requested she provide flowers for their wedding because, as she said, “marriage is a sacred…a very sacred thing.”

Still, the beat goes on. When North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory signed House Bill 2—commonly referred to the bathroom bill—into law requiring “transgender people to use bathrooms that correspond with the sex on their birth certificate in state government buildings, schools, universities and highway rest stops”xix (it doesn’t apply to anyone in the private sector), the Obama administration was not pleased.

“Vanita Gupta, the top civil rights lawyer for the Justice Department, said that “both [Governor McRory] and the State of North Carolina” were in violation of civil rights law, and gave him until Monday [three business days] to decide “whether [the state] will remedy these violations.”xii If not, DOJ clarified, the state stood to lose billions in federal funding. The administration action was a stunning combination of executive overreach and ideological extortion that could cost the state untold numbers of jobs and impact all North Carolinians, including those who the administration claimed were being discriminated against.

Yet the White House Press Secretary, Josh Earnest painted North Carolina as the villain: the North Carolina “law…is just mean-spirited because it seeks to discriminate against people because of who they are.”xii In so doing, he dismissed any possibility of reasonable dissenting opinion and sought to close the book on whether simply identifying as another sex makes it so.

Without even a blink, Governor McCrory returned appropriate fire by suing to restrain the administration’s attempts to govern at the state level. Likewise, Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant signed his state’s religious freedom bill into law despite similar charges of discrimination and threats from corporations. Good for them.

The framers of our Constitution chose to emphasize rights in Amendment I to the document that they felt were most vital to the survival of the Republic. It includes the bedrock rights that defined young America such as freedom of speech, freedom of the press, the right to assemble peacefully, and the right to “petition the government for redress of grievances.”

You may have noted one right is missing from the list above. True, and it holds an exalted position in our founding charter. It’s the very first right listed in the very first amendment: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof…”

That’s the rub for those whose rights under Amendment I are being bulldozed by today’s cultural trends. Here’s what Baronelle Stutzman said about those rights: “Since 2012, same-sex couples all over the state have been free to act on their beliefs about marriage, but because I follow the Bible’s teaching that marriage is the union of one man and one woman, I am no longer free to act on my beliefs.”xiii Those who disagree with her concerns may tell you the Constitution’s religious-freedom clause is broad enough to push a galaxy through. They may have a point there. How do we preserve religious freedom without giving license to someone who says, for example, their church doesn’t allow interracial marriage?xiv We turn back to our founders. (Continued page 8)
According to William J. Bennet, former Secretary of Education, “In the view of the Founders, rights were God-given and government by consent was rooted in “the Laws of Nature and Nature’s God,” as the first paragraph of the Declaration of Independence states.” And lest there be any question of what ‘god’ was referenced there, it’s clear that “America, in the eyes of the Founders, was a New Israel…And though the Founders provided the widest scope for religious liberty, they presupposed that the principles of the Judeo-Christian tradition would be enshrined in the hearts of all citizens.”

Clearly, the God of the Declaration is the God of the Bible. They crafted our government based on its principles. Those same principles are required to sustain it. How do we achieve that? Dr. Timothy Goeglein, Vice President for External Relations at Focus on the Family and former Special Assistant to George W. Bush and Deputy Director of the White House Office of Public Liaison, recently suggested two vital measures: A total focus and concentration on the development of virtue to counterbalance the possibility of liberty running rampant, and collective and daily prayer across the country. As he well reminds us, “it’s amazing how often prayer was a very central part in each step of the creation of our great country.” Sage words.