

The background of the entire page is a close-up, slightly blurred image of the American flag, showing the red and white stripes and the blue field with white stars. In the center, there is a white rectangular box with a thin blue border. Inside this box, the words "NEWS AT FIRST" are written in a large, black, serif font, stacked vertically.

NEWS AT FIRST

211 W 1st St | Monticello | 319-465-3393 | JULY NEWSLETTER

HOW WILL WE USE OUR FREEDOM?

In 2000, Cornealious Anderson was sentenced to 13 years for robbery. The 23-year-old was released on bail and told to await orders to show up to prison. But due to a clerical error, those orders never came. Some people might have taken advantage of such freedom and committed more crimes. But Anderson started a business, coached youth football and volunteered at church, earning respect in his community.

Thirteen years later, when Missouri officials discovered the error and put Anderson behind bars, an online petition called for his release. A judge agreed that Anderson was a changed man and, again, he was freed.

What would *you* do with such undeserved freedom? What *do* we do with the unmerited freedom God grants us despite our sin, and with the freedoms we celebrate on July 4? May we follow Anderson's example and use our freedoms — social *and* spiritual — to serve others.

—adapted from *Homiletics*

Being Okay With the Pencil

It's nice to have answers. I've always loved math, and many times I thought I might like to teach math, because it's such a great feeling . . . having the answers. It's particularly satisfying when you can project into the future, put dates on the calendar and make positive predictions. "We'll have our debt paid off by this date. We'll be graduated by this date. We'll be grandparents by this date."

Our Bible passages this summer are in Genesis 11, and they are about Sarah. She is surrounded by people who - like us, before Covid-19 - can make plans in black ink and get moving. They are productive. They are busy putting their goals into action. But Sarah is like us during this pandemic. She is unable to have children, our Bible says, which is short-hand for something far more essential than that - she is unable to plan, to put anything in motion, to project her ideas into the future with a decent amount of certainty. She must write all of her ideas and answers in pencil, with an eraser nearby. She and Abram are wandering with no end-point, and they are, in some ways, stuck in perpetual state of inertia. They can't get anything off the ground, for sure.

Funny thing, this is our Bible's starting point of faith. Take a pencil and erase the answers on your math test, erase the dates on your calendar,



Pastor

Emory Gillespie

m 319.481.7572

EmoryGillespie@yahoo.com

Office Administrator

Mackenzie Kahler

o 319.465-3393

office@FPCMonticello.org

Virtual Office Hours:

M-F, 8 am - 12 noon

Treasurer

Dan Saunders

Office hours vary

Worship

Sundays at 10 am

Adult Sunday school 8:30 am

Social Media

Facebook: @MonticelloFPC

YouTube: Search "Emory Gillespie"

erase the predictions in your financial planner. . . . that's Sarah's story. Surrounded by multitudes of generations who are churning forward in a predictable rhythm, she is different. She is the person who is forced to be in a state of uncertainty.

Why?

So she can learn about faith.

As we work through the summer, each of us will probably find ourselves planning, re-doing, erasing and starting again. What will school be like? What is happening at college? What about our local businesses? What about our living situation? What about next week? When will I see my grandchildren again? When do I get to be with my friends?

Even as we open our church doors on July 5, we will be a work-in-progress, making decisions about health and safety, shifting gears at times, keeping our eyes aware - perhaps as we have not been before - to the ups and downs of this disease.

A big thank you to those who have continued to keep our church humming along - the session, the office staff, the food pantry workers, the pie ladies. And those who have offered their time, talent and treasure to us with music, words of encouragement, cards and letters, upkeep of the church building and grounds. To those of you who have shared your life's expertise and fumbles in our Bible studies through zoom, a big thank you.

Like Abraham and Sarah, we keep putting one foot in front of the other, loving each other, staying safe and making plans for the coming year in pencil. We're getting through this! God is with us!

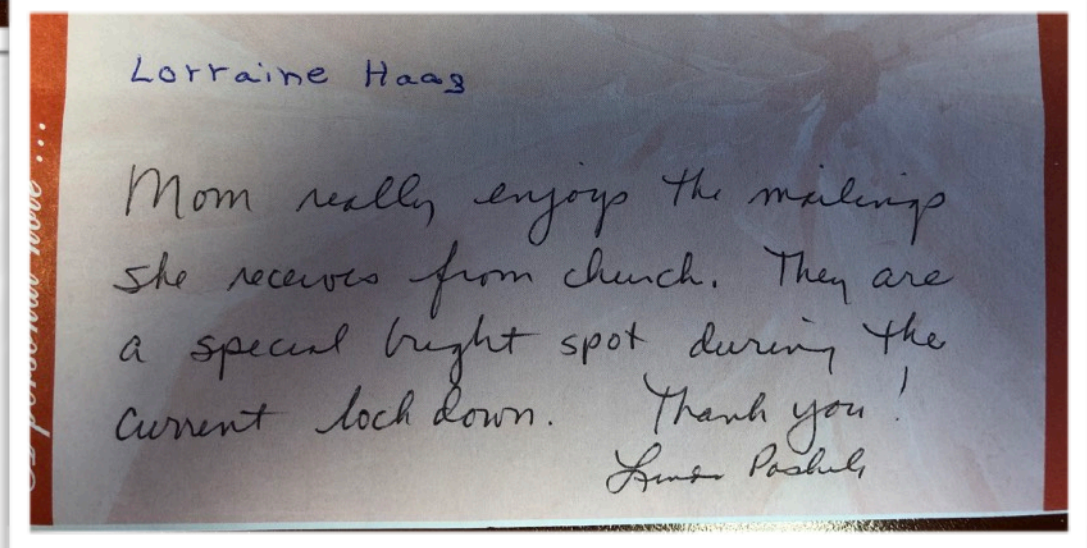
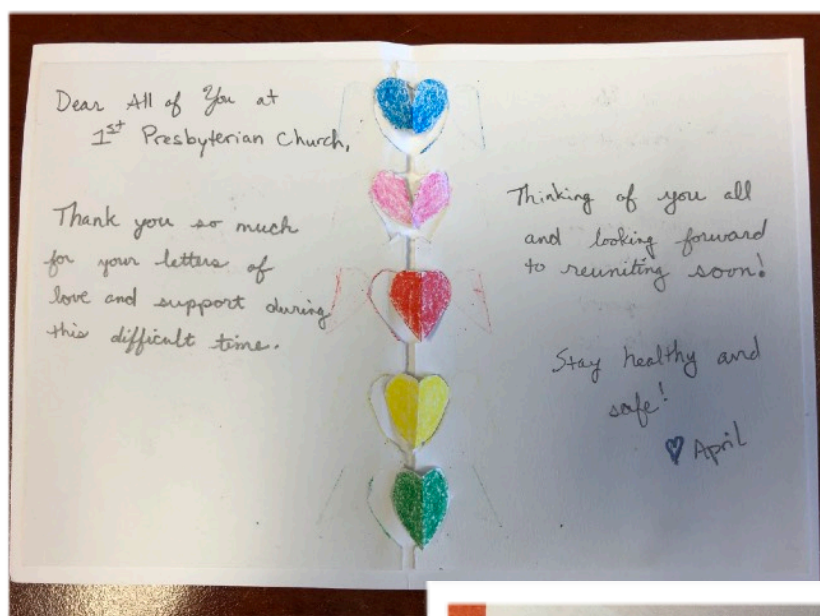
I close with this passage that I keep thinking about. . .

Ephesians 3:20-21

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Blessings!

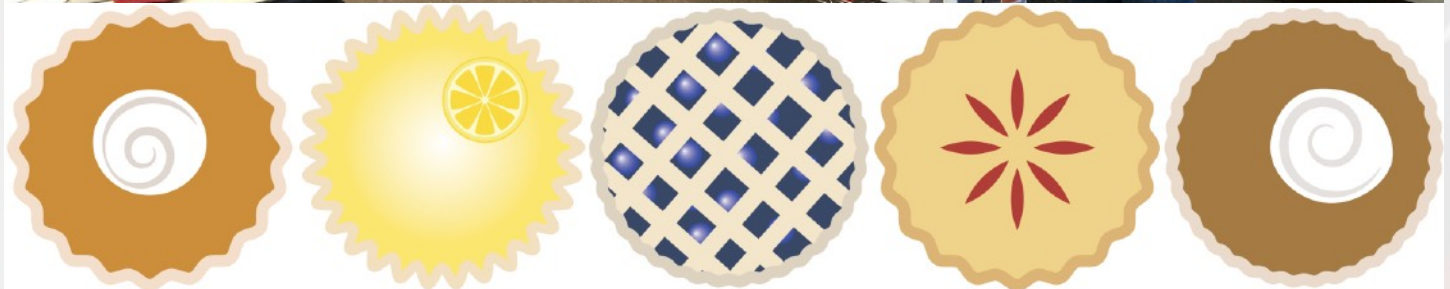
Pastor Emory



Lorie Schmidt
Marie Hein
Naomi Bender
Jane Corbin
Ron Behrends

Barb Null
Lorraine Haag
Marj Stubbe
Betty Lambert
Laura Eiben

Betty Wolken
Mary Jane Steiner
Irie Welch
The family of
Leoda



Presbyterian Pie Service Drive Thru

The ladies are at it again! On Friday, June 19th, another drive-thru pie event was held at First Presbyterian Church to allow their faithful pie lovers an opportunity to make their purchases. They spent many days in the kitchen, with precautions in place, stocking up the freezers. Pie-lovers turned out to get their slice of the pie, just in time for Father's Day. One hundred thirty-five pies were sold at this event. Thank you to the pie ladies who continue to safely prepare pie for distribution, and to those who continue to show up and patiently wait around the corners for their turn for a piece of the pie.

(Pictured left to right: Lydia Recker, Jan Takes, Lisa Lubben (representing Marj Lubben), Pam Recker and Kris Read.

A very special thank you to our "Pie Ladies" who dedicate their time and talent to our church week after week: Betty Yount, Evelena Lang, Marj Lubben, Carol Gillmore, Kris Read, Mary Kay Ackerman, Judy Mettler, Linda Burns, Sherri Neofotist, L.J. Takes, Jan Takes, Carl Takes and Pam Recker.

UPDATES

TILT CONTINUES TO MEET REMOTELY ON A BI-WEEKLY BASIS.

FOOD AT FIRST WAS ABLE TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FOOD VOUCHERS TO FOOD PANTRY PARTICIPANTS THIS MONTH, VALID FOR A FREE SANDWICH AND FRENCH FRIES. **THANK YOU FOOD AT FIRST!**

DUE TO COVID-19, MONTREAT SUMMER PROGRAMS HAVE MOVED ONLINE. CHECK OUT THEIR WEBPAGE FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MONTREAT @ HOME, WORSHIP & MUSIC VIRTUAL, SUMMER SABBATH, AND SUMMER WORSHIP SERIES. WWW.MONTREAT.ORG

FOOD PANTRY UPDATE

Current needs for those wishing to make a donation to the food pantry are:

- **Toothpaste**
- **laundry detergent**
- **Deodorant**
- **Dishwashing soap**
- **Kleenex tissue**

Gift cards to our local grocers are always a tremendous help. Those items can be dropped off during food pantry hours, Mondays from 5 pm-7 pm and Fridays from 2 pm-4 pm. **THANK YOU** to all of our generous neighbors that make this service a possibility!

WITH SYMPATHY...

Our deepest sympathies go out to the family and friends of Leoda Thompson. Leoda Thompon passed away Monday, May 25, 2020. Private services were held on Friday, May 29, 2020, at Goettsch Funeral Home, Monticello, with internment in the Hopkinton Cemetery. You can sign her guestbook at www.goettschonline.com.



SESSION NEWS

(SUMMARY; NOT APPROVED MINUTES)

CHURCH OUTREACH PROJECTS COMMITTEE REPORTS/UPDATES

- Food at First (Jo) - Jo has been handing out gift certificates to the Cone Shoppe (for food pantry recipients) with money leftover from Food at First donations
- TiLT (Lindsay) - members reported that Lindsay is continuing with Zoom meetings
- Montreat (Dan) - Dan reported that Montreat has officially been cancelled as far as the in-person camp goes. The organization is offering "Montreat at Home" and encourages churches to use videos/film series/handouts in any way the church sees best.

SESSION COMMITTEE REPORTS/UPDATE

- Christian Ed - Camp Wyoming has cancelled all summer programs due to Covid-19; but they are offering "Camp in a Box" items for individuals and families; Christian Ed has offered to pay the fee for anyone who has missed the opportunity to attend camp this year
- Finance/Corporate Trust - Dan presented his reports and is in contact with our bank regarding our CARES loan
- Building - Don reported that the white board sign is now installed on the wall outside of the pastor's office
- Personnel - Custodian Peggy Green was hired and started cleaning. Jo Zirkelbach, committee chair, requested that Becky Orcutt and Linda Parker be added as members to the Personnel Committee; **MSC**
- Scholarship - have not met due to COVID restrictions; they will meet later in the summer and will keep applicants posted

REOPENING FOR WORSHIP - There was a lengthy discussion about this topic, including information about what other churches in town are doing in preparation for reopening. **MSC** to reopen church for:

- Sunday worship beginning July 5, 2020;
- Emory will hold adult Sunday School in Fellowship Hall at 8:30, with church to follow at 10:00. We will come forward for communion but will have offering plates/boxes available at front/back of church. We will not print bulletins, but use the video screens.
- A **separate MSC** was made to send out a mailing to all church members to explain the church's reopening for services and expectations for attendees.
- We will also stream the service on Facebook, and Emory will continue to do her message on Facebook each week.

Cindy Plummer
Clerk of the Session



As we prepare to open our church building doors for in-person worship service, the session, with Pastor Emory, have put in place several health protocols in place for the health and safety of everyone.

A special edition newsletter was sent to active members of the church. This newsletter can also be found on our website at www.fpcmanticello.org.

You should NOT attend worship if any of the following apply to you:

1. Are sick or have an underlying condition.
2. Work with or care for high risk people.
3. Have been within 6 feet of a person with COVID-19 for at least 5 minutes or had direct contact with their mucus or saliva in the past 14 days.
4. Have had ANY of the following symptoms in the last 48 hours:
 - Fever of 100.5 degrees or higher
 - Fever symptoms like alternating chills and sweating
 - Trouble breathing, shortness of breath, or severe wheezing
 - Loss of smell or taste, or change in taste
 - Muscle aches
 - Cough
 - Diarrhea
 - Sore throat
 - Headache

We are eager to be together as a congregation again, and we are serious about keeping everyone safe. As we begin worshipping under one roof again, we will be making adjustments as we experiment with what is best for our congregation. If you have questions or suggestions, or would like to volunteer to help us to keep our facility germ-free, please contact the church office or any member of the session.

OFFERING & FINANCES

We appreciate your continued financial support in these unknowing times. If you'd like to learn more about your contribution options, please contact Dan Saunders, Treasurer, or the church office.

May Contributions: **\$8,066**

(May 2019 \$6,426.50)

May Expenditures: **\$10,423.10**

(May 2019 \$17,730.60)

