Mason First Presbyterian Church

The
CORNERSTONE

You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone. Ephesians 2:19-20

June 2025

Worship on the Lord's Day

(Continuing a discussion of various elements in the worship service…)

Prayer

A prayer may be offered, giving thanks and praise to God, expressing joy in the presence of Christ, and calling for the gifts of the Spirit to be poured out upon the gathered community. This prayer may employ themes and images that are drawn from the biblical readings for the day or from the setting in the Christian year.

Confession and Forgiveness

Having praised the holiness of God, we must also face the sinful state of the world and of our lives, confessing our unworthiness to enter into God's presence. Nevertheless we approach God with confidence, trusting in the mercy of Jesus Christ. This turn from communal praise to corporate confession, established on the promise of God's grace, is one of the hallmarks of the Reformed tradition.

A call to confession expresses God's initiative in calling for repentance and promising forgiveness in Christ. As members of Christ's body, we confess the reality of sin, captivity, and brokenness in personal and common life and ask for God's saving grace. The prayer of confession may include the singing of a prayer for grace, such as "Lord, have mercy." A declaration of forgiveness proclaims the good news of God's mercy and offers the assurance of pardon in Jesus' name. Leading this element of worship from the font connects our confession with the grace and cleansing of Baptism, and the baptismal call to new life in Christ. Because of these associations with the ministry of Word and Sacrament, it is fitting for a minister of the Word and Sacrament to lead the call to confession and proclaim the good news of forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

Other actions may follow—a song of praise, such as "Glory be to the Father" or "Glory to God"; a summary of the law or call to faithfulness; the sacrament of baptism; and the sharing of peace as a sign of reconciliation in Christ.

— from The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),
"Directory for Worship"

Session Synopsis

The Board of Deacons has begun planning for an August Back-to-School Project. Donations of student school supplies will be requested. Procedures for home communion are being considered. An appeal for Deacons and Elders to serve in-home communion is forthcoming.

Pastor Bill attended a luncheon hosted by the Mason City Police Department for area pastors. The department hopes to strengthen relationships with the area clergy and support churches in security protocols. The clergy were informed about issues the department is concerned about.

Session again supported endorsing the Special Beverage License to allow serving alcoholic beverages within 500 feet of the church property at the annual Sun Dried Festival on August 22nd.

The Worship & Music Committee proposed minor changes to the Inclement Weather policy. Basically, if a state of emergency is declared then all events including Sunday services are cancelled. If school is closed for inclement weather so will church children and youth activities. Committee and choir activities will be at the discretion of the group leader. Sunday services will be held at the discretion of the Pastor in charge for the day, and communicated to the congregation via e-mail. Session supported the changes.

Session approved the recommendation of the Parish Life Committee to drop Taylor Huntley from the church Active Roll due to loss of contact. The committee reported $715 made from the spring rummage sale. The next sale will be in September, concurrently with the rummage sale of the neighboring Methodist Church.

The Personnel Committee reported on the 6-month review of Financial Secretary Jess Weber. Patience is called for as Jess continues to learn the complicated nuances of our system and as she deals with software challenges, which we are trying to get resolved.

The Spiritual Growth Committee is considering inviting parishioners to present single lessons to the teen youth to provide a broader spectrum of life perspectives. Those interested in sharing their perspectives should contact the committee. Session also approved the appointment of Deb Shellenbarger and Camille Subject to fill at-large positions on the 2025 Scholarship Commission. Coming up is Vacation Bible School July 7-10 from 5:30-8 PM at Eden United Brethren Church, Family Camp on September 6-7 at Camp Greenwood, and Presbyterian Youth Triennium in Louisville, Kentucky, traveling with the youth of Holt First and Lansing First.

The Administration Committee made repairs to the rain gutter above the upper Barnes Street exit stairs during the successful spring cleanup and mulching day. The committee is working with the Kitchen Angels to possibly replace the downstairs kitchen refrigerator this summer. Improvements to the sanctuary audio system are being considered to improve in-house and livestream audio quality among the diverse speaking styles at services. Session approved the committee's recommended revisions to Building Use Fees applied for weddings, funerals, and other church member and church affiliated events.

The joint gathering of Deacons and Elders will be the evening of July 18th.

Session will not be meeting in June or July unless urgent response is needed. Session's next scheduled meeting is August 21st.

Bruce F Archer
Clerk of Session

Presbyterian Social Witness: Democracy, Education, and Patriotism

This is the fifth part of a series exploring different aspects of our church's social witness policy.

These policies address threats to democracy, voting rights, electoral and campaign finance reform, public education, and a Presbyterian and Reformed understanding of patriotism:

1. A Letter to Presbyterians: The PC(USA) 1953 General Council Challenge to McCarthyism

The 165th General Assembly made the following pronouncement: "All human life should be lived in accordance with the principles established by God for the life of men and of nations. This is a tenet of Biblical religion. It is also a basic emphasis in our Presbyterian heritage of faith. As individuals and as a group, Christians are responsible for adjusting their thought and behavior to those everlasting principles of Scripture. It is no less their responsibility as citizens of their nation, to seek as far as their influence may extend, to bring national life and all the institutions of society into conformity with the moral government of God, and into harmony with the spirit of Jesus Christ." This letter suggests, therefore, that all Presbyterians give earnest consideration to the following three basic principles and their implications for our thought and life: (1) The Christian Church has a prophetic function to fulfill in every society and in every age; (2) The majesty of truth must be preserved at all times and at all costs; (3) God's sovereign rule is the controlling factor in history.

https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/3-1953_letter_to_presbyterians-1953.pdf (8 pages)

2. Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform (2008)

This report recommends ways to strengthen democratic (small "d") practice in the political life of the United States based on principles of Reformed Christianity. Presbyterian political scientists, ethicists and others studied why so many Americans do not vote, despite the 2007 renewal of Voting Rights Act protections against racial discrimination. Remedies include voting machine paper trails, non-partisan election commissions, re-enfranchising former felons, D.C. voting rights, weekend and instant-run-off voting, and innovative structural improvement.

https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/votingrights1_0.pdf (32 pages)

3. Loving Our Neighbors: Equity and Quality in K-12 Public Education (2010)

This report discusses the challenges to public education posed by growing economic divisions and new demographic realities in our society. This study examines the multiple economic, racial and ethnic, and social disparities that weigh down our current education efforts and impede them from fulfilling this role. The study acknowledges the negative national consequences of an emerging dual track education system—one privileged, one not—and calls for reforms and reinvestment in public education (K-12) in order to offer all children similar opportunities to develop their talents to the fullest and become constructive citizens. From the perspective of the Reformed tradition, with its longstanding commitment to expanding educational access, the study celebrates the value of sharing educational approaches while building a common democratic ethos in our society. Charter schools, for example, are a product of the frustration that people feel with the shortcomings of the current system and their desire to experiment with alternative approaches. Yet the privilege, based in economic status, to choose an educational alternative for one's own child does not absolve anyone from the obligation to support the public schools that educate the vast majority of our nation's children.

https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/lovingourneighborsk-12_0.pdf (64 pages)

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Presbyterian Social Witness: Democracy, Education, and Patriotism

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4. Election Protection and Integrity in Campaign Finance (2016)

In accord with our understanding of the impacts of concentrated power on the common good, this policy affirms the words of the Supreme Court in 1990 in Austin v. Michigan Chamber of Commerce as it spoke in favor of the government having a compelling interest in legislation to prevent or restrain "the corrosive and distorting effects of immense aggregations of wealth that are accumulated with the help of the corporate form and that have little or no correlation to the public's support for the corporation's political ideas." This policy supports measures and judgments that distinguish clearly between technical corporate personhood and the personhood of individual citizens, and opposes laws and rulings that allow the spending or communications of corporations and other private enterprises to be considered free speech, necessary to it, or otherwise accorded the rights due human persons.

https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/Election-Protection-and-Integrity-in-Campaign-Finance-2016-ACSWP.pdf (10 pages)

5. Honest Patriotism, Against Autocracy, and Against Racist Nationalism (2018)

The document "Honest Patriotism" addresses threats to the vital freedoms of the First and Fourteenth amendments to the U. S. Constitution due to changes in communications, media, and politics. It calls for measures of public accountability for truthfulness in the public square in all its forms: over public airwaves, through cyberspace, and through required public disclosure by government agencies, profit and nonprofit entities. Except for hate speech, freedom of speech is to be untrammeled, with widest possible access to information, protection of the press, publication of research, and public assembly rights. Respect for privacy of personal information from government or private surveillance and commercialization is affirmed. Starting with our theological appreciation of truth, the church itself should model full participation and transparency in governance. "Honest Patriotism" is meant to include disenfranchised groups. The short declarations "Against Autocracy" and "Against Racist Nationalism" are one presbytery's way of addressing the issues involved, including the demonization of others and the corruption of public morality.

https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/Honest-Patriotism.pdf (24 pages)

6. Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights and Electoral Reform (2022)

This resolution reaffirms and updates the 2008 resolution of the same name that was approved by the 218th General Assembly and updated by the 222nd General Assembly (2016). It states the church's clear opposition to attempts at voter suppression, expressions of white supremacist and white Christian nationalist ideologies, and efforts at the state level to subvert legal elections. It recognizes the role of gerrymandering and the corrupting power of money in electoral and governing processes and calls for election finance reform. It denounces the intimidation of election officials and workers and calls on law enforcement agencies and lawmakers to enforce and strengthen laws to protect them.

https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/0019-CPJ-ACSWP-Lift-Every-Voice-Democracy-Voting-Rights-and-Electoral-Reform.pdf (5 pages)

I would encourage you to pick one or more of these documents to read and study.

Deacons

Hello All! Summer is almost here and we've finally got warm, nice weather and beautiful flowers, plants, birds, and animals to look at! Thank you Jesus!
Thank you again for helping with our latest food collection for the Mason Food Bank.
As we transition to summer and finally put away our winter gear, please keep in mind the Coats For Kids Drive this fall. This annual community project collects and distributes warm winter coats, hats, gloves, and boots to children and those in need. Items can be dropped off at the church all year round.

We continue to pray for those in our church family who are in need of our love, care, and support. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers. And, thank you for your continuing generosity to help those in need!

Bridge Builders

Book review: *Seeing Gray in a World of Black and White* by Adam Hamilton.

My assumption, when checking this book out of the church library, was that it would be about conflict resolution and finding ways to connect with people whose views differed from my own. In fact, it is a series of short essays on various topics that spark controversy in today's world. It does not offer guidance on how to resolve a conflict, but rather lays out both sides of each issue and attempts to find a middle ground between. And, although I don't necessarily agree with all of the author's conclusions (he promised in the introduction that I would not!), the book generally succeeds very well in its stated purpose.

Chapter titles include: "The Battle over the Bible", "Will there be Hindus in Heaven?", "The Logic of Hell", "Homosexuality at the Center" and "Faith and the Presidential Elections". Each one accurately presents both sides of the issue, then gives an alternative that the author believes draws from the best of each viewpoint. Well-written, very thought-provoking. A worthwhile read.

Monte Shuck

Parish Life

Birthdays in June

Vicki Drown	6/01	Debbie Johnson	6/15
Rex Hauser	6/03	Joan Meinke	6/18
Donna Archer	6/05	Jamie Robinson	6/22
Emelia Hammond	6/07	Monte Shuck	6/24
Katharine Wise	6/07	Marjorie Welch	6/24
Peg Shaub	6/10	Max Harman	6/28
Anita Cote	6/12	Charlie Herrick	6/28
Luana Foster	6/14	Karen O'Malley	6/29
Anna Lee Lavis	6/14	Mary Robinson	6/30

Spiritual Growth

Youth

Bibles were presented to youth entering the 3rd grade during the worship service on May 11th.

Youth enjoyed an end of the year Wonderful Wednesday program including making slime and an ice cream bar. They also packed 50 Disaster Relief Hygiene Bags for the Disaster Relief Program of the Presbytery.

And end of the year party was held for Sunday School youth of all ages. Middle/High school youth attended a bowling event at City Limits with youth from 5 different churches from Mason.

Adults

The last Adult Sunday school was held on May 11th. It will resume in the Fall.

Important Dates

June 1st Graduation Sunday

Vacation Bible School will be a joint adventure between our church, the Methodist church and the Eden United Brethren church. The event will be held at Eden United Brethren church on July 7, 8, 9, and 10th from 5:30-8:00pm.

Triennium 2025

This every 3-year event will take place in Louisville, KY, July 28-31st for Presbyterian youth 9th-12th grade. Thousands of youth world-wide will be attending this week of music, worship, and spiritual growth. Many youth from our church plan to attend. Please contact Lori Filka for details.

Worship & Music

June 2025 Worship Calendar

June 1	Seventh Sunday of Easter	~ Sacrament of the Lord's Supper ~ Graduation Sunday
June 8	Day of Pentecost	~ Music Appreciation Sunday
June 15	Trinity Sunday	~ Children's Sermon
June 22	2nd Sunday after Pentecost	~ Rev. Dr. Jim Hegedus preaching
June 29	3rd Sunday after Pentecost	~ Two-Cents-a-Meal Hunger Offering

Finance

Financial Report through April 30, 2025

General Fund Balance: January 1, 2025	0
Income through April 30, 2025	$ 155,580
Expenses through April 30, 2025	$ 120,711
Ending Balance (April, 30, 2025)	$ 34,869

General Fund Balance 4/30/2025	$ 34,869	Anticipated pledged income through October	
Revolving Accounts Balance	$ 72,537	$88,995	
Reserve Accounts Balance	$ 73,999	Actual pledged income through October	
Investments as of 3/31/2025	$ 541,108	$126,327	
Net Financial Position (4/30/2025)	**$ 722,513**		

A Message from the Finance Committee:

Reimbursement Requests

We have implemented a new process for reimbursements to members and friends. When you need reimbursement from the church, you should submit your receipt or invoice to the office. In the office, there is a reimbursement request that indicates the important information needed for the reimbursement. Please complete the form and affix the receipt, at the bottom of the form. This allows for easier scanning of the receipt. Jess will send this information to the applicable committee chair for approval prior to processing the check. Once the chair has approved the check, she will process the check, have our Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer sign it, and then leave it in the church office for you.

There are things that slow down the processing of the check. One is a lack of information including using only first name, using acronyms, or not knowing the activity. Please remember that Jess has only been with the church for six months. This means she does not know everyone's name nor each church activity. Please err on the side of more information instead of less. The second possible delay is waiting for the chair to approve the request. These requests are emailed to each chair (If there is a chair without an email, he/she will receive a paper request.). If the chair has not seen the email yet, Jess is waiting for approval prior to processing the check.

You can also email the receipt/invoice to Jess (jess@masonfirstpresbyterian.org) with a copy to your committee chair. The committee chairs approval via this email is sufficient. But remember, it needs to have all the detail!

The Finance Committee appreciates your patience as we work through this new process.

Statement Corrections

There have been some requests to make changes on statements that should not be made. There are two types of corrections that can, and should, be made. First, if money is incorrect on the statement, then this will be corrected. Second, if the fund listed is incorrect. This will be corrected. For example, if you paid $25 for Flowers but it shows up as a General Fund donation, we will correct this. One item that cannot be corrected is the dates. The date on the statement corresponds to our deposit date and should not be charged to the date in your records. It is important that the dates match our deposit dates.

Find the latest, up-to-date church calendar at masonpresbyterian.org

WORSHIP AT
MASON FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

In-Person and Livestreaming at 10:00am each Sunday

Bulletin Submissions are due by 12:00pm every Wednesday. Submissions for *The Cornerstone* are due by the 20th day of every month.
Please be prompt. Late submissions may not be honored. We are attempting to publish the newsletter the week following Session.

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.
Numbers 6.24-26

The CORNERSTONE

Mason First Presbyterian Church
MINISTERS - All Members
PASTOR - Rev. Bill Pinches
PARISH ASSOCIATE - Rev. Dr. Jim Hegedus
PASTOR EMERITUS - Rev. Charlie Herrick
SPIRITUAL GROWTH DIRECTOR - Lori Filka
SANCTUARY CHOIR DIRECTOR & BELL CHOIR DIRECTOR - Deb Melse
OFFICE MANAGER - Jessica Tessman
FINANCIAL SECRETARY - Jess Weber
CHORAL MUSIC ACCOMPANIST - Le Ji ("Claire")
OFFICE ASSISTANT - Nancy Sue MacDonald
SEXTON - Eric VanDyke
ADULT SPIRITUAL GROWTH COORDINATOR - Michelle Mackey

ELDERS:
2025 - Doreen Chapman, Mary Garland Jackson, Greg Lang, Monte Shuck (*Recording Clerk*).
2026 - Bruce Archer (*Clerk of Session*), Ginnie Gibson, Jane Hamelink, Tim Hammond.
2027 - Travis Archer, Evelyn Tayong, Dan Baker, Steve Sowles.

DEACONS:
2025 - Marge Clarke, Julie Dart, Tom Seely (*Moderator*).
2026 - Ron Dlouhy, Bill Leutscher, Sandy Leutscher, Nancy Sue MacDonald, Laurie McGonigal.
2027 - Donna Archer, Rick Cote, Sally Hughes, Debbie Johnson, Issie Nielson.