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

August 2025

Worship on the Lord's Day: Word

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

Prayer for Illumination

A prayer for illumination calls on the Holy Spirit to empower the reading, understanding, proclaiming, and living of God's Word. This sense of utter reliance on the illumination of the Spirit is an important and distinctive mark of the Reformed tradition. The prayer for illumination precedes the reading of Scripture and preaching of the sermon and applies to all of the readings, as well as the proclamation of the Word.

Scripture

The public reading of Scripture is to be clear, audible, and attentive to the meaning of the text. Reading from the church's Bible conveys a sense of the permanence and weight of the Word of God, and demonstrates the communal nature of the biblical story. Anyone may be invited to read Scripture, including children and youth. Because deacons are charged with the ministry of witness to the gospel and ruling elders are responsible for the proclamation of the Word, it is fitting for a deacon or ruling elder to read Scripture. The session will ensure that all readers are prepared for this important ministry.

The role of the congregation is to listen prayerfully, actively, and attentively to the Word that is read and proclaimed. Such listening requires expectation, concentration, and imagination. The congregation may participate in the presentation of Scripture through unison, responsive, or antiphonal readings, or by following along with printed or projected materials. Spoken responses may conclude the reading of Scripture. Scripture may also be presented through music.

Musical Responses

Psalms, canticles, anthems, alleluias, songs of praise, or other musical responses may accompany the reading of the Word. A psalm may be sung in response to the first reading, giving the congregation an opportunity to reflect on and pray from that text.

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

(continued next month)

Presbyterian Social Witness: Human Rights (Part 2 of 2)

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

These policies provide human rights updates in a variety of global contexts. They also address issues including human trafficking, sexual violence in the military, torture, for-profit prisons, restorative justice, and the International Criminal Court.

1. Report on Human Rights in Colombia (2008)

This report identified the World Mission's South America Office, the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, and the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship as three resources available to the members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who wanted to join with our sisters and brothers in Colombia as they worked to end the patterns of internal violence that were tearing this country apart. These agencies are also available to help the members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in exploring ways to respond effectively to human violations around the world. Some of these concerns may be similar to the human rights violations occurring in Colombia - such as the paramilitary violations in the Philippines. Some may be as complex as the ongoing ethnic conflicts taking place in parts of the African continent. Others may be as enduring as the struggle to achieve lasting peace with justice in the Middle East. Regardless of the human rights issue, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is committed to "sharing with Christ in the establishing of his just, peaceable, and loving rule in the world" (Book of Order, G-3.0300c(3)(e)).

https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/4-human-rights-colombia-2008.pdf (6 pages)

2. Human Rights Update 2010

The role of the church at every level is to be at least part of the conscience of society. The basis for our daring to hold Amos' plumb line of justice is our understanding that the prophetic role is willing to challenge those in power, kings of Israel then, governments today. We see God's spirit leading and calling in the countless acts of conscience. This report acknowledges one particular area of concern for renewed witness and ministry by our church and others: reform of the criminal justice system of the United States and the laws and lack of rehabilitation that currently put one in 133 of our citizens in prison, the highest proportion in the world today.

https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/3-human_rights_update_2010.pdf (31 pages)

3. Human Rights Update 2012

This Human Rights Update focused on three areas of domestic concern: access to reproductive health care, the rights of workers, and challenges to civil liberties first guaranteed in the Bill of Rights. In these areas and many others, we honor those individuals called to work on safeguarding the rights of others, and defending their own rights, knowing that "the price of liberty is eternal vigilance." It is also the case, whether the Human Rights Update surveys developments in other nations or in our own, that attacks on human rights in any area diminish us all.

https://www.pc-biz.org/search/3989 (approx. 27 pages)

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Presbyterian Social Witness: Human Rights (Part 2 of 2)

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4. Sexual Violence in the U.S. Military: A Human Rights Update (2014)

Sexual violence is one of the oldest, most pervasive, and most dehumanizing of sins. From the rape of Dinah in Genesis 34 to the one in four women today who will experience sexual violence in their lifetimes, sexual violence leaves a lamentable mark on our culture and faith narrative. The PC(USA) condemns sexual violence in all its forms and has a long history of advocacy for the rights of women and against sexual violence. The PC(USA) has approved several resolutions regarding sexual violence in a military context, where the chain of command creates particular vulnerability for those lower in rank. In 1975, the General Assembly of the UPCUSA declared that "sexism and rigid sex-stereotyping [in the military] ... should be vigorously eliminated." In 1986, the 198th General Assembly of the unified PC(USA) denounced sex tourism and prostitution around military bases and installations. More recently, the 210th General Assembly (1998) approved a "Resolution on the Military and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Women" denouncing rape used as a weapon of war as a human rights violation, a form of torture, and a war crime. This resolution focuses on a particular context of vulnerability but does not ignore other contexts, including prisons, hospitals, and migrant labor, where such dangers have been addressed.

https://www.pc-biz.org/search/4789 (approx. 8 pages)

5. Human Trafficking Statement of Concern (2016)

In fulfillment of the direction of the 221st General Assembly (2014), this report provides a comprehensive policy on trafficking based on a human rights approach. As stipulated, this report covers forced labor, sex trafficking, bonded labor, debt bondage, involuntary domestic servitude, forced child labor, child soldiers, child sex trafficking, illegal adoption, and organ harvesting, underlining the conditions that affect vulnerability. A study team gratefully drew on expertise from those coalitions with whom the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has long worked, including Freedom Network, U.S.A., the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, and End Child Prostitution and Trafficking (ECPAT-USA), part of an international network.

https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/Human-Trafficking-Statement-of-Concern-2016-ACSWP-and-ACWC.pdf (50 pages)

6. Human Trafficking Human Rights: Children of God, Not for Sale (2016)

This report contains policies to curtail the on-going tragedy of human trafficking. It addresses not only sex trafficking and child trafficking, but labor trafficking and lesser known ways that persons can be bought and sold. It speaks of forced labor more than modern slavery, but both phrases point to a grim reality in many international supply chains for products from fish to fashion. It reviews laws, coalitions, different approaches to prostitution (including safe harbor laws for minors), codes of conduct for tourism, fair trade and worker-driven social responsibility, all in a globalizing market context. The human rights approach seeks to protect and empower workers, reducing the economic drivers of vulnerability, so that there can be less emphasis on criminalizing perpetrators and rescuing victims. Theologically, the report stresses our shared creation in God's image and vocation rather than commodification in the world of work.

https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/human-trafficking-human-rights-children-god-not-for-sale.pdf (56 pages)

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

Deacons

There are several upcoming projects to think about during the summer months:

The Deacons are holding a food drive for the Mason Food Bank. This collection will run until August 17th. The Food Bank is in need of canned corn, canned green beans, chicken noodle soup, tomato soup, baked beans, rice side dishes, peanut butter, and hamburger helper. Thank you for all your donations!

The Harvest Table will offer your homegrown produce each Sunday in the Memorial Room. Please bring in any extra produce you would like to share.

The annual Back To School Jubilee is underway. Backpacks, school supplies and clothing items for the next school year will be needed. Watch for more information in the Sunday bulletins.

The Coats For Kids Drive in on the schedule this fall. This community project collects and distributes warm winter coats, hats, gloves, boots, etc. to children and adults in need. Gently used or new Items can be dropped off at the church any time.

The Deacons are hoping to expand their outreach by offering home communion visits on a monthly basis, on the same day we celebrate communion in the Sanctuary. The Deacons are looking for volunteers who would be interested in helping to serve, perhaps once every three months if we get enough volunteers. Anyone who has ever served as an Elder or Deacon is welcome to participate in this effort. Please contact Sandy Leutscher or Bill Pinches for more information or to indicate your willingness to assist. Thank you!

Please continue to pray for those in our church family that are in need of our love, care, and support.

- Nancy Sue MacDonald, Secretary

Parish Life

Birthdays in August

Richard Abbott	8/1	Eric VanDyke	8/13
Jacob Barber	8/2	Julie Dart	8/17
Susan Chien	8/2	Sharon Ambrose	8/18
Kathy Oesterle	8/2	Suzanne Riley	8/22
Barry Chapman	8/3	John Castle	8/23
Sandy Leutscher	8/5	Eva Schlenner	8/23
Jasmine Leffew	8/13	Lucy Simons	8/27
Ralph Taggart	8/13	Donna Hujsak	8/28

Spiritual Growth

Important Dates

Vacation Bible School:

We would like to give a big thank you to everyone that helped with VBS this year. It was a very successful event! There were between 50-60 kids that attended the 4 day program, including 7 from our church. We would like to give Pastor Bill a special thank you for leading the "Bible Story" station. We loved working together with the Methodist Church and Eden United Brethren Church of Mason. We look forward to another adventure next year.

Camp Greenwood Family Camp:

Family Camp is coming up quickly! The dates are September 5th-7th. The cost is $10.00 for adults and $5.00 per child. This includes breakfast, lunch and dinner on Saturday and breakfast on Sunday. The sign-up sheet for cabins is hanging outside the church office. We will start to gather on Friday the 5th (after dinner) and hopefully kick off the weekend with a bonfire. We will be leaving Sunday the 7th after the worship service in the woods.

Youth Fellowship—Middle/High School:

Mark your calendars for September 14th from 4 pm to 6 pm at Mason Community Church. We will be having a joint fellowship kick off event with 6 other churches from the Mason Area.

Worship & Music

August 2025 Worship Calendar

August 3	8th Sunday after Pentecost	~ Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
August 10	9th Sunday after Pentecost	
August 17	10th Sunday after Pentecost	
August 24	11th Sunday after Pentecost	
August 31	12th Sunday after Pentecost	~ Two-Cents-a-Meal Hunger Offering

August 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Financial Report through June 30, 2025

General Fund Balance: January 1, 2025	0
Income through June 30, 2025	$ 207,688
Expenses through June 30, 2025	$ 186,703
Ending Balance (June, 30, 2025)	$ 20,985

General Fund Balance 8/31/2025	$ 20,985
Revolving Accounts Balance	$ 91,744
Reserve Accounts Balance	$ 47,010
Investments as of 8/31/2025	$ 541,108
Net Financial Position (8/31/2025)	**$ 700,847**

Anticipated pledged income through June
$133,492

Actual pledged income through June
$168,068

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. Jessica will send this information to the applicable committee chair for approval prior to processing the check. Once the chair has approved the check, Finance 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. 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, Finance is waiting for approval prior to processing the check.

You can also email the receipt/invoice to Jessica (jessica@masonfirstpresbyterian.org). 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 12:00 PM every Wednesday. Submissions for *The Cornerstone* are due by noon on 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 Ses-*

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
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.