



TIDINGS

IT TAKES GRACE



Clean-up Project

JUNE 4 CLEAN-UP DAY AT THE CHURCH!

We've made it through another Great Banquet season! What a blessing that is! Now we need to focus on getting the building and grounds looking good for the summer.

There's light yard work and some indoor sprucing up to accomplish. We'd love to see a good turnout and get the work done in short time! We'll start at 8:00 and work through the morning. Thanks in advance for your participation.

Dick Peyton and Bill Stewart (your building and grounds guys)

"Dearly loved friends, I have been eagerly planning to write to you about the salvation we all share. But now I find that I must write about something else, urging you to defend the truth of the Good News. God gave this unchanging truth once for all time to His holy people." [Jude 3]

For twenty-five years now, I have nearly every month written a newsletter article. Almost all that time, the lead line has been "It Takes Grace..." because, well, 'it' does take grace, whatever the 'it' in life is for that month. Sometimes, though, I've thought about changing the by-line to "Huh?!" or maybe "Reflections of a Weird World." But then, it just keeps coming back to the fact that with everything going on around us, it certainly does take grace – and aren't we blessed to receive every grace necessary for our lives? Like this month, I've been trying to make sense in my own head over "bathroom bills." I've got more questions about all this than there is space allotted to a newsletter article. I understand that my idea of common sense isn't every-

one's idea of common sense, so I'll just leave that part of it alone. I am, though, intrigued by the whole boycott aspect. Last month, Bruce Springsteen cancelled a concert in North Carolina to protest the state's so-called "bathroom bill." He said he wants to join the "fight against prejudice and bigotry." He claims that cancelling his concert is the strongest way he can raise his voice "in opposition to those who continue to push us backward instead of forward."

Really? I wonder then, why Bruce is still planning a summer tour that includes Italy, or why he doesn't drop his contract with the Sony recording label, which does business in Russia, China, South Korea, Hong Kong, and the UAE... all places where same-sex marriage, and in some places where homosexuality, is illegal? Maybe that was yesterday's prejudice and bigotry issue and this month has moved on to the transgender battle?

Bryan Adams cancelled a mid-April concert in Mississippi because of their LGBTQ laws, but just a few weeks earlier he played in Egypt, where homosexuals face persecution daily...and the same for his concerts in Syria, Qatar, and the UAE.

Starbucks has officially asked the governor of North Carolina to repeal its "bathroom bill." Did you know Starbucks revenues for the fourth quarter in China and the Pacific Rim was more than \$650 million? Homosexual marriage there is banned. PayPal has declared boldly that they will not go forward to build a planned 400-employee operation center in North Carolina...yet, they do operate very successfully from a financial standpoint in Singapore, where homosexual activity is illegal.

The NBA announced they may have to move its All-Star game from Charlotte next year. Did they tell you they recently signed a \$700 million agreement for streaming coverage of games in China over the next five years? All this makes me think about the guy who complained to the pastor that "the church is full of hypocrites." The pastor just smiled. "No, not yet. There's room for one more."

Blessings,
RevLon

LET'S MEET THE NEIGHBORS!

At the beginning of the year, our Mission and Outreach Committee made it a goal for our church to reach out into the community. One hope we have is that the community might know we're here and that we can be of value to folks who need a church home. In an attempt to reach out, we have sched-

uled two Sunday afternoons for anyone interested to take part in visiting our neighbors.

We are putting together information cards to offer as we walk the streets near FPC. On June 5 and 12, we'll meet at the church at 2:00PM, then disperse...

This is not a program – just good neighbors

sharing good news. We would love to have as many from our church take part in this as possible, on one of the two days or even on both if you'd like.

If you'd like to pick up a few cards for your own neighbors or neighborhood, that will be great, too!

FORGIVING . . . ON THE INSIDE

God is a God of forgiveness. Exodus 34:6 says, "Then the Lord passed by in front of Him and proclaimed The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in loving kindness and truth, who keeps loving kindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin." He says, "I am the God of forgiveness that is who I am." Solomon said, "It is a man's glory to overlook a transgression," (Proverbs 19:11). Man is never more like God than when he forgives.

In Luke 15, Jesus tells us of a father who had two sons and one of the sons was weary of being in the father's house and wanted to go and live on his own and take all of his inheritance. And he did that, left the house, wasted all his substance in sin. And then when he reached the low point of life, wanted to come back and be only a servant in his father's house because being a servant in the father's house would be better than being what he had become. That son was not unlike many of us, greedy, anxious to get his hands on wealth he had not earned, so humanly foolish in the way that he spent it on fast living with those who exploited him and left him in misery when his money ran out. But slowly he came to his senses because he was dying of hunger in a pig sty that really mirrored his life. He said, "My father's servants live far

better than I, I will arise and go to my father."

It seems the young man did not expect forgiveness. He only expected some kind of mild tolerance. All he wanted was the chance to say to his father, "I'm not worthy to be your son any longer, but could you just make me a slave? I know I forfeited ever being a son, but could I just be a slave? All I really want is a roof over my head and all I want is a little better food than pig slop." And so he started on the road back. And it is then that Jesus teaches us how to forgive. The father didn't even wait for the son to get there. He ran to the son when he saw him in the distance. His words were not unkind. The Bible says he fell on his neck and kissed him repeatedly. And so Jesus tells us what the heart of forgiveness is like. It is eager, not reluctant. It doesn't even wait for the sinner to arrive. In fact, when you see him coming far away, you run to meet him and you embrace him and kiss him. And when he starts to say he's sorry, you don't even give him time to finish, you just embrace him, love him, and proudly invite everybody to come to the celebration of your son's return. That's how God forgives. That's how He wants us to forgive.

The Lord also warns us such forgiveness will be unappreciated. Such forgiveness will be misunderstood. The son who never went anywhere didn't appreciate this at all and was angry with his father for being so forgiving. And there are a lot of us stay at home children who will pout and call you a fool for such stupid forgiveness

and tell you you ought to send him back to the pig sty where he belongs. But the forgiving father can only say that he loves and he will always love even the one who deserves no forgiveness.

From that story we learn how God forgives – eagerly, totally, lavishly. And is it any wonder on the basis of that that when Jesus taught us to pray, the best words He could give us who have so great a need to be forgiven were the words "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us"? Those words really put our feet to the fire. They tell us that God's forgiveness of us is based on our forgiveness of others. James put it this way in chapter 2:13: "There will be judgment without mercy for those who have not been merciful themselves." Or in a positive note, the Beatitudes say, "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy." You want mercy? Give it. You want forgiveness? Give it and forgive like God for you are never more like God than when you forgive.

Thomas Watson wrote: "We need not climb up into heaven to see whether our sins are forgiven. Let us look into our hearts and see if we can forgive others. If we can, we need not doubt that God has forgiven us."

Thomas Adams wrote: "He who demands mercy and shows none ruins the bridge over which he himself must pass."

Mend those bridges with all your heart.

On the inside, Pete

FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT

We'll be having at least a couple of Family Movie Nights this summer. Our first will be June 22. We'll start passing out the pop-

corn and drinks at 7:30, with the showing of *Inside Out* at 8:00. Invite your friends and neighbors to this fun night of fellowship and a great movie for any age.





JUNE BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

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|------|----------------------------|------|----------------------------|
| 3rd | Cheri Loftis | 15th | Craig & Shari Winstead (A) |
| 4th | Bill & Marilyn Coates (A) | 16th | Carolyn Hunt |
| | Lance & Brenda Millard (A) | 18th | Mike & Ann Hofmann (A) |
| | Bill & Susan Stewart (A) | 20th | Brenda Millard |
| | Denise Wilson | 22nd | Ann Hofmann |
| 6th | Teresa Griffith | | Joel David Lansden |
| | Holly Pohlman | 24th | Brooks & Anna Leasure (A) |
| | James Cope | 28th | Larry Wilson |
| 7th | Doug Henley | 29th | Hunter Goodwin |
| 8th | Pete & Peggy Phelan (A) | 31st | Cierra Brown |
| 10th | Elizabeth Leasure Carlton | | |
| 11th | Dale Davis | | |



Many thanks to those that donated diapers, wipes and clothes to Door of Hope. Items were delivered soon. Parents and babies will truly benefit from your generosity.

June 2016



Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

			1	2	3	4 8AM Clean up Day
5 2PM Neighborhood Outreach	6 9:30 AM Norma Siria Circle	7 7PM Session Meeting	8 VBS Training Day Youth Mission Trip →	9	10	11
12 2PM Neighborhood Outreach	13	14	15	16	17	18 VBS →
19	20	21	22 7:30 PM Movie Night	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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