



JULY 2018

NETWORK NEWS

TIMELY TOPICS FROM ST. ANDREW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

FROM THE PASTOR

“For freedom Christ has set us free...For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Galatians 5:1, 13-14)

Dear Friends,

I have just returned from St. Louis, where I was one of six commissioners from the Presbytery of Scioto Valley to the 223rd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA). For eight days we worshipped, debated and voted in committees and plenary, and fellowshipped. I think the 223rd GA will be remembered for its focus on addressing issues of racial justice in the convention hall and on the streets. A persistent theme on issues of systemic racism and injustice weaved in and out of GA. It was in Ferguson, a suburb of St. Louis, where black teenager Michael Brown was shot and killed by white police officer Darren Wilson in August 2014.



On Tuesday afternoon, June 19, many Presbyterians, instead of engaging in parliamentary debate and passing overtures and resolutions, took to the streets chanting, singing, and holding signs. They marched over a mile through the streets of downtown St. Louis where the temperature was 94 degrees with a heat index surpassing 100 degrees. The heat didn't dampen the spirit of the crowd, who boldly chanted "End cash bail!" as they made their way to the City Justice Center. There they delivered a

message – and a check for \$47,200 for bail relief. The money came from the offering collected during the assembly's opening worship. Working with local networks in St. Louis, the offering will purchase freedom for people held under bench warrants and minor offenses as they await trial. It gets them back to their jobs, to their families and to their communities. [1]

Also at front and center of the GA was a deep consideration of how we are called to marry vision and structure for the sake of mission. One of the marchers was Stated Clerk of the GA, J. Herbert Nelson who said, "It's not about talking any more. It's not about building big sanctuaries; it's about building a heart and passion for ministry and the love of Jesus that drives us out of the church and into the streets. From institutions to organizers, building bridges of hope and standing firm in the liberty where Christ Jesus has set us free." [2]

In his letter to the Galatians, the Apostle Paul says in the actual Greek word order, "For freedom us Christ has freed." The sentence is enveloped in freedom language and we are with Christ inside that envelope. Freedom surrounds us and will continue to shape our lives.

Paul then says, "For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" The essence of Paul's teaching is that Christian freedom is love. We are free precisely for the purpose of service to others through love. That's the freedom and love that was on display in St. Louis.

In St. Louis, the days of meetings were long; the nights even longer. Friday's meetings for the committee I was on, General Assembly Procedures, did not end until 1:30 am Saturday morning as we wrestled with recommending per capita for the next two years. Even though I am tired, I am also buoyed by the experience and exceedingly proud to be a Presbyterian.

Yours in Christ,
Roger

[1] Greg Allen Pickett, "Has the church found a new way forward? Bail bond march at General Assembly exemplifies the 'Hands and Feet' initiative," *Presbyterian Outlook*, June 20, 2018.

[2] Ibid.



SECOND SUNDAY OFFERING

The Second Sunday Offering for July will go to St. Dominic's Church to help with recovery from recent damages to the sanctuary stained glass windows from a nearby house explosion. St. Dominic's and St. Andrew have collaborated on projects in the past. Our heartfelt prayers go out to St. Dominic's during this time. Please consider helping with their recovery by giving to the Second Sunday Offering.



21 AND DONE!

As of the end of June, \$7,250 has been collected towards the debt reduction campaign to pay off St. Andrew's loan balance. THANK YOU! Session has agreed to match this amount from the Bequest Fund to make at least a \$15,000 payment towards paying down the loan. But let's not stop! Please continue to contribute to the Third Sunday debt reduction fund so that we can pay off the loan even sooner and use our valuable resources for furthering the mission of the church in other ways.



CHURCH PICNIC

JULY 22 - FOLLOWING WORSHIP

Hot dogs and hamburgers will be furnished by the hospitality committee. Please bring a side dish to share.



SAVE THE DATES:

SUNDAY, AUGUST 26

- SUB BAR AND A SHOW

Worship will be followed with a sub bar. You are then invited to journey on to the Eclipse Theatre for the 2 pm performance of "100 Saints You Should Know," featuring former St. Andrew pastor Rev. Phyllis Heffner.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

- WORSHIP IN THE PARK

A pancake breakfast followed by worship will be held at Blendon Woods Park.

More details to come on these events.



SESSION HIGHLIGHTS JUNE 26, 2018

Saw a preview of the new St. Andrew website which is nearing completion.

Heard a report from the finance committee that \$7,250 has been given towards the 21 AND DONE! debt reduction campaign. Approved matching funds to make a payment of \$15,000 with funds coming from the Bequest Fund.

Approved Second Sunday Offering for July to St. Dominic's Church to help with recovery from damage due to nearby house explosion.

Formed a task team to prepare a draft of St. Andrew's future story/mission study as the next step in the pastoral search process.

Heard an update on the status of Fugees Academy.