Platte County Back to School Fair

The annual Platte County “Back to School Fair” will be held on Thursday, August 4, at the Rock of Kansas City Church, 12750 N. Winan Rd. 800 to 900 Platte County children with limited resources are expected to attend this event, which is sponsored by the Platte County Health Department and Platte County Community Centers YMCA, serving all Platte County Schools. Each Student will receive a backpack filled with school supplies and a hygiene packet to start the new school year.

On behalf of the congregation of Parkville Presbyterian Church, the Mission Team through general budget funding is providing ear buds to be used by students with school issued iPads and Chromebooks.

If you are interested in donating funds or additional ear buds, further details will be provided to the congregation soon. If you are interested in helping to distribute the ear buds at the Back to School Fair, Thursday, August 4, please contact Linda Tillinghast at 816-741-4841 or at htillin_6111@juno.com.

~ Risk Taking Mission Team

Hillcrest Walk for the Homeless

Thanks all those who supported the Hillcrest Walk for the Homeless – through monetary donations, walkers, and those who have continually offered up their time and gifts to this life changing ministry. It was a windy, chilly day but spirits were high! A time to hear testimony from a past Hillcrest resident, and great fellowship with other walkers. We were able to raise over $500 in support of our PPC apartment. What a great testimony to this ministry! Risk-Taking Mission Team
Thank you for all you do to bless our neighbors!

Place shared items in the grocery cart outside the Sanctuary. Special needs at this time are:

- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Mustard
- Jell-O & Pudding
- Single pack toothbrushes
- Saltine crackers
- Tea bags
- Flour
- Sugar

Cash donations are always helpful—make checks to SPEAC Food Pantry

Congratulations!

We extend our congratulations and best wishes to Blair Walker on his graduation from Park Hill North High School. Blair has been a music intern with PPC this past year and singing regularly with the choir. He will be beginning studies soon at William Jewell College where he will prepare for a career in music.

The Board of Deacons has begun their Shepherding Ministry. Each deacon will be reaching out to specific members of our congregation, their flock. We want to be sure that each person's needs are ministered to and that we share joy-filled moments together. If you have any questions, please call Marla Zaragoza at 816-213-0493 or Dixie Selvidge at 816-505-2689.

June Adult Christian Education

Join Bill Geary on Sunday mornings at 9:40 during June for a conversation on “The Biblical Nature of Doubt” - an exploration which ties into our June sermon series on “Questioning Faith.” Faith and Families class will be “lemonading on the lawn” during month of June.

Getting to Know Parkville Pres

Join us this Saturday morning, June 4, from 9am—11:30 IF …

- you have questions about the church, denomination or faith
- Are interested or even curious about joining the church
- You have questions—even if you’ve been a part of PPC for years!

We’ll do our best to give you answers and direction! Child care will be arranged if we know in advance that there is a need—so please contact Pastor Steve for questions or to let him know about child care. His email address is: stevenandrews@parkvillepresby.org

June Dates!

PPC hosts a training session for volunteers on Sunday, June 12, at 2:00pm — in preparation for our Host week, June 19-25. We are in need of volunteers to set up rooms for families, help in the kitchen during meal times, welcome our visiting families each day, daily clean up, overnight stays (2 each needed per night), and teardown on Sunday morning, and food. For information or to volunteer, contact: Marla Zaragoza — mzaragoza588@gmail.com or 816-213-0493, or Linda Myers @ lindarmyers@sbcglobal.net, or 913-951-1821.
Pastoral Visit

On Sunday, May 29, Pastor Steve offered one of his patented “Ask Me Anything” sermons, where people submit written questions on the day of the service or ahead of time through e-mail, and the pastor responds to each question — either during the service or here in “The Salt Shaker.” For your enjoyment, here are the questions he didn’t quite get to last Sunday:

When a little child is born, how does he know who his mother is?

I asked this question of my mom when I was four, and she told me that newborn children just gravitate to the most beautiful woman they can see. Hearing this, I exclaimed, “Vanna White's my mom!” Incidentally, my mom was at the service last Sunday and thought this would be a good question to submit. Thanks, Mom.

What is the one defining difference between Methodists and Presbyterians?

If you asked this question in the 1700s, the answer would be longer, but these days, the two groups are closer together. Still, I would offer two important distinctions.

One is our structure of government: Methodists have bishops who have some spiritual and temporal authority over the regions they govern, and we have hired staff members who can only do the will of elected, legislative bodies within the denomination. In other words, there’s more room for the voice of the people in the way we do our business.

The second distinction is theological: Methodists place more emphasis on the role of humanity in deciding to turn to God and embrace God’s love, while we place more emphasis on the role of God in reaching out to us. In this way, we follow Ephesians 2:8, which says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.” We believe that if faith makes us right with God, then faith, too, is a gift from God, and not a result of anything we have done, so that, as Ephesians 2:9 adds, “no one may boast.”

On a related note…

Why are Presbyterians so unemotional? — aka “stick up their butts.”

Hey now! You were just trying to get me to say ‘butts’ in church, weren’t you?

In all seriousness, though, one of the things that has been special (not unique, but special) about the Presbyterian tradition is an emphasis on the life of the mind in a life of faith. We want you to bring your brain to church! — and when you do, we’ll offer it well-thought-out sermons, beautiful prayers, an orderly worship service, and powerful Sunday School offerings, because Scripture calls us to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength.”

But what about those other parts, besides the mind? How do we worship God with our bodies? How do we let our emotions loose in worship and in fellowship? How do we open up our souls, making room for them to be captivated by God’s Spirit? Scripture — especially in the Psalms, but elsewhere, as well — repeatedly calls us to dance with joy, lift up our hands, and sing with loud exaltation — to worship in a way that involves every part of who we are and doesn’t hold anything back.

But I think our powerful minds sometimes prevent us from answering this call. I think our minds sometimes tell us, “Don’t do that! You’ll look foolish!” or “Don’t do that! It isn’t proper for church!” But if Scripture calls for it, then it is proper. And so the question is: can we continue to value the life of the mind, while also valuing our bodies, hearts, and souls? Will we offer God everything we have, in accordance with Scripture?

Why is forgiveness so difficult?
Because it hurts so much when someone betrays our trust, and moving beyond that hurt is a hard thing to do. God is good at it, because God has had a long time to practice, but for us it is a challenge and a growing edge—a thing we are called to work on as we learn to follow Jesus more closely.

I will say this, though: 

**forgiveness is better when it comes with reconciliation.** When we walk through the kind of process laid out in Matthew 18:15-17, offering ourselves in honesty and love and giving the person who has hurt us a chance to respond face-to-face, we have an opportunity to build a relationship that moves through (not past, but through) the hurt.

This is a hard thing to do—and sometimes it’s not possible or feasible, if it means coming face to face with someone who has abused us or someone who is no longer in our lives—but it’s ultimately more healing than trying to work through our feelings on our own. In fact, I would say that the face-to-face conversation seems harder, but it’s actually easier for our hearts and souls in the long run.

**I have heard that Church Bingo could be a reliable means of sustainable revenue for funding church endeavors or even reducing the debt. How do you feel about this idea?**

If you’re willing to organize it, I’m willing to promote it and get people there.

**What do you think are the most important questions for our time, and PPC’s obligations in responding?**

Several decades ago, American poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti attended a conference for writers in Chile. The conference included tours of the country, introducing the writers to Chile’s natural wonders, industries, and attractions. At the end of his time there, when Ferlinghetti was filling out an evaluation form, he answered every question with a single phrase. What was the most impactful moment of the conference? “The faces of the miners in their cages at Lota.” What did you learn from your fellow writers? “The faces of the miners in their cages at Lota.” He simply couldn’t get that image out of his mind.

For me, the images I can’t get out of my mind are the devastating poverty of the shantytowns I saw outside of Quito, and the restive hopelessness I lived beside in downtown Atlanta, and the simple knowledge that there are millions of people around the world who die, every year, of malnutrition and starvation, in a world that produces enough food to provide a healthy, nutritious diet to every person who lives on it and more besides. For me, those are my “faces of the miners in their cages at Lota.”

What are PPC’s obligations in responding to these crises? First, to continue serving our community as...
we have been, offering food through the food pantry and shelter through Hillcrest, Family Promise, and the Fuller Center. Second, to continue to look for ways to share what we have, including our financial resources and our personal resources (our presence, our caring, our educations, our connections), with those who are most in need. And third, to move as quickly as possible toward being debt-free, so that we can be completely free to offer what we’ve been given by God in mission, partnership, and love.

What does God’s voice sound like?

I’d like to think it sounds like Morgan Freeman—or maybe Maggie Smith. But I suspect it sounds different to everyone who hears it, and that the sound it makes is whatever the person who is hearing it needs to hear.

What was your term for someone you hope is in Heaven, but he said he was not a believer when he died?

The best term I can come up with is, “A beloved child of God.”

I don’t have room in this space to give the idea of eventual universal salvation justice, but feel free to ask me about it sometime, as it is part of my core, personal theology. Basically, this doctrine states that when we die, God embraces those who have lived lives that demonstrate openness to divine love and communion with other people, and gives space to those who have chosen to be closed to the love of God and to other people—allowing those who have chosen to live with clenched fists around their hearts the space to be by themselves. But eventually, I believe, these people are welcomed into God’s loving arms. Because it is God’s will to save everyone, and how can the divine will be subverted by human will? How can our “no” to God be more powerful than God’s “yes” to us? In the end, I believe, all people are saved, and all of creation is redeemed by our Lord.

What insight do we get from Scripture regarding the occurrences of, and how to love, transgender people?

Many transgender Christians find comfort in passages of Scripture that talk about “eunuchs,” that class of men in the ancient world whose genitals had been mutilated or who were otherwise outside the sexual norm. Often, eunuchs came to that identity because a king wanted men to protect his women who would not be a threat to impregnate them. However, Jesus himself notes that “there are eunuchs who have been so by birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:12). In that third group, Jesus is referring to people, including himself, who have cho-
not to be sexually active in order to pursue divine things.

Transgender Christians find comfort in passages about eunuchs because, in the ancient world, these were people who defied traditional gender roles and categories. In fact, stereotypes about eunuchs, drawn from ancient literature, show that they were viewed in the same way that some “effeminate” men, gay and straight, are viewed today, as people who combine aspects of both male and female gender roles.

Given this, contemporary transgender believers take note of Acts 8:26-39, where a eunuch who had traveled hundreds of miles to worship at the Temple in Jerusalem (and who may have been denied access to the Temple, based on the prevailing interpretation of Deuteronomy 23:1) was on his way home (and perhaps comforting himself, after his humiliation, by looking for Isaiah 56:3-5) when he encountered one of Jesus’ apostles, heard the Gospel proclaimed, and was baptized. Indeed, even though there may have been something that prevented him from worshiping at the Temple that day, there was nothing to prevent him from coming to the waters, and there are many reasons to rejoice in that kind of Gospel.

**How is the Eastern Orthodox Church different from the Protestant Church?**

Oh, so, so, so many ways... First of all, it should be noted that there is not one Protestant Church, but many, and there are hundreds of different flavors of Protestantism, from Baptists to Methodists to Presbyterians to Episcopalians to.... There are also many flavors of Eastern Orthodoxy, but they tend to be pretty similar. Orthodox churches often organize by nationality (the Russian Orthodox, the Greek Orthodox, and so on), but aside from differences in language and the people they look at as spiritual leaders, these churches are much closer to each other than many Protestant denominations.

Eastern Orthodox services tend to be longer. They also tend to be more ritualistic — somewhat like Catholic worship — with regular routines of standing, sitting, kneeling, and chanting. Many of their priests are unmarried, unless they were married before being ordained.

I’ve often said that if you want to see the closest thing around today to the worship of early Christians, visit an Orthodox church. This is due to what I think is the most basic difference between Orthodoxy and Protestantism: over the centuries, for a variety of reasons, the Orthodox tradition hasn’t changed very much in response to cultural shifts or changing borders, while Protestant churches have been quite adept at changing with the times and adapting to new cultures. I think both these approaches have their pros and cons, but the two approaches represent the main distinction between these traditions.
When two or three gather in my name, there I shall be also.” What if you are alone?

You’re never alone, because even when you’re physically by yourself, or even when you feel emotionally isolated from others, the Holy Spirit is with you and the church is with you. After all, at least once a month we engage in the sacrament of communion, a ritual that brings us into communion with Jesus himself and with believers in every time and place, and those people are with you when you’re at home as much as they’re with you at the communion table. Therefore, since you’re never alone, God is always with you. And if you’re feeling particularly difficult pangs of loneliness, call me. That’s why I’m here.

What role do doubt and questioning play in our faith journey?

They strengthen our faith. A faith that isn’t durable enough to face questions, or flexible enough to make room for doubt, is a faith that is more fragile than it needs to be. In my view, doubts and questions are among the signs of a strong faith.

How do we stay focused on faith in a world that seems to lack faith and respect?

There can be little doubt that American culture has changed over the past few decades. Fewer people are calling themselves ‘Christians,’ and fewer people are coming to church regularly, and fewer people even have a positive view of what it means to be religious. For those who remember a time when Christian faith was the default position, and going to church on Sunday was simply the thing that everyone did, these changes have been sweeping and dramatic.

Still, they are nothing less than what Jesus told us to expect, when he said, “If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you. If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world – the world hates you” (John 15:18-19).

Of course, Christians should not court the hatred of ‘the world’ (which I would define as people, institutions, and cultural dynamics that are not expressly identified with the universal church), and ‘the world’ includes a number of things that are holy, unholy, somewhere in between, and both at the same time. But as followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to live in the world and to be a holy people within it, treating others with uncommon kindness, giving extravagantly, and naming the holiness of the world when we see it.

But we can’t expect the world’s approval for doing these things. In fact, I would argue that if we’re doing them right, we will be so loving, so forgiving, so generous, and...
so kind that other people will question their own motives and practices. And as we learn from reading the Gospels, people don’t generally like the people who make them do that. Sometimes, they even crucify them for it. But that’s the example we’re called to follow: to be God’s holy people in a world that may not believe, may not understand, and may not even welcome our fumbling attempts at holiness; to follow Christ outside of our comfort zones, and be a witness to ‘the world’ of a new and better way.

Where do sermons come from? God or Man?

Well, when a pastor and a congregation love each other very much… wait, no. That’s not it.

I would say that a sermon is a conversation between God’s Word, the preacher (who may be female as well as male, of course), and the congregation. I believe the process of crafting a sermon—from the moment the Scripture is chosen to the moment the sermon is delivered to the church—is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and that the Spirit is present to help us listen, as well.

I especially see the Spirit’s presence in listening when someone approaches me and says, “Thank you for preaching that sermon. I really needed to hear…” and the thing they heard is something I don’t recall saying! When this happens, I think it’s the Spirit at work, bringing us the part of the message we most need to hear on that day.

To answer the question, then, I think sermons have both divine and human elements. At their best, they can be a place where the two elements meet and create something deep and powerful for God’s Kingdom.

In the Apostle’s Creed, why does Christ “descend into hell?”

When the creed declares this, it’s being true to what we read in Scripture, that Jesus felt forsaken by God and separated from his Father’s presence. The idea—popular in the early churches where this creed was formed—was that Jesus spent those three days between Good Friday and Easter Sunday in hell, either ministering to ‘the damned’ or tormenting the devil, depending on who’s telling the story. In my view, this is one of those ancient beliefs that isn’t rooted firmly in Scripture, and we can feel free to honor its fidelity to the emotions of the story, while also not believing in the literal truth of the claim. Or we can also feel free to believe it. Either way is fine. And speaking of that…

May 2016 Acolyte Training
Given the number of theological differences and the strong-held beliefs of people, what are some unifying principles that can help us transcend those differences?

God is the Creator of the world and everything in it, and every human being bears God's image and is worthy of our respect and love. Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior, the paragon of humanity and the model of what an unbroken human being can be. But we ourselves are broken people living in a broken world. Though we bear God’s image, there is no part of our lives that is not tainted by sin, and we all stand in need of God’s love and forgiveness, through Christ. Finally, the Holy Spirit sustains our lives, guiding us—as we pray, read Scripture, make decisions, and become the church God has called us to be. These core beliefs, combined with the conflict resolution principles of Matthew 18:15-22, are enough to hold us together if we’ll let them.

And finally… How do I respectfully respond to a fellow Christian who is explaining why my beliefs are wrong?

And by the way, I love that the question writer added in the word “respectfully” after writing the rest of the question! I think I understand where you’re coming from on that.

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist church, developed a concept that came to be called the Wesleyan Quadrilateral—made up of Scripture, reason, tradition, and experience. In his view, the beliefs we express are rooted in these four things, and holy discernment about what we ought to believe or do should be rooted in these four things, as well.

I would say that when someone disagrees with the views we express, we should listen to them carefully and lovingly, and examine our beliefs to see if we might be wrong. I also believe that we should firmly and clearly express what we believe. For these purposes, using the terminology of the quadrilateral may help us sort out which aspect of the faith we’re drawing from in forming our opinion, and it can help us talk with others about where we disagree—helping us to see, perhaps, that we are reading the same Scripture differently, or pitting our theological tradition against our own lived experience. In this way, clarifying where we disagree may help us agree to disagree.

In the end, though, if we have listened with love, examined ourselves, expressed ourselves clearly, and clarified our mutual perspectives—and yet the person we’re talking to continues to insist on not letting it go—the most loving thing to do is to leave the conversation. And if it helps, vent to your pastor.

If you made it all the way through, thanks for reading! I hope you enjoyed taking in these responses as much as I enjoyed seeing your questions. Let’s keep thinking about faith together.

**Wednesday at Weatherby is June 22 at 5:30**

Hamburgers and Hot dogs are provided, bring a side dish or just come. There will be boat rides, swimming, yard games and fellowship.

The address is: C Point Pavilion, Weatherby Lake—NW 77th Terrace

**Directions from HWY 9 and 45:**
Hwy 9 — Turn right onto Eastside Dr.— Turn Left onto 77th Terrace — C Point will be at the end of the road. Plan now to join us!
GRADUATE SUNDAY featured many of our YOUTH!

Youthful vitality energized our May 22 Worship

Scout Awards

Hunt Listrom

Blair Walker

Jessie Bloomer, Katie Jones

Emily Powers
Little Dresses for Africa

The Parkville Pres Little Dresses for Africa group will meet Friday, June 3, from 1:00 to 5:00 PM in Whipple Hall. Please come when you can and leave when you must, or drop by to pick up a packet of materials to work on at home.

All skill sets are needed and welcome at this work session. Currently we need volunteers to:

- select fabric to make dresses and shorts
- cut out patterns (rotary cutters are available)
- make preassembled kits for home sewing
- do basic machine sewing.

We have two donated sewing machines for our use if you would rather not tote your own machine around.

If you would like to help by sewing at home, there are packets of fabric and supplies available to make dresses and shorts. Or, you can select materials from our stash of donated fabric to personalize homemade garments.

Contact Cindy Wissinger for VBS questions or information - cindywissinger@gmail.com
Something different on Sunday mornings throughout June . . .

Join us on the front lawn for lemonade, games, and conversation—Sunday mornings between worship services in June.

Bring a lawn chair if you want to sit.
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<td>5p-8a Family Promise</td>
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<td>5p-8a Family Promise</td>
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<td>Newsletter Deadline, 12:00 noon</td>
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<td>5p-8a Family Promise</td>
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<td>8:30 a.m. Worship</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5p-8a Family Promise</td>
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<td>9:45 a.m. Church School</td>
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<td>5p-8a Family Promise</td>
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<td>11:00 a.m. Worship</td>
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The Rev. Steven Andrews, Pastor
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Peggy Pape, Office Manager
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