

From the Pastor

Rob and I really enjoyed going to General Assembly last week and thank you for sending us. It was a great time of worship, fellowship, and committing ourselves to the ministry of our denomination, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Over the next coming months, I hope to share more of what happened.

Sometimes in Presbyterian circles, controversy sometimes erupts at General Assemblies, and there seemed to be some controversy that began even before the General Assembly started. It was due to an overture for a committee to be formed to put out a letter of “racial lament and hope.” There was a lot of discussion back and forth a few weeks earlier, and when the overture came up, there was plenty of discussion on the floor of GA. As Rob can tell you, I was right at the microphone to speak in favor of the overture, when, sadly, discussion had to be cut due to time concerns. Therefore, because I wasn’t able to get out what I so desperately wanted to say, I’ll say it here.

I would have opposed the overture if two things had been included: The first is that if there was a leaning towards critical race theory. In fact, one African-American pastor spoke out against the overture because of critical race theory. I am with him in agreeing that CRT should not have a place in our denomination. We should look to the infallible Word of God to guide us rather than the fallible philosophies of mankind, but it seemed very clear that this letter was not to contain anything related to CRT.

The second reason that I would have opposed it would be if there were a purpose of repentance in the letter. The reason why I think that would have been a bad idea is because as far as I can tell, the EPC has not had any historical roots in racial philosophies and actions. This is different from other denominations, such as the PCA (where I grew up in and was first ordained) which was formed, at least partially, due to the racism of some of its founders. Thankfully, it has since repented.

It was made very clear that this was not meant to be a letter of repentance, but rather a letter of lament and hope. Again, I am thankful for this as my feeling as a fake repentance would somehow cheapen real repentance where it is needed, such as in the PCA.

So why would I support a letter like this? As almost all of you know, I am from Mississippi, which has a long history of racism. I have seen firsthand how the sin of racism is one of the largest obstacles of the Gospel, which only makes sense because at the heart of Christianity should always be a sense of humbleness as we acknowledge our sin before God. This is the very opposite of what racism is, which has pride and arrogance at its heart.

However, in the 1990s, I was able to see a huge culture shift as regards to racism in Mississippi, especially within many churches. This was mainly due to an organization called Mission Mississippi that sought to connect churches across racial boundaries. In fact, First Presbyterian in Jackson became a leader in that movement, which is quite remarkable as that church was a hotbed for racism in the days of segregation. I saw firsthand the wonderful effects of that, as it was a testimony of the Gospel of how God often changes peoples’ hearts and forgiveness, grace, and understanding came into churches and Christians’ homes. It was, and continues to be, a testimony of the power of the Gospel.

Sadly, that racial reconciliation has somewhat diminished over the last few years, but it is still there. It is something that I, as a pastor, long to see fully happening again. One of the ways that I think could happen for us as a church (as I saw happen in the 1990’s) is that churches who had the same theological understanding crossed racial boundaries and became sister churches. If we are able to do this, it is very important that we don’t do it in a way that is patriarchal, but rather we are equal partners in the Gospel. I would ask that you please pray for such opportunities for us as a church.



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You can also find us on Facebook.

Office Hours:
Mon, Wed, Fri: 12 - 3:30 pm
Tue & Thurs: 12 - 4 pm

Pastor’s Hours:
Tuesday – Thursday
9:30 - noon (flexible)

TAG ~ Teens After God

What is Faith?

TAG continues to draw new teens almost every meeting. I am blessed to be a part of the work God is doing in the lives of teens in Bergen and many of the surrounding towns. We regularly have teens attend from Brockport, Hamlin, Byron, Bergen, Caledonia, LeRoy, etc.

Our group continues to work through the book of Luke during our time of spiritual development and reflection each week. We read and discussed Luke Chapter 4 verses 13-30 at our most recent meeting. Take a moment to read through those verses. Each week I challenge the teens to come up with a real-life application of the scripture read which is relevant to them in their life. What the teens took away from our evening reflection is that belief in Jesus, God, and the Bible, is not just a single moment decision, or a "God" magic show to get what you desire, but a lifelong process of growing deeper in your faith and relationship with the Lord.

Our TAG youth group will be meeting on the following Sundays from 6:00-8:00PM: July 3rd, July 17th, and July 31st. Please keep all the teens of our group, and in Bergen, in your prayers. Continue to pray for God's protection and guidance in their lives!



Teens Helping at Foodlink – June 16, 2022

Vacation Bible School - 2022

BEPC and BUMC and the Bergen community will be



Under Construction

August 15-19
9 am - noon



Please use online (pre)-registration for children age 4 (by 8/15) - high school

The 'youth builders' will begin their work of building a

STRONG FOUNDATION ON JESUS!!!

We are still looking for Adult volunteers to help make this an efficient and safe 'job site' for our your builders. Please see the sign-up sheets in the foyer. Areas especially needed:

- Group Guides (travel from site to site with same group all week)
- Crafts/Building Activities (at BEPC)
- Preschool (in BUMC)

Information/questions: Julie Foeller 943-9155/Judy Bailey



Fellowship

Many thanks to Delores Seward and Dave and Chris Wright for their generous hosting of the church picnic on May 29!! (see pictures on previous page) And thank you's to all that helped and brought food! It was a wonderful time of fellowship in a great place!!

Coffee hour will resume in the fall. We plan to return to some home-made goodies and fruit offerings. We would welcome donations of food. So get out your recipe books and plan for the fall.

The Fellowship Team



Anniversaries & Birthdays

July Birthdays

- 2 - Kathy Cosgrove
- 5 - William Walker
- 8 - Gail Freeman
- 10 - Cambria Goodenbery
- 10 - Gregg McAllister
- 11 - Tracy Miller
- 24 - Eunie Ely
- 27 - Daniel Sheldon
- 30 - Jonah Hammack
- 30 - Jeremiah Hammack
- 31 - Shirley vonBergen



July Anniversaries

- 4 - Gregg & Debbie McAllister (35 years)
- 19 - Alden & Christin Snell (19 years)
- 20 - Janice & Scott Langdon (38 years)
- 28 - Dan & Debbie Sheldon (5 years)

August Birthdays

- 2 - Janae Genna
- 5 - Elizabeth Snell
- 8 - Jonathan Snell
- 9 - Pam Patmore
- 10 - Sally Thomas
- 14 - Mark Kobel
- 20 - Brian Foeller
- 22 - Jan Harris
- 22 - Anne Waldruff
- 23 - Kyle Foeller



August Anniversaries

- 5 - Dan & Pam Patmore (22 Years)
- 14 - Charlie & Elaine McAdam (51 years)
- 19 - Ward & Judy Bailey (55 years)
- 25 - David & Cindy Baker (22 years)
- 25 - Rick & Amy Stacy (38 years)
- 30 - Ricard & Shirley vonBergen (69 years)

Parkfest Booth Tells Our Church Story

Our church booth at the Bergen Parkfest informed members of the community of the number of activities happening at BEPC.

Shirley Harris, with assistance from Joan Dermody, assembled a booth that drew people in to learn more about activities at our church and hear about the love of Jesus.

"All the prayers and helpers made it happen," Shirley said.

Volunteers did everything from put up the tent and bring tables and chairs from the church, staff the booth through the afternoon, run games for children and share about Jesus. They included Dave Wright, Bruce and Sandy Partridge, Brian and Julie Foeller, Alden Snell, Jonathan Snell, Elizabeth Snell, Donna Lacey, Delores Seward, Stu Freeman, Joan Dermody, David Catalino. Neva Lattimer donated water.

The team distributed more than 80 pens with church address as well as information sheets with church info including Vacation Bible School and FoodLink. The team was able to pray with several members of the community.

VBS, Sports Camp, Sewing with a Purpose and other programs were well advertised as many people stopped, looked and asked questions. The table sand box was a hit with younger children. The older kids enjoyed the beanbag game and kept bringing their friends back.

Free water was offered to visitors. Bandages were available, but not needed. The day was a beautiful summer afternoon.

"I appreciate everyone's love and coming together as the Lord always blesses our church," Shirley said.



God Keeps Foodlink Distribution Dry!

Praise God for a successful FoodLink distribution in June. The weather was extremely hot and humid; the delivery truck lift broke before all the pallets of food could be unloaded; and the weather forecast that afternoon was for potentially heavy thunderstorms, hail, high winds and possibly even a tornado.

Praise God that all went smoothly and the temperature actually cooled off a little during the distribution! None of the serious weather threats happened.

Thanks to all our 42 volunteers who had to help manually unload the truck. It was wonderful that we had several teenagers who could move so many boxes by hand. Volunteers of all ages are needed to efficiently run the distribution. Our youngest volunteer is Colin McNear. Dick von Bergen was our most seasoned volunteer. The rest were scattered between the two.

We were able to serve 133 families representing 476 people, plus food that wasn't distributed was shared with six local food pantries, so nothing went to waste.

God was faithful that any bad weather went around Bergen, and we didn't even have a drop of rain! We were able to serve our neighbors in need in the Bergen community and concluded the drive, despite the challenges, at approximately the same time as we do every month, around 5:30 pm.

Our next distribution is July 21. We hope volunteers can arrive about 2:45 pm. Mark your calendar for the rest of the year: Aug. 18, Sept. 22, Oct. 20 and Nov. 17.



Operation Christmas Child

Toward the end of the year, we are planning a church-wide shoebox packing party for Operation Christmas Child. The shoeboxes are sent all across the world to children in need. The shoeboxes contain tangible gifts and provide an opportunity for the children to learn about Jesus.

We are continuing to collect items each month based on a theme. The theme for July is clothing. Ideas include shirts, pants, shorts, loose-fitting sundresses, socks, underwear, flip flops, shoes, sunglasses, hats (ball caps, summer hats, winter hats), gloves, tote bags or purses, bandanas, hair bows, and wrist watches. As a reminder, the shoeboxes are packed for age groups 2-4, 5-9, and 10-14. Also, please remember shoebox items need to be new.

Thank you to everyone for being so generous in your donations thus far! Also, a huge thank you to June Hahn for cutting out Spiderman masks, and to those in the Sunday School, led by the Wrights, for drawing the webbing on the masks. Examples of these masks will be on display in the lobby near the shoebox collection box. If there are any questions, please contact Julie Foeller.



Pray for EduNation's Work in Sierra Leone

Our church family was privileged to hear from Dana Kaltenger, the US director for EduNations, a mission we support in our church E&M budget. Dana visited us during a worship service in June. She is based in offices in the Pittsburgh area.

EduNations' mission statement is: Our mission is to ignite hope in under-resourced communities by comprehensively educating rising generations and to honor Christ in all we do. EduNations is a faith-based non-profit organization that builds and operates schools in Sierra Leone, Africa.

Dana shared details of the organization's activities, the schools, students and teachers.

Specific prayer requests include:

1. Continued spread of the gospel
2. God's protection, provision, and presence
3. Support for EduNations operations.

Please continue to hold these requests and the work of EduNations in your prayers.

For more information, see their website at www.edunations.org

Children's and/or Youth Minister

We are continuing our search for a children's and/or youth minister. This person would have a lot of freedom to create ministry for young people the way he or she envisions it. Our hope is that this person will use their gifts and abilities to be involved in the community (possibly within the school system) getting to know young people and families, and thus making connections with Bergen Presbyterian. This is meant to be a part-time position, but we are open to the position being full-time. If you know of someone who would fit this role, please email (brandthammack@hotmail.com) or call or text the pastor at (585-732-6162).

Details can be found at:

<http://www.bergenepc.com/employment.html>

A Peek at the Church Calendar

Weekly

- Sunday, 9:15-10:15 – Adult Sunday School beginning July 10 through August 28
- Sunday, 10:30-11:45 – Morning Worship
- Food Collection on first Sunday of the month
- Wednesdays, 6:00 pm - Prayer for Door of Hope
- Thursday, 6:00-7:00 am – Son Risers (continuing to meet on alternating Thursdays for breakfast and on ZOOM)
- Fridays, 10:30 am - Kid's Quest

Other Goings-Ons

- July 4th - No Office Hours
- July 21st - Foodlink @ 4 pm, volunteers arrive by 2:45 pm please.
- July 30 - Door of Hope @ 6 pm
- August 15 - 19 - Vacation Bible School from 9 am till 12 noon each day.

Blood Drive

The next Red Cross Blood Drive that will be held at the Bergen Evangelical Presbyterian Church is scheduled for Friday, August 12 from 1 to 6 pm. Stop in and donate some blood or platelets. Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood.org to schedule an appointment, or you can just stop in the day of the drive.

You may still donate after receiving a COVID-19 vaccination. Knowing the name of the manufacturer is critical in determining your blood donation eligibility.

The Red Cross follows a high standard of safety and infection control. The Red Cross will continue to socially distance wherever possible at our blood drives, donation centers and facilities. While donors are no longer required to wear a facemask, individuals may choose to continue to wear a mask for any reason. The Red Cross will also adhere to more stringent facemask requirements per state and/or local guidance, or at the request of our blood-drive sponsors.



Church Finances

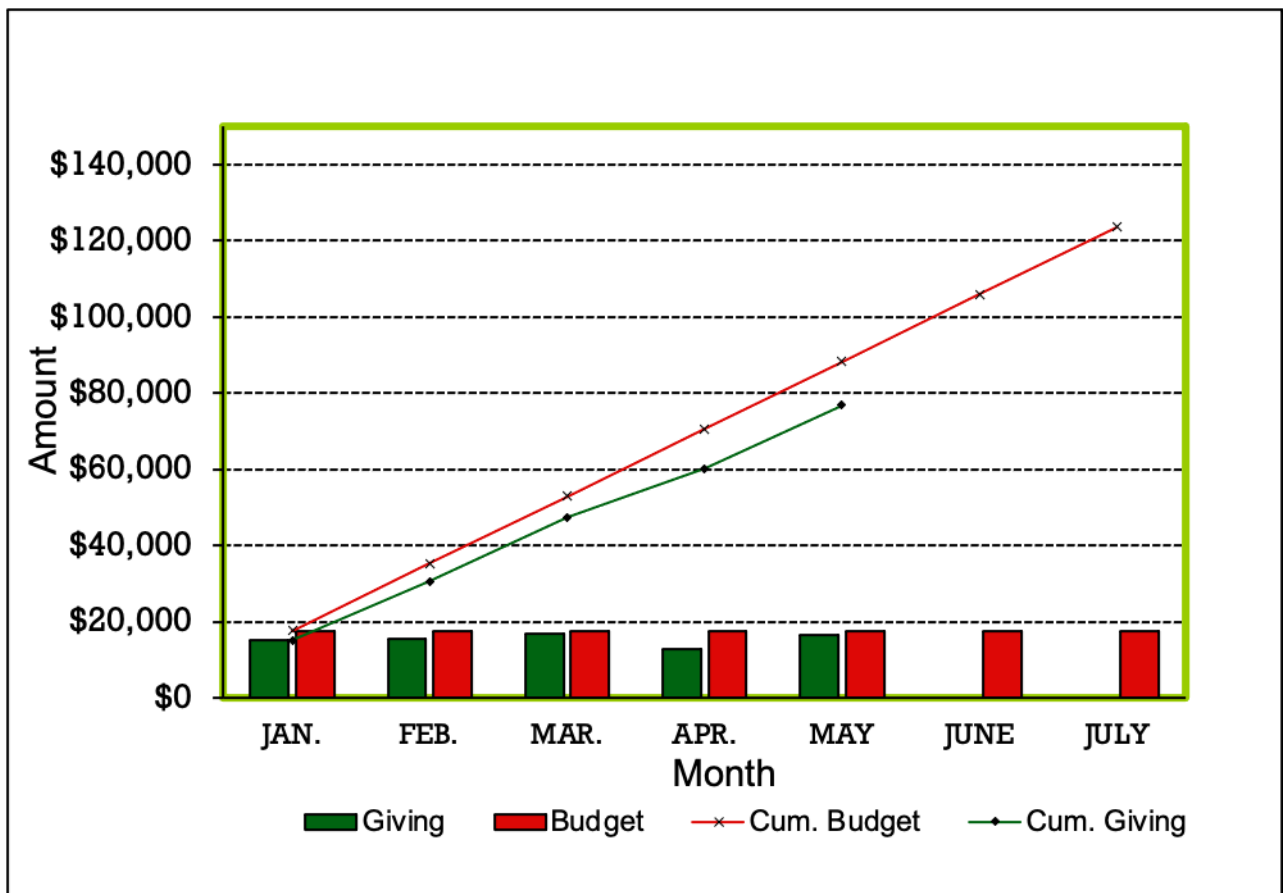
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“But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. [...] Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you.”

1 Chron. 29:14,16

May’s giving of \$16,642 was far better than April’s and helped bring our giving to date closer to that of 2021’s very good numbers. Expenses were low and we did not need much of the accumulated giving to make ends meet.

Some more gifts to the Organ Fund were received, and to date through the end of May total giving is \$45,482.



MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT – MAY 2022
OPERATING FUND**Income**

Sunday offering:	\$12,206.00
Net Online Offering:	\$1,470.75
<i>*note – online offering reflects \$44.56 fee taken from gross donations from the vendor before deposit</i>	
Amortized one time gifts:	\$2,965.00

<i>Total New Receipts</i>	\$16,641.75
<i>Opening Balance (from previous month)</i>	\$284.98
Total Funds Available (opening balance + new receipts)	\$16,926.73

Expenses

Gross Expenditures for the month	\$14,570.45
Line Item Paybacks received this month that reduce expenses	
• None	\$0.00

Net Expenditures for the Month	\$14,570.45
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Accumulated Income Fund Transfer Needed to cover Expenditures	\$1,000.00
Extra Monthly Amortized Gift Overdrawn from the AIF	\$0.00
Monthly Amortized Gift Left in Accumulated Income Fund	\$1,965.00

OPERATING FUND BALANCE **\$391.28**

DESIGNATED FUND

Opening Balance (from previous month)	\$34,287.50
New Designated Receipts	\$28,700.00
Total Designated Expenditures	\$51,103.98

DESIGNATED FUND BALANCE **\$11,883.52**

TOTAL CHECKBOOK BALANCE (Operating Fund + Designated Fund) **\$12,274.80**

OTHER FUND ACTIVITY**Accumulated Income Fund**

• May expenditures	-\$1,000.00
Current Balance (5/31/2022)	\$23,979.34

Organ Fund

• May Deposits	\$1,200.00
Current Balance (5/31/2022)	\$45,481.82

Rogers Music Scholarship Fund

• May Scholarship	-\$1,000.00
Current Balance (5/31/2022)	\$40,251.28