



CHURCH CHAT

Butner Presbyterian Church

Pastors: Brian Stratton, Dewey Cassell

JUNE 2025



A Message From Dewey

It's that time of year again. A time of endings and new beginnings. It happens every year around this time.

First come the graduations – from high school and college and universities. Caps and gowns and speeches and diplomas. And a journey that began usually four (or more) years ago is finally over. For some it will seem like the time passed in the blink of an eye. For others, it will have seemed like it would never end. For some, it will carry with it fond memories that will last a lifetime. For others, it was an arduous endurance test best forgotten. But all will leave their institution changed. And that change provides a foundation for what follows. An ending leading to a new beginning.

The other thing that happens around this time of year are weddings. May and June have historically been popular months to get married. It's the perfect season to gather with family and friends and publicly profess your love for one another, exchanging vows and making promises about their life to come. My niece is getting married in Vermont this month. My daughter is a bridesmaid for her friend, who is getting married in Japan. It seems like the only place you're not likely to see people getting married these days is in a church. (More on that topic in another Church Chat.) New beginnings.

When I got to thinking about it, I realized that these rites of passage are not unlike what Jesus and the disciples experienced around the time of his death and resurrection. He had spent three years teaching them everything he knew – sometimes in plain words and

sometime in parables – and showing them by his own example the kind of life they should lead. Just like in school, some of them seemed to grasp the basic concepts and others didn't seem to have a clue. Even after he returned following the resurrection, some of them still struggled to understand and accept what he was teaching them.

And like in a wedding, he professed his love for them – both in his words and in his actions of dying on the cross. He promised them that if they “ask, it shall be given to you.” And he vowed that he would be with them always, even to the end of the age. It was an ending and a new beginning.

Starting out in a new job or a new marriage is typically a challenge. Life doesn't always happen the way we had expected or planned. We have to cope with confusion, uncertainty, and obstacles in our path. It is a matter of taking what we have learned and applying it to new circumstances. And it is a matter of perseverance.

The disciples faced those same challenges. They faced confusion and uncertainty as they took what Christ had taught them and carried the message into the world of Gentiles. They persevered and we are all the better for it.

Just as the Holy Spirit was there for the disciples as they endeavored to carry on the work of Christ, so it can – and should - be called upon to help with the challenges of things like graduating from school and getting married. Christ walks with each of us on our journey, wherever it may lead. May we live lives of new beginnings that bring glory to God.

Dewey

JUNE Calendar

Sun, 6/1 11am Communion Worship Service
Brian Stratton, Michael McFadden

Sun, 6/8 11am Worship Service
Brian Stratton, Michelle Osborne

2pm Butner Church Council Meeting
@ Community Methodist Church

Sun, 6/15



10:00 am Father's Day Breakfast
Fellowship Hall

11am Worship Service
Brian Stratton, Erma Hudgins

Sun, 6/22 9am Session Meeting via zoom

11am Worship Service
Dewey Cassell, Cecil Hudgins

Sun, 6/29 11:00 am Worship Service
Brian Stratton, Michael McFadden



FATHER'S DAY BREAKFAST

Sunday, 6/15 @10:00 am

Fellowship Hall

Mark your calendars!



FOR BETTER OR VERSE

A calendar of Bible verses, one for each day.

Compiled by Paul Lintern, Joyful Noiseletter

- 1 Hebrews 6:1
- 2 2 Corinthians 6:2
- 3 Matthew 6:3
- 4 Mark 6:4
- 5 Romans 6:5
- 6 I Timothy 6:6
- 7 Galatians 6:7
- 8 Job 6:8
- 9 John 6:9
- 10 I Timothy 6:10
- 11 Ephesians 6:11
- 12 I Timothy 6:12
- 13 I Corinthians 6:13
- 14 John 6:14
- 15 Acts 6:15
- 16 Ephesians 6:16
- 17 Ephesians 6:17
- 18 Galatians 6:18
- 19 I Corinthians 6:19
- 20 Proverbs 6:20
- 21 Luke 6:21
- 22 Proverbs 6:22
- 23 Romans 6:23
- 24 Matthew 6:24
- 25 Deuteronomy 6:25
- 26 Matthew 6:26
- 27 Luke 6:27
- 28 Proverbs 6:28
- 29 Luke 6:29
- 30 2 Chronicles 6:30



Romping with the Pre-K

The preschool year is complete. We had 18 students graduate on May 21st. All of them are prepared for what to expect in kindergarten, and each one of them showed tremendous growth over the year. Thank you to so many members of the church who showed up that evening to support us!

This was a great year, of course it had its challenges, but we had wonderful families and a lot of parent involvement.

Each graduation is emotional for me. This year was no exception. I am always overcome by pride at how much the students have learned and overcome by sadness because they are moving up, and no longer "mine". I recognize fully that families have a choice where to send their child for preschool and am always honored that they have chosen Butner Presbyterian Pre-K. I love that some of these kids have siblings yet to come to our school, so I will get to see them again. I'm sad that some of them are the youngest of their family, and it feels like the end of an era to me.

Facebook has made some of it easier as I get to see them grow through the years and support them from afar. Now that my daughters aren't in the

local schools, I don't see as many of my former students as often. The first group of kids I taught are graduating high school this year, and that just blows my mind! I am always reminded each year as I give my graduation speech, how fortunate I am to have this position. It's a lot of responsibility, but I still firmly believe that God has put me where I can serve him and others.

I was searching through old pictures after graduation and came across my own girls on the Butner Presbyterian stage for graduation. Oh, how tiny they were! I also saw pictures of Mrs. Joy up on stage with them and it warmed my heart. I am grateful to have known her and always grateful for her continued support. I was so pleased that I was able to fulfill Missy's request of having some students sing "Jesus Loves Me" at her memorial service.

As I head into another summer, I plan to slow down and cherish what might be my last full summer of my own girls living at home. Savannah has an apartment next year at App State, and most likely will stay for the summer next year. It's what we raise them to do, but I feel like I will miss her so much!

The preschool has 1 spot open for our 3-day class right now, and the 2-day spots are all full.

I am grateful for so many things, God has truly blessed me and I pray I can pass along his grace and word to others.

Susan Zink



Church News

Father's Day Breakfast

We will hold a breakfast fellowship on Sunday, June 15th at 10am to celebrate all the great dads!

New Renters – Kid Zone

The new after school care center on the corner of Central Avenue and D Street is now providing summer camp for local children. However, they do not have a kitchen or dining area in order to provide lunches for the children. They asked us about renting the fellowship hall / kitchen for an hour per day for 2 months this summer. They began using our facilities the last week of May.

Joy Grubb's Memorial Service

Our church and Susan Zink came together in a magnificent way on Saturday, May 10th to honor a beloved member, Joy Grubb. We were surprised at the number of attendees to both the service and the reception. It was obvious that Joy meant a lot to many people in our community.

Rev. Dave Vellenga (our part-time pastor 1984-1998) provided prayer. Libby Hayes (niece) sang and was accompanied by some Pre-K students. Dewey Cassell (part-time pastor since 2015) provided the message, which honored Joy in a most lovely way. Others shared stories of reflection including Bill Humphries, Missy Moss, and Erma Hudgins.

After the service, there was a brief tree dedication ceremony, officiated by John Winings (part-time pastor 1999-2002). Some of Joy's ashes were placed in the hole dug for the tree.

Two New Trees

You may have noticed a couple of new trees in the church's front yard. The one closest to the

sanctuary is a weeping cherry tree, planted in honor of Joy Grubb.

The tree planted closer to the Fellowship Hall is a flowering dogwood and was planted in honor of Julian & Nellie Grey Hudgins, two founding members of our church.

Thanks to Nancy and Donald Wilkins and Cecil and Erma Hudgins for the purchasing, planting, and continual care for these special trees.



Many gathered around for the tree dedication service held after Joy's memorial service.

Below: Missy Moss placed some of her mother's ashes in the hole prepared for the planting.



From the Editor

Preferences

We all have them, don't we? When we make choices, we choose what we prefer. How to spend our days, what restaurants we go to, the décor in our homes, who we spend time with, etc. Preferences are part of who we are. How God created us. Hopefully, our preferences normally honor God. But sometimes our preferences will get in the way of God's will for us. That's when we are making choices that do not honor Him, and we create a barrier to God's work.

As most of us grew up in Christian homes, (I was raised Baptist) we were undoubtedly taught Christian preferences like not smoking, drinking, dancing, or going to R-rated movies. And to not associate with those who do those things because those folks were bad influences. Our Baptist church preferred that everyone attended church every single Sunday and gave out perfect attendance pins to those who accomplished that. Some folks hadn't missed church in many years and had their perfect attendance pins hooked together, and the string hung from their shoulder to their navel! I was not one of those perfect attendance Christians. I never received even one perfect attendance pin. I still wouldn't receive one. Maybe the criteria should be 90% attendance or something. LOL!

Years ago, my sister invited me to a non-denominational church she had been attending, and I went. I admit that I was a little out of my comfort zone at first. Attendees there would stand during the music instead of sitting quietly. They would clap during the music like we were at a concert! The music was played by a band instead of a pianist sitting in the corner. People lifted their hands in



worship. It was totally different from what I was used to and frankly, I was out of my comfort zone. This type of worship was not my preference, but I kept coming with my sister, although I felt a little like she had gone to the dark side. I got used to it and started doing all the things that the others did – stand, clap, raise my hand, sway with the music, sing, etc. I felt a deeper level of worship than I had ever felt before. It was marvelous!

Many folks come to these non-denominational churches and there are lots of kids learning about Jesus. I went to my sister's church for a few years before Cecil and I got married and I started attending Butner Presbyterian Church with him. But I am so glad that I had put my preferences to the side so I could experience something else. While there, I learned some great contemporary Christian songs and experienced such a deep level of worship that I cannot explain. The sermons were wonderfully rooted in the Bible and I heard some life-changing sermons while there.

I once read something about Billy Graham as it pertained to the band DC Talk (one of my favorites). You may remember them because they were a crossover band, and their songs were played on secular radio stations as well as Christian stations. The lead singer, TobyMac, still puts out a lot of great music. Anyway, Billy Graham said that he really didn't understand the music but knew that God was using these men to speak to our youth, so Graham said he needed them at his crusades. Billy Graham was willing to set aside his personal preference in order to lead others to Christ.

Are we willing to do the same?

Peace, Erma



COMMENCING THROUGH THE GRADUATIONS OF LIFE

Adapted from the Joyful Noiseletter, May 19, 2025

Pre-K Graduation:

"Congratulations parents on this occasion of your child completing preschool. Let your little graduate now commence to gaining wisdom in kindergarten and losing teeth."

Kindergarten Graduation:

"Congratulations children, on graduating from kindergarten, and commencing to the path of reaching, writing, and recess!"

Eighth Grade Graduation:

"Congratulations students! As you graduate the 8th grade and commence your high school years, may it keep you busy, focused, and as far away from social media as possible. Fat chance."

High School Graduation:

"Congratulations high school graduates, as you commence to take on adulthood, and the sooner the better!"

College Graduation:

"Congratulations college degree holders, as you claim the diploma you have worked so hard to achieve. May you now commence to find meaningful employment for your social media arts and advanced YouTube degrees, probably at Wendy's."

Newly Married:

"Congratulations newlyweds, as you commence into our thirties with a life partner, who will spend as much time trying to change you as trying to not be changed by you. Who would have thought you were so set in your ways already?"

New Parents:

"Congratulations new parents, as you marvel at this new creature in your life. Here is your chance to raise this child the way your parents should have raised you."

Empty Nesters:

"Congratulations parents, as you see your youngest child graduate and you prepare to commence

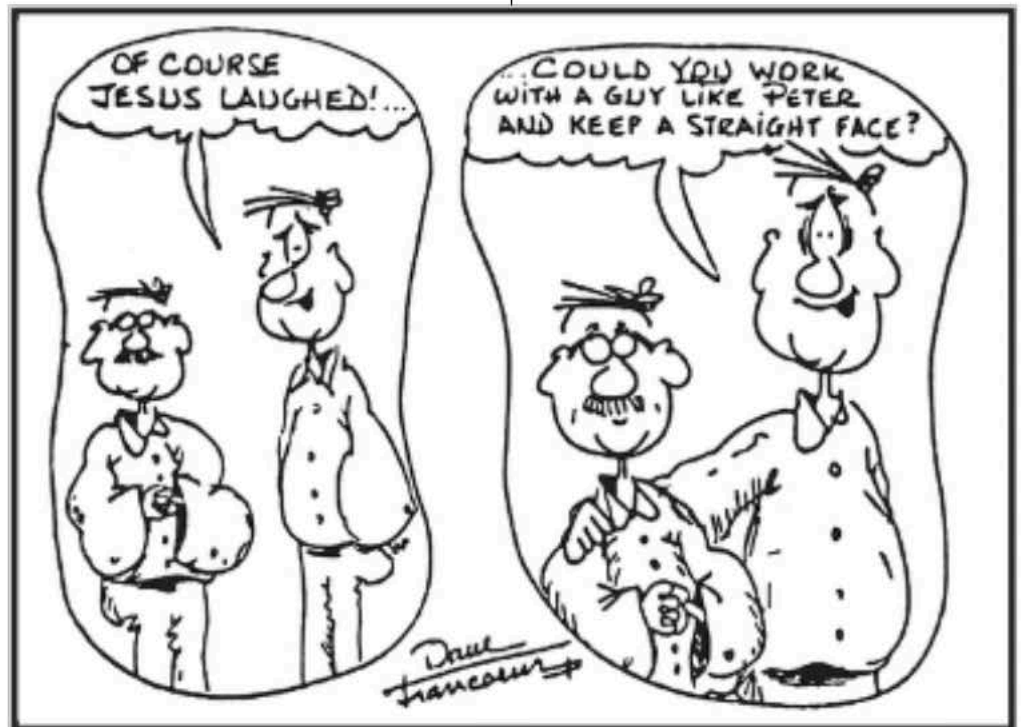
with the empty nest. Enjoy it quickly, before the kids all start moving back."

Retiring:

"Congratulations as you graduate from the workforce, commencing on your retirement, for which you have been counting down the days since your 56th birthday nine years ago. Sure hope you like watching game shows."

Graduation into your 80's:

"Congratulations elderly person, as you graduate from yet another phase of life and commence with whatever is next, which, like preschool, still involves gaining more wisdom and losing teeth."



The Lord's Laughter

I called a friend recently and got his voicemail message: "I am not available right now, but I thank you for caring enough to call. I am making some changes in my life. Please leave a message. If I do not return your call, you are one of the changes."

A guy walks into a bank, points a gun at the teller and says, "Give me all your money, lady, or you are geography."

"Don't you mean history?" the teller asks.

"Hey lady," the robber replies. "Don't change the subject."

A student nurse found an elderly gentleman already dressed, sitting on the bed with a suitcase, when she brought a wheelchair for the patient to be discharged. Although he objected, she insisted that hospital regulations require using a wheelchair, even though he said he would be fine walking.

Reluctantly, he agreed.

On the way down in the elevator, she asked him if his wife was meeting him.

"I don't know," he said. "She's still upstairs in the bathroom changing out of her hospital gown."

I passed a cemetery on a trip a few months back that had a sign saying the inventor of the crossword puzzle was buried there. I stopped and asked the sexton where he was buried.

He pointed and said, "Four down and three across."

A man walks into a psychiatrist's office with a cucumber up his nose, a carrot in his right ear and a banana in his left ear. He says, "What's wrong with me?"

The psychiatrist says, "You're not eating properly."

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Nice Definition of TIME

Time is slow when you wait.

Time is fast when you are late.

Time is deadly when you are sad.

Time is short when you are happy.

Time is endless when you are in pain.

Time is long when you are bored.

Every time.

Time is determined

by your feelings

and your

psychological conditions

and not by clocks.

So have a nice time

always.

*"Don't live for your
presence to be noticed
but live in such a way
that your absence will
be felt."*

~Bob Marley