



# CHURCH CHAT

Butner Presbyterian Church

Pastors: Brian Stratton, Dewey Cassell

JULY 2025



## A Message From Dewey

*[Note: This month we have a guest contribution to Church Chat from Lyman M. Smith, Captain, CHC, USN, Retired; Director of*

*Presbyterian Counsel for Chaplains and Military Personnel, originally published on July 4, 2018 on the [pcusa.org](http://pcusa.org) website.]*

We pause today to remember and celebrate the brave action of the Second Continental Congress on July 4, 1776. On that date the delegates voted to officially adopt the Declaration of Independence. A committee of five was tasked to have the text printed and dispatched across the 13 colonies as rapidly as possible. These copies departed Philadelphia on July 5.

George Washington, commander of the continental forces, was camped outside New York City when he received his copy of the text on July 9. On that day the soldiers under Washington's command were given a new mission as they fought to defend the newly declared independence.

Perhaps by coincidence or perhaps by design, in the very same general orders of July 9, Washington also directed the colonels and commanding officers of the regiments to procure chaplains for their units. The commanders were to pursue "persons of good characters and exemplary lives." The soldiers were to "pay the chaplains suitable respect and attend carefully upon religious exercises."

Washington wrote, "The blessing and protection of Heaven are at all times necessary but especially so in times of public distress and danger. The General hopes and trusts, that every officer and man, will endeavor so to live, and act, as becomes a Christian Soldier defending the dearest Rights and Liberties of his country."

Today we give thanks for the visionary leadership of the founders of our nation and the courageous act the members of Congress took 242 years ago. We are also encouraged to pray as Paul said to Timothy, "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

And as we celebrate and pray, please remember all who have served our nation defending freedom and justice. And pray also for our chaplains, "persons of good characters and exemplary lives," who throughout our history have been present wherever our forces have been deployed.

Let us pray:

*Eternal God, guide us on this day, that we may dedicate ourselves anew to ushering in an era when good shall live in the hearts of a free people, justice shall be the light to guide their feet, and peace shall be the goal of humankind. We pray in the name of the Prince of Peace. Amen.*

~ Dewey

# JULY Calendar

Fri, 7/4



Sun, 7/6

11am Communion Worship Service  
Brian Stratton, Michael McFadden

ACIM Ministry Day

Wed, 7/9

**CHURCH**  
*Clean-up*  
**DAY**



Sun, 7/13

11am Worship Service  
Brian Stratton, Michelle Osborne

2pm Butner Church Council Meeting  
@ Community Methodist Church

Sun, 7/20

9am Session Meeting via zoom

11am Worship Service  
Brian Stratton, Erma Hudgins

Baseball Theme Fellowship  
After service in fellowship hall

Tues, 7/22

Presbytery Gathering

Sun, 7/27

11am Worship Service  
Dewey Cassell, Cecil Hudgins

## FOR BETTER OR VERSE

A calendar of Bible verses, one for each day.  
*Compiled by Paul Lintern, Joyful Noiseletter*

- 1 Revelation 7:1
- 2 Proverbs 7:2
- 3 Proverbs 7:3
- 4 2 Corinthians 7:4
- 5 Matthew 7:5
- 6 Matthew 7:6
- 7 Psalm 7:8
- 8 Psalm 7:9
- 9 Psalms 7:10
- 10 Psalm 7:11
- 11 Revelation 7:12
- 12 Deuteronomy 7:13
- 13 Luke 7:14
- 14 Mark 7:15
- 15 Genesis 7:16
- 16 Revelation 7:17
- 17 Genesis 7:18
- 18 Genesis 7:19
- 19 Exodus 7:20
- 20 Matthew 7:21
- 21 Luke 7:22
- 22 Jeremiah 7:23
- 23 John 7:24
- 24 Romans 7:25
- 25 Hebrews 7:26
- 26 Ezra 7:27
- 27 Ezra 7:28
- 28 Leviticus 7:29
- 29 Acts 7:30
- 30 John 7:31
- 31 Psalm 23

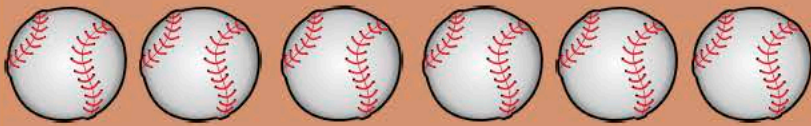


## DURHAM BULLS FELLOWSHIP

SUNDAY, AUGUST 17 @ 5PM

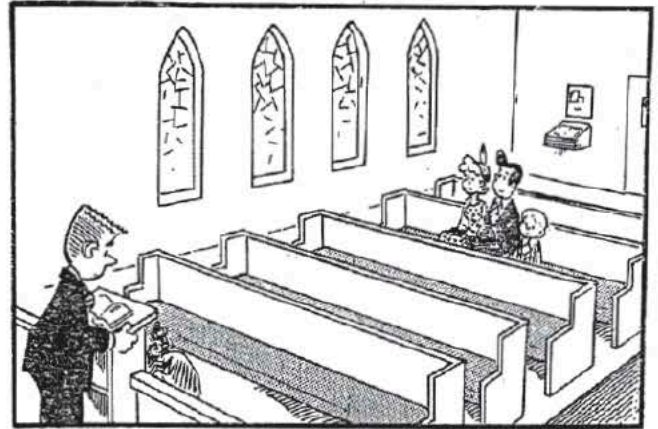
*We have 2 tickets left for the taking!!*

*\$30/each - See Erma if interested!*



## PHILLIP'S FLOCK

By Doc Goodwin



from JoyfulNoiseletter.com

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**WANT A BAD MARRIAGE?**

**PUT YOURSELF FIRST.**

**WANT A GOOD MARRIAGE?**

**PUT YOUR SPOUSE FIRST.**

**WANT A GREAT MARRIAGE?**

**PUT GOD FIRST.**

# Church News

## Fellowships

The June fellowship was held on Sunday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> after worship service. It was a Father's Day "breakfast for lunch" menu. Thank you to Michelle for providing!

Upcoming fellowships include a baseball theme luncheon on Sunday, July 20<sup>th</sup> and a group outing to a Durham Bulls game on August 17.

## Church Cleaning

We will hold a church cleaning evening on Wednesday, July 9<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. Come help us keep our church clean and presentable!

## Church Music

With a recent update to the digital hymnal, we can now download MP3s and MIDI files. We were able to play Turn, Turn, Turn by the Byrds through the

digital hymnal on June 22<sup>nd</sup>. We will be using this feature going forward to enhance our music and worship experiences.

## Lake Holt Service

Our Lake Holt service will be held on September 21<sup>st</sup> under the main shelter. Esther will be there to sing for us. Mark your calendars!

## Summer Renters

Kid Zone, which is an afterschool daycare located across the street from the post office, is holding their first all-day summer daycare for school age children. Unfortunately, they do not have a kitchen or a place to feed lunch to the children. We agreed to rent to them the use of our kitchen and fellowship hall each weekday at lunchtime for approximately 2 months.

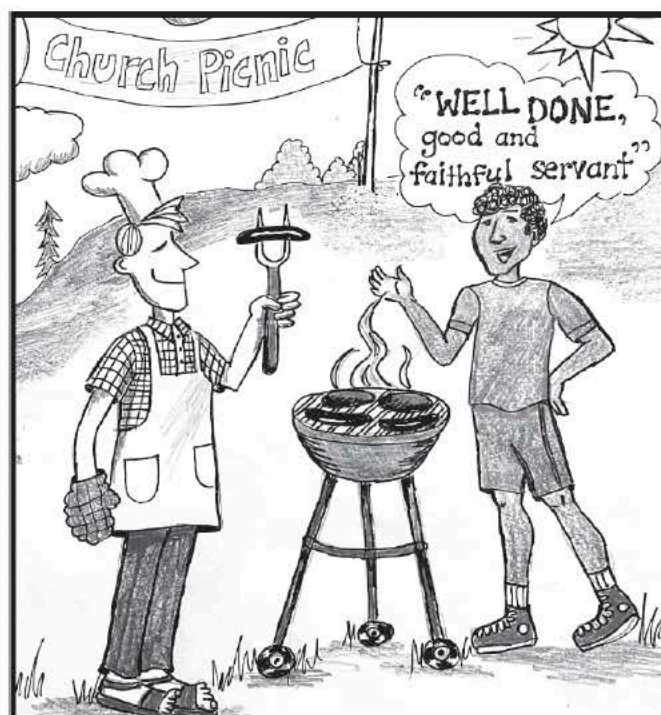
## BASEBALL THEMED FELLOWSHIP

July 20th

in the Fellowship Hall after worship

*Hot dogs and all the fixings, etc.*

*Watch for more info!*



## From the Editor

### Club vs. Washcloth

In one of Brian's recent sermons, I was intrigued by something he mentioned about folks treating their church more like a club instead of a washcloth. And it's so true for many churches. On the one hand, I think developing friendships at church is a really good thing. It's good that we show love for one another and get together beyond the walls of the church. It's good that we lift each other up and care for one another. At the same time, we must be careful not to treat church as a club. We have to be careful not to become too clique-ish because it could cause visitors to feel like they are on the outside. Thankfully, our church is always very welcoming.

The washcloth analogy made me think, though. Some of the purposes of going to church is to worship God, pray, and learn to be more like Christ. We are to listen to the sermons and learn. The purpose of the sermons is to inspire us, educate us, and make us think, as well as serve to correct any wrong behavior, thoughts, or prejudices we have in our lives. This is what makes us more like Christ. Like anything else, we have to practice to get better. We are supposed to listen and learn from all bible teachings. This is what makes us better. We get cleaned up, like using a washcloth to clean ourselves. And remember that although it is the preacher or teacher who is delivering the message, it is God who uses the message as a washcloth to cleanse us, if we will let Him.

Have you ever heard the saying, "the preacher really stepped on my toes today"? That can simply mean that the church goer heard something in the



sermon that taught that person how to correct a sin in his/her life. And hopefully and prayerfully, make the needed adjustment. But many times, the saying means that the church goer became offended that the sin they enjoy was denounced in the sermon. In the church goer's pride, they rather be offended than learn to become more Christ-like.

I hear of so many churches who have ousted their pastors because that pastor dared to preach on a sensitive subject, although biblically based, but "stepped on too many toes". There are churches who demand "feel-good" sermons and that's all they want. They want to walk away from church each Sunday feeling good about themselves and happily continue to live in the sins they are enjoying. It's really sad when a church is opposed to the sermons being more like a washcloth to cleanse and help people to become more like Christ.

I pray that we at Butner Presbyterian Church will always be open to biblically sound messages from Brian and Dewey (and anyone else in the pulpit) and use those teachings as washcloths to cleanse our lives and make us more like Christ.

Peace,  
Erma

*All scripture is breathed out by God  
and profitable for teaching,  
for reproof, for correction,  
and for training in righteousness,  
that the man of God may be  
complete, equipped for every good work.*

~ 2 Timothy 3:16-17



## LAND OF THE FREE AND HOME OF THE BRAVE?

Blessings and peace to you all in celebration of our nation's 249<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The war for independence was about the 13 American colonies breaking away from the rule of the King of England. Although not all of them were from England, as there were people here from about every European country, mostly fleeing religious tyranny and wanting religious freedom. Well, also escaping warring countries and all kinds of other tyranny. The colonies became united and approved the Declaration of Independence. It was signed on July 4, 1776. (to put it simply).

We are Americans. We were originally united with common goals and dreams, seeking freedom of speech, to worship as desired, and so many other blessed freedoms.

But not everyone was free. Some had been dragged here in chains from other countries, which was common throughout the world at the time. But out of all the world, America was the first country to abolish slavery.

*"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."*

We are all allowed to pursue our dreams and become whomever we want to be, worship freely, accomplish what we want, and find our own happiness, thanks to these founding documents. For all Americans.

But I feel that bit by bit our freedoms are being stripped from us. The political turmoil in America is concerning. I feel that we are losing our unity and becoming more divided each day. This is sin and our nation is being torn apart.

We no longer have freedom of speech as so many people get offended at every little thing that is said. Comedians cannot even be comedians anymore due to the easily offended audiences. You know the saying, "United we stand, divided we fall"? Yeah, that is starting to happen.

How do we make a change? We prayerfully start with ourselves. Allow others to speak freely. Try to understand others even if we don't agree with their stand on certain topics. Show love and respect to everyone.

I love a quote I once heard, "Left wing, right wing, they are both from the same bird". Remember that we are to be united and let's work to keep it that way.

*Thank you, Lord, for America. Show us how to honor you with all the freedoms you have blessed us with. Remind us that we are united and we are to love one another in all circumstances. Allow America to always be victorious over our enemies. Amen.*

~ Erma

# To Tickle Your Funny Bone

I asked my daughter to give me the phone book. She laughed at me, called me a dinosaur and lent me her iPhone. So, the spider is dead, the iPhone is broken, and my daughter is furious!



I didn't make it to the gym today, for the fifth straight year.



I decided to stop calling the bathroom the "John" and renamed it the "Jim". I feel so much better saying, "I'm going to the Jim this morning."



Of course, I talk to myself; sometimes I need expert advice.



The biggest lie I tell myself is "I don't have to write that down; I'll remember it."



Last year I joined a support group for procrastinators. We haven't met yet.



I couldn't believe it today, when I came home and was told by my wife that my 5-year-old son wasn't actually mine. She says

that I need to pay more attention when picking him up from school.



I told my boss today that three companies were after me and that I needed a raise! He asked me which three companies. I said Gas, Electric, and Water.



My wife and I have decided we don't want kids. We are telling them tonight.



I have everything I wanted as a teenager, only 60 years later. I don't have to go to school or work. I get an allowance every month. I have my own place. I don't have a curfew. I have a driver's license and my own car. And the people I hang around with are not scared of getting pregnant.



Dave's kids asked him what it was like growing up, so he grabbed their phones, and turned off the WIFI, gave them some popsicles and a bike, and told them to stay outside until the street lights came on.

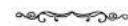


A mom texts, "Hi son, what does IDK, LY and TTYL mean?" The son replies, "I Don't Know, Love You, Talk to You Later."

The mom texts back, "It's okay, don't worry about it. I'll ask your sister. Love you too!"



Hitting a stationary object at high speeds can be disastrous, according to a recent pole.



The word "Queue" is ironic. It's just a Q with a bunch of silent letters waiting in line.



Dinosaurs didn't read. Now they are extinct. Thank goodness the Thesaurus survived!



Where do bad rainbows go? To prism. (It's a light sentence, but it gives them time to reflect.)



Recipes should include photos of the mess you have to clean up after cooking. (AMEN!)

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