



FROM THE PASTOR:

Dear Church Family,

Very few things I have read over my lifetime have stuck with me. My memory is quite short-term. Like many of us, I do remember some famous lines from Shakespeare, Mark Twain, the Bible and other familiar books. For the most part, I forget a lot of what I read - no photographic memory in my noggin!

Sometimes it is titles of books that I remember and not the content of the book. One such title I remember well is a book called, "Small, Strong Churches". If my memory serves me well it was written from a United Methodist perspective. For every town where there is a post office, there is likely a United Methodist congregation.

The gist of the book, which I do remember, was something like this: Most churches are small. Most pastors will pastor a small church. Don't get overwhelmed by trying to be big when the reality is most ministers and churches will serve a small situation. So, make your small church a strong church!

I liked that thesis and it has stuck with me over the years. A lot of churches and ministers spend time wondering why they aren't big or wishing they could get big. That may not be in God's plan.

Over 80% of churches are one hundred or fewer in number. Our church's stats are something like seventy family units and 120 men, women and children in active participation in our body life. We have many homebound folks and some children who are members but living elsewhere. These statistics put us in the top 20% of churches but nothing near the approximately 2,000 U.S. churches that are called mega due to their weekly attendance of 1,200 plus.

First Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church is a small church by numbers. It isn't mega and it isn't tiny rural. Most importantly, we recognize that it is made up of the Lord's children who have united here.

So, let's be a small, strong church! We worship the living and true God. We grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We fellowship together in our service, meals, worship, learning and advance of the Gospel.

One of the ways I hope that our church is strengthened is by our fellowship or partnership together in every aspect of church life.

Our morning and evening Lord's Day services are the most important, most critical events where we can spend time together.

Our Shorter Catechism (see questions 82-107 - you Sunday night folks have heard this bit the last two Sunday nights!) teaches that disciples of Christ are those who: 1) profess faith in Jesus Christ as the savior of sinners, 2) repent of their sins and endeavor to live as obedient children of God, and 3) make diligent use of the means of grace (word, sacraments, prayer, fellowship and suffering).

I like to think of additional events, those apart from Sunday Worship, as "icing on the cake" - things that can make church life and Christian growth sweeter!

Some events that "ice the cake" are: Sunday School Fellowship Classes, Young at Heart, Sunday Night Suppers, Hymn Sings and Socials, Mens' Fellowships, Ladies' Fellowships, Choir, Handbells, Newsletters, Sunday Lunches and other events.

In order to grow stronger, some missing areas to "ice the cake" have recently been added! Here is the first report:

Cat Kids is our new ministry for children up through high school. We meet twice monthly on Wednesdays at 6 PM for brief instruction from the Westminster Shorter Catechism and then go play together. Last week we played girls vs. boys in kickball out in the field. I'll let them tell you who won!

There's a wonderful story told about the value of learning the catechism. It tells of two military men walking down a chaotic, war-filled street during World War II. Both are peaceful, confident and resolute. One asked the other, "What is man's chief end?" The other gave the reply, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever." The first man replied, "I knew you were a shorter catechism boy!"

Our hope for this ministry is to learn truth, get to know one another, have a place to invite friends and to have fun. Another goal of mine is for the children of the church to know their pastor in a way other than on Sundays. I don't want to be the guy up in the pulpit wearing the black robe and be largely unknown to the kids of the church. I want to be their pastor - leading them in worship and preaching the word to them. But I also want to spend specific time with them teaching them and playing games. I pray it will be fruitful! Shorter Catechism boys and girls grow up to be Shorter Catechism men and women, able to be peaceful, confident and resolute in the world as it is.

So families with kids up through high school - check out the dates for Cat Kids in the ministry calendar and plan to come! Bring someone along as well.

Another addition is our **Table Talk Gathering for 20s and 30s**. We will meet once a month on Tuesdays for fellowship and to discuss a hot topic - check the ministry opportunities listings for the future dates. Our first gathering last night had seven participants and we discussed the blessings and curses of technology. So much has advanced in the last century and if you simply look at the rise of smart phones and tablets, you will see that they are central to nearly everyone's life. Life is mediated through devices. The blessings? One device does so much and makes wonderful content available to us. The curses? So much is available and grabs our constant attention.

Some of you may notice that the church bus is missing from the parking lot. Here's a brief story behind the story. A few months back at Young at Heart, Mark McKinney from Christian Adventurers Youth Ministry made a presentation of their ministry. In the course of telling about how they minister to young folks in our county, it was mentioned that a bus fund was established for a much-needed vehicle to transport their kids around town and to various camps. Several church officers in attendance glanced at one another with the affirming nod indicating that we all were thinking the same thing: *we have a bus that is underutilized if not used at all. They need just what we have.* After several months of thinking it over and in recent conversations with leaders of the Christian Adventurers Youth Ministry, we struck a deal for the sale of the bus and the shelter. The bus was sold on Monday and the shelter will soon be removed to their facility. We pray that after they put on a set of tires, mark the bus with their own name and do a few needed maintenance jobs, that the bus will serve them well! If we have needs for travel, we can utilize late model vehicle rentals that will equal in cost what we paid out to own our bus.

May the Lord bless and keep us. And grow us into a small, strong church - a nuclear reactor for the Gospel!

This Sunday Night @ First

Join us at 6 PM. We will sing, pray and hear from God's Word as we study Psalms 44. Our guest pastor is Rev. Kent Butterfield of First Reformed Presbyterian Church of Durham. He is married to Rosaria and they have four children. Following we will have a salad bar for Simple Supper. Lettuce will be provided; please bring fixings—cheese, cucumbers, tomatoes, croutons, carrots, and more!

The Prayer Needs of Our Church Family

Give thanks for the Limon's new granddaughter: Margaret "Meg" Estela, born 5/22/17 at 9:50 PM, measuring 7.3 pounds and 19.5 inches.

Upcoming Surgery: Jackie Smith, cataracts. Chuck Renegar, cataracts.

Health & Strength: Tom McPherson (blood clot), Ferald Mann (severe nerve pain), Connie Bennett (Parkinson's/foot surgery), Cindy Wright (complications with ankle), Dottie Latta and Audrey Turner.

Homebound Members: Elizabeth Barber, Theo Baulding, Jean Cathey, Foy Evans, Doris Haywood, June Little, George McKinney, Catherine Mangum, Pat Montgomery, Gene Parks, Mae Wilburn and Al Wright.

Family of the Week: Ben Gregory and Gary Gregory.

Personal Missions: for the doors of opportunity to open that we may minister the Gospel to others.

Local Missions: that the Gospel would be evident to those who seek rest and refreshment through Siloam Missionary Homes.

Foreign Missions: that God would protect our missionaries in volatile political environments, especially Andrew Brunson suffering persecution in Turkey.

Persecuted Christians: for the perseverance of the saints who bear distress for the sake of Christ.

Governing Authorities: pray for our local police, fire and rescue personnel – especially those in our church.

Our friends, relatives, and A.R.P. Chaplains serving around the world in the U.S. Military.

Local Church: Adams Farm Community Church (A.R.P.), Jamestown, Rev. Brian Howard.

Regional Ministry: David Springer (Campus Outreach at Elon University)

For those in our congregation who are sent on short-term missions:

Summer 2017 Wales & Scotland:

Karen Hoke, Lynn Limon, & Joyce Payne;

Mexico Music Camp: Ed Limon

Missions Sunday & Congregational Lunch

Mark your calendars for **Sunday, June 4**. Rev. Josh Grimm, along with his wife Ashely and son Isaac will be with us for Sunday School, Worship, and lunch. Pastor Grimm will share in the Sunday School hour, preach in our morning service, and be available during lunch to tell us about campus ministry at Queens University in Charlotte, NC. They serve through Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church's (ARP) partnership with the Presbyterian Church in America's (PCA) Reformed University Fellowship (RUF).

Please bring a salad and dessert. Main dish is provided.

Save The Date!
August 15th



First ARP Church night at the Burlington Royals Baseball Game!
Tickets are \$6!

(Also, let Bryan know if you would like to participate in singing the National Anthem—any age!)

First ARP Calendar of Events

May

28 Simple Supper (salad bar) - 7 PM

June

4 Missions Luncheon & Jubilee
Birthday Celebration: guest minister & family

5 Men's Lunch: 18 Words, Ch. 4 (Southbound Sandwich Works) -noon
6-8 General Synod Meeting-Bonclarken

11 Lord's Supper

12 Men's Evening Gathering: 18 Words, Ch. 4 (Panera Bread)-7 PM

13 Ladies' Book Study: *Envy of Eve*, Ch. 4 (The Root Trackside)

14 Cat Kids - 6 PM

19 Stated Session Meeting

20 Table Talk-(20's & 30's) 7 PM

21 Cat Kids - 6 PM

25 Simple Supper - 7 PM

27 Young at Heart Luncheon - noon

Find ideas for shopping all year long for Operation Christmas Child shoebox items:

<https://www.samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child/year-round-packing-ideas/>

MAY

BIRTHDAYS

Jason Massey	5/28
Esther Roy	5/28
Kathy Isley	5/30
Mae Wilburn	5/31

ANNIVERSARIES

Ferald & Betty Mann (50)	5/28
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JUNE

BIRTHDAYS

Dick Wright	6/4
Heather Hayes	6/6
Kevin Hutelmyer	6/8
Darrell Plyter	6/9
Steven Cobb	6/16
Kelton Christopher	6/17
Audrey Sneed	6/17
Judy Bernhardt	6/18
Aaric Newton	6/21
Kasey Burwell	6/23
Kristen Carter	6/23
Lainey Childrey	6/23

ANNIVERSARIES

Kristen & Travis Carter (4)	6/1
Lola & Jim Knox (61)	6/8
Esther & Darrell Plyter (55)	6/9
Kathryn & Stephen Crotts (44)	6/16
Mandy & Bryan Crotts (18)	6/19
Pat & Grady Pack (62)	6/19
Bryan & Karen Jones (30)	6/20

NEW Ministry Opportunities!

Table Talk:

20s & 30s are invited to gather with Pastor Crotts on **Tuesday, June 20th at 7 PM** for dinner and conversation.

Text Bryan at 336-944-2892 to R.S.V.P.

Cat Kids is for young people through high school age!

Join Pastor Crotts in learning the Westminster Shorter Catechism, fellowship and games on **Wednesdays, June 14th & 21st at 6 PM!**

Nursery:

May 28: Macon Baird & Donna Wolff
June 4: Laurene Howington & Fran Haynes

Counter:

May 28: Stephen Robinson
June 4: John Robinson

Deacon on Duty:

May 28: Larry Isley
June 4: Stephen Robinson

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