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AUGUST 2026

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Faith
CHURCH

A WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY OF GRACE

Faith Church, a Reformed Presbyterian congregation, is a member of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), a denomination faithful to the Scriptures, true to the Reformed Faith, and obedient to the Great Commission.

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

BY JOHN ARMSTRONG JR.

August 2026

Wow, we're already coming to the end of Summer, and school is going to start soon. It makes you wonder sometimes at the speed of things. You can certainly affirm what we read in James 4:14, *What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.* Since our lives are fleeting, we need to focus on what is most important. Let us glorify God and enjoy Him forever. To that end, let me say something about the way we worship referencing a newsletter article I wrote years ago, speaking about the elements in our worship service.

Pastor's Ponderings – March 2011

If you make a habit of reading this article in each Beacon, then you know I have been commenting on the various elements and parts in our worship services. This time around we come to the singing of the "Doxology." Doxology, literally means "to speak praise." The singing of "the Doxology" is a particularly American Protestant tradition. In our congregation we have sung the doxology every week for at least as long as I have been pastor here. That is 270 Sundays so far. We use the same words to the same tune every time. To give you some more background, I am going to borrow a short article entitled "The Doxology" by Mike Ross and then will comment on it at the end. Very few believers in our reformed and evangelical churches realize where the Doxology comes from, even though they sing it most every Sunday. In fact, it is the last stanza of three hymns written by the Anglican Bishop Thomas Ken, who lived from 1637 to 1711.

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His three hymns are entitled: The Morning Hymn, the Evening Hymn, and the Midnight Hymn, to be sung at their respective times in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer liturgy. Ken placed this stanza at the end of each hymn...

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him all Creatures here below,
Praise Him above, ye heavenly Host,
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
Amen.

This stanza is today used by more English-speaking Christians in worship than any other stanza or single verse in existence. It reflects a great tradition of worship, in simple verse, by the people of God, and it unites us in praise to the saints of all times and places. There is nothing in the regulative principle of worship that prohibits the use of traditional hymns, choruses, verses or prayers, provided these traditional elements of worship do not violate the Biblical guidelines of worship. Tradition that is Biblical is indeed a positive thing and a strengthening influence upon corporate worship. Perhaps it would be good, on particular Sundays, to sing the two stanzas of Ken's "Morning Hymn," in total:

Awake my soul, and with the Sun
Thy daily stage of duty run;
Shake off dull sloth, and joyful rise
to pay thy morning sacrifice.
Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him all Creatures here below,
Praise Him above, ye heavenly Host,
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
Amen.

There has been some comment within the congregation about the repetition of the Doxology. As the Session has discussed this matter we have concluded that first of all there is nothing wrong with us continuing to repeat the same doxology. However, there is also nothing wrong with our not singing the same words to the same tune every time. Therefore we are going to try changing the tune. In time, we may also change the words we use as well. Don't panic! We are not giving up on the traditional setting of these words with the tune "Old Hundredth," we simply will not be using it every time. Now let me address the inevitable question, "why do we have to change things?" I want you to know we are not being forced to change anything. Change is good in that it makes us stop and focus on what we are doing. One of the big problems with worship is the tendency for it to become a rote exercise. Worship of the living God must not be allowed to become some kind of mechanical repetition. We need to engage personally when we sing the praises of God. By switching the tunes and the words we sing, we are forced to stay more focused and engaged in worship and that is a good thing. Remember, just because we add variety to what we are doing does not mean we are giving up our traditions. If you are offended by a change in worship that is not un-biblical then I challenge you to reflect on why you are offended. We need to guard against our non-biblical traditions becoming "golden calves." Unfortunately, since we are sinners, we tend to be blind to our own "idols" in worship. Therefore it is important to expose those idols from time to time.



VBS Struggles

By Quentin Johnston



How would you preach the gospel to a five-year-old? If I were asked the question, my gut reaction would be to think it would be easy. Just tell the gospel simply—Jesus saves you from your sin. In my work as a pastoral intern, I've done all sorts of tasks, but to my surprise, presenting the gospel to the children at VBS was a big challenge.

Our VBS curriculum was titled *The King Is Coming*, which presented the activities and the messages in a medieval theme with dragons, princesses, and knights. Each day, we focused on a theme of Scripture and connected it to the skit, games, activities, and even the snacks of that day. At the end of our program each day, I would present the gospel but only covering the topics surrounding that day's theme. The order of themes throughout the week was

(1) Creation, (2) Fall, (3) Covenant, (4) Salvation, (5) Glory.

Presenting the topic of Creation was easy enough, but the difficulty quickly picked up. Sitting down and prepping to discuss the Fall brought me to a complete stop. How does one present this doctrine to a young audience sufficiently and appropriately? The Fall and understanding the nature of sin is a dark topic and carries very disturbing implications for all of life.

Children need to know this doctrine, so I needed to take care how I presented this to the kids, but I struggled. On the one hand, I did not want to confuse the children by presenting too many complex details or dark subject matter inappropriate for the audience. But on the other hand, I would dare not oversimplify this important doctrine. The Fall does more to life than cause pain when I stub my toe or hit my siblings. In the end, I confess that I erred on the side of oversimplifying the message given the time constraints and the seriousness of the subject matter. I didn't feel like I did a good job.

The next day, I had to teach on "Covenant" — not exactly an easier subject to teach little children. But I decided that from then on, I would be less restrained with my words and present those topics the way I normally would, while doing what I could to package the message in a way the kids would understand. As a result, I felt like the gospel presentations went a lot better for the rest of the week. This article isn't exactly an "Intern's Insight" but more of me sharing a struggle. My "insight" would be this—sharing the gospel is not a light thing, so don't treat it as such. These are eternal souls that we speak to. Thank God that in the end, it's not up to me and the rhetoric in which I present the gospel, but I also want to take seriously the warnings the Bible gives to those who teach. I need to trust more in God. I need to be faithful to water the seed with the pure water of God's Word. God will bring the growth.





VBS 2026



Overview of the 53rd General Assembly

By Rich Rochford

If you are new to our church or don't fully understand church polity, our church is a part of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), and its form of government is presbyterian, which means that we are a part of a larger body of Presbyterians, ruled not by bishops or cardinals, but by elders. The PCA comprises three church courts. Each church has a session; sessions are part of a larger geographical group of churches, called a presbytery; and, finally, the General Assembly, a gathering of all the lower courts in one location to govern the affairs of the denomination.

TE John Armstrong, RE Martin Hudzinski, and I represented you at our denomination's 53rd General Assembly this year, which took place in Louisville, Kentucky. The General Assembly was held during the week of June 22, 2026. As the highest church court, the assembly handles the issues and business of the entire denomination, including changes to the Book of Church Order and the Rules of Assembly, as well as committee actions from Presbyteries and Committees of the General Assembly. This year's General Assembly was given 91 Overtures to act upon. Overtures are recommendations submitted to the assembly to change current standards or practices. The number of overtures presented was a dramatic increase over years past and posed a challenge for the overtures committee, which prepares, reviews, and recommends action to the Assembly for discussion or action.

The moderator of this year's General Assembly was Melton Duncan. The Overtures Committee worked tirelessly to consolidate, remove, and act upon these overtures. The following is a concise summary of these Overtures.

Female Officers: Commissioners overwhelmingly defeated Overture 37, reaffirming that ordained diaconal office is reserved for men and rejecting efforts to allow local churches the option to ordain women as deacons.

Overture 61 - Complementarianism Formally commends the Danvers Statement on biblical gender roles. Upholds biblical manhood/womanhood as a faithful resource without altering constitutional text.

Overture 66 - National History Adopted a Declaration of Thanksgiving for the U.S. 250th anniversary. Acknowledges God's common grace and historical providence under a biblical worldview.

Ministerial Requirements: Overtures regarding the educational requirements for ministers. Overture 12 sparked significant debate, particularly over proposals to remove the bachelor's degree requirement while retaining the master's degree requirement.

Financial Sustainability: Facing rising assembly costs, the General Assembly approved updates to its registration and financial structure, establishing a 2027 standard registration fee of \$650, with provisions for smaller churches and financial aid.

Artificial Intelligence: A proposal to form an ad interim study committee on Artificial Intelligence passed with more than a two-thirds majority.

Critical Race Theory: A proposal (Overture 80) to form a study committee on Critical Race Theory was defeated.

The Assembly extended the timelines for the existing ad interim committees on Christian Nationalism and the Directory for Worship. They will present findings at the 54th General Assembly. Finally, John Bise, the interim Clerk of the General Assembly, was replaced by TE Fred Greco as the new Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. He will serve as the new Stated Clerk, replacing Bryan Chapell, who stepped down last year. A more complete and thorough review of the 53rd General Assembly may be explored at the denomination's PCA Website or By-Faith's website.

Featured RECIPES

OF FAITH CHURCH



Chicken Poppyseed Casserole

by Anna Newman



Serves 6-8

Prep time 15 minutes

Cooking Temperature 350 degrees

- 3 cups cooked chicken, shredded/cubed
- 1 pint sour cream
- 1 can cream of chicken condensed soup
- 1 cup cooked rice
- 2 Tbsp poppyseeds
- 1 sleeve Ritz crackers, crumbled

Mix together soup cream and soup in a large bowl. Mix in chicken, rice, and poppyseeds. Spread in a lightly greased 9x13" pan.

Melt butter and add Ritz cracker bits. Sprinkle over chicken mixture.

Bake uncovered in preheated 350 degree oven for about 30 minutes, until bubbly.



Notes: This can be made ahead. Topping should be added just before baking. Perfect for a family dinner, when company is coming or for the meal ministry!

DIAL-AN-ELDER

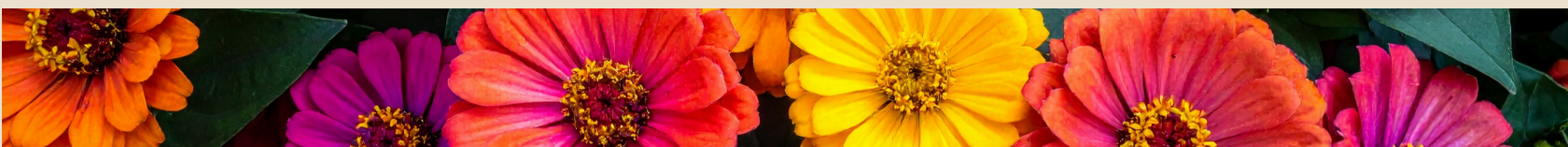
By Bruce Brierly
(Ruling Elder)



That's right, we have a new program at Faith Church called, DIAL-AN-ELDER! You don't have to call Pastor Armstrong with your issues. He's a busy guy. Now, you can just dial one of the Ruling Elders and they can help you.

In all seriousness, we now have roughly 180 members in our church. We also have another 20 or so regular attenders. It is impossible to expect our pastor to handle all of the issues that may come up in a church our size. That is why we have Ruling Elders. Jesus is the Shepherd of the church, and He has appointed both pastors and elders to govern as "Under-Shepherds". Each has the same authority though different roles, but we are all here to shepherd the sheep (that's each of us).

The names and phone numbers of all of the elders are in the bulletin. You can also see our handsome faces on a bulletin board in the Narthex. If you have a problem, need, or concern, call one of your elders. We are here to help and serve you!



Victory Jam 2026





HAPPY BIRTHDAY
August

- 1 Daniel Newman
- 1 Steve Tuel
- 5 David Phillips
- 8 Clark Adams
- 8 Sarah Bolen
- 9 Bryan Johnston
- 11 Barry Kerstetter
- 13 Julie Nardi
- 13 Nathan Nardi
- 18 Charlotte Wilson
- 20 George Cramer
- 20 Lydia Yost
- 22 Calvin Baker
- 23 Charles Moore
- 25 Donnie Frost
- 25 Quentin Johnston
- 25 Tim Snyder
- 27 Charlie Van Meter
- 29 John Cowen
- 29 Susan Hauver
- 29 Caleb Hudzinski
- 29 Megan Kenny
- 30 Jonathan Newman



Psalm 8

Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens. Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them. You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! his holy name for ever and ever.

Happenings

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WEEKLY

Sundays:

- 9:15am Sunday School
- 10:15am Fellowship
- 10:45am Worship
- 5:30pm Evening Worship

Every Other Tuesday:

- 12:00pm Men's Bible Study

Wednesdays:

- 12:00pm Men's Lunch Bunch
- 7:00pm Prayer meeting

Thursdays:

- 7:00pm ESL Ministry (breaking for summer)

Fridays:

- 10:30am Fiber Fellowship (breaking for summer May 22)

Saturdays:

- 10:30am Downtown Christian Fellowship

MONTHLY

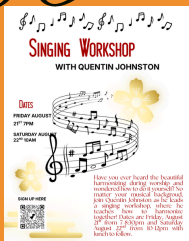
Third Saturdays, (18th)

- 8:30am Men's Breakfast
- 8:45am Women's Bible Study **

Third Sundays, (19th)

- 12:30pm Fellowship Meal

Coming Events



8158 Yellow Springs Road.
PO Box 8158 Frederick, MD
21702

Sunday School for All Ages 9:15am
Worship Service 10:45am
Evening Worship, 1st Sundays 5:30pm

faithchurch@faithreformed.org
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301-662-0662

