



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

E-Link

June 8, 2022

10:00 am
Sunday Worship
Firstprescf.org



This Weekend's Worship – 10:00 am

Sermon: The Pentecost After-Party
Scripture: Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31 and John 16:12-15

Prayer of Preparation

As the earth groans for restoration,
the Spirit comes to rouse the people.
Her chaos births new worlds.
Her fires spark movements.

she comforts those troubled by evil
and agitates the apathetic.
come and disturb our complacency.
Come and inspire our courage.
come and enliven all the lifeless places,
tired with grief, frustrated with struggle.
In community, make us a passionate people
with a wild and unruly practice of hope.
Amen. *-enfleshed*

Matthew 25 – Building Congregational Vitality – Listening to Young Families

As we seek to build the vitality of our congregation, it is essential to listen to the various experiences our generations experience. An article has been making the clergy social media rounds lately, written by Laura Stephens-Reed, a clergy and congregational coach based in Alabama. It is titled, "[Why bringing in young families is not a magic bullet for your congregation](#)". Many people have remarked on how well her words accurately reflect the experiences of many young families and I concur. Whether you identify as part of a young family and/or you hope to see more young families in worship, *please take time to read the article below* (or read it from the blog [here](#)).

Why bringing in young families is not a magic bullet for your congregation

by Laura Stephens-Reed

I have heard it many times in congregations experiencing stagnation or decline: If we could just bring in more young families...

This is an understandable thought. For churches with nurseries that once burst at the seams or with memories of youth choirs that went on tour in the summers, bringing in more young people seems like the obvious way to enliven a graying or shrinking church. Bringing in these families, though, is neither a simple task nor an easy solution. Here's why:

Young families are busy. This is not to say they are too busy to spend time with God.

(It's important to refrain from judging how faithful anyone is by how much time they anchor a pew.) It is to say that demands on parents and kids are sprawling, no longer contained to certain days of the week. It is very challenging for them to push back on those pressures.

Young families don't want to be told what to believe. The mode of church that many of us are accustomed to is a didactic one in which a pastor or Sunday School teacher holds the wisdom and imparts it to hearers. It doesn't always leave space for or encourage discussion, questions, or creativity. Most young families – both parents and kids – are not interested in a one-way conversation.

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Church Birthdays

Jun. 8-Jackson Humpal,
12-Molly Wells, 13-Debbie Smith,
16, Sandy Lawry,
Jakob Hagee, 17-
Jeannette Mukaysirie

Notice...

The memorial service for **Susan Runkle** will begin 10:30 am at the church on Saturday, June 18. Visitation in the narthex is one hour prior. Please wear a mask. A lunch will be served in the dining room.

A memorial visitation for **Vi Lund** is Saturday, June 18 at Island Park shelter #5, 2:00 to 4:00 pm.

Pentecost Offering

It's not too late to give to the Pentecost Offering. **40% from our church goes to our Soles for Souls clothing project.**

Volunteers can sign up anytime online:

Greeter Sign Up:
[Sign Up Genius: Greeters](#)

Worship Leader Sign Up:
[Sign Up Genius: Worship Leaders](#)

Or sign up in the narthex!

Thanks for serving last week:

Worship Leader: Jan Thedens

Videographer: Kevin Thedens

Computer Operator: Rob Cline

Installation of Officers: Hope Goering

Communion Preparation: Darrel & Marsha Flater

Liturgical Decorations: Dave & Sue Luck

Pentecost Cake Reception: Jim & Jane Seeley, Rob
& Lynette Cline, Jeverna & Tom Mulligan

Window Washing: Jim Seeley

Lawn Mowing: Brad Braley

(Mowing the week of **6/12** - Steve Moon)

Thank You

Thank you for the card with your thoughts and prayers. The weather has been hot and I ended up in the hospital with dehydration. Dust storms were out yesterday. Beans and corn are up by some miracle. Thanks again for your thoughts and prayers.

God bless each and every one in Christ,
Roger Dean

Hymn Sing

Dave and Sue Feltman will be hosting a hymn sing at their home on Sunday, June 26 at 6:30 pm. It will be outside (and mostly in the shade). Rain date will be Sunday, July 3.

Please bring a "Glory to God" hymnal and your own lawn chair, your choice of bug spray just in case, and a plate of cookies to share. Water will be available. Please contact us to RSVP.

This week's schedule

Pentecost Sunday, June 12

10:00 am Worship, sanctuary

Tuesday, June 14

6:30 pm Session Meeting, dining room

Next Saturday, June 18

10:30 am Susan Runkle Memorial, sanctuary

To a Good Home!



There are six red geraniums in the church's north entry that need a loving home. Anyone who wishes to take one is welcome—first come, first served. They're free, but if you wish to leave a donation toward our Holiday Decorations Fund, you may drop it off in the office.



Installation of Officers

Welcome to our new class of officers for 2022-2026!

L-R: Elders Scott Connolly, Tanner Barber, Sandy Jensen and Deacon Stephanie Marra

Personal Care Drive

Community Ministries is collecting personal hygiene products for Eye of the Needle. Products requested are bar soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and deodorant (only those items, please.) Donations can be left in the marked baskets inside the north entrance from now through July 17.

We will pack donated items into hygiene kits following worship on July 24. These kits will be given to students and families along with school uniforms and shoes as part of Eye of the Needle's school uniform drive.



Young families don't want to be gawked at. They know when they are the object of spoken (or unspoken) sentimentality: "Thank you for being a first-time visitor. Would you like to become a deacon?" "It's great that we now have people with energy to pick up what we're too tired to do!" "Aren't those kids so cute sitting on the platform during the children's message?" "I'm relieved to know that because of these young people, the church will outlive me." These are the messages of a congregation focused on survival, not on fully welcoming young families on their own terms, and they are not here for it.

Young families aren't interested in "how we've always done it." They can respect tradition and their elders without wanting to replicate old patterns. So if your church brings in young families, expect to be changed by them. They will ask why you do certain things. They will want to know how you are using your gifts to show Christ's love to the world. They will not join in ministries for which they see no relevance.

Young families don't have disposable income. Sometimes the stated or unstated hope is that bringing in a new demographic will not just increase attendance but also bolster the church budget. If you're looking for a financial boost, this slice of the population does not offer it. Young adults might have student debt or be paying an outpriced mortgage because of inflation. They might be working multiple jobs (some of which might overflow into Sundays) because what they are paid and how far that amount goes are misaligned, through no fault of their own.

Not all communities have a big demographic of young families. Your community might be aging, shrinking, or both. If industry has left your town or if there is no preschool or afterschool care, it's unlikely that there are huge numbers of young adults where you live.

These might be hard truths to receive. If you have ears to hear, however, don't despair. In 2010 the Pew Research Center conducted a study of millennials (who would now be in roughly the 30-40 age range). Findings indicated that millennials were just as likely to believe in God as preceding generations and that

they engaged in regular spiritual practices. This means that there are probably unaffiliated young adults open to a faith community. If your church is truly ready to welcome them, here are some things to keep in mind:

Young families need a place to find their center. Over-programming, which is often what we assume will bring in families, won't accomplish that. Families are already dealing with that outside the church. Instead, young adults and kids need a container in which they can develop relationships across generations and with a God who calls them to transformation through delight and rest and community.

Young families want to participate in meaning making. They have big questions and need a place to ask them. Every generation has lived through "unprecedented times" and had to figure out where God is in all of it and how faith could help them navigate their circumstances well. Younger generations are no different.

Young families want to be seen, welcomed, and supported. They need a village. Many young families live distantly from support from extended family, and it's tough to juggle a lot of commitments without it. They can benefit greatly from spiritual friends and family, people who invest in and show up for them when they need help.

Young families want to make a difference. Many younger people are hesitant about the church because they see it as standoffish toward, if not downright hostile to, the world around it. But if your congregation offers hands-on avenues to minister in the larger community and is open to anyone who might walk through the doors, that piques the interest of many young adults and kids.

Young families want to contribute in ways other than financially. They want to collaborate and create. They want to bring their talents and wisdom and energy to bear. So, while they might not turn in a pledge card, they could be enthusiastic about other opportunities to engage.

Making space for young families involves hard, holy, self-reflective work on the part of church. What future is God inviting us to consider? What changes, not just in how we do but also in how we think and feel, will this involve? Pray for God's wisdom and then wait on God's unexpected but always good work in your midst."