

## *God Takes the Summer Off*

*(excerpt from devotional article - origin unknown)*

The writer of Hebrews tells us not to forsake “...the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” Hebrews 10:25

When we think of summertime we begin to think about relaxing and summer activities, taking vacation trips, and generally taking time off from our regular activities and responsibilities at work and at church. But what about God? Recently Rebecca Chase found this devotional article about God taking the summer off.

Here it is:

### **God Takes the Summer Off**

We are sorry to inform you that God will not be available during the summer beginning June 1<sup>st</sup>. He feels He deserves some time off, so He has canceled His normal duties for the summer.

He has agreed to send the sun and rain occasionally when He happens to be in town, but so far as answering prayers for the needs of your family, please don't count on Him.

God has let church leaders know that they should not plan any outreach efforts or mission trips during the summer—or at least if they do, they will have to do it without Him because He plans to be gone a lot to see relatives, baseball games and the like. God has expressed the opinion that we should find someone else to take His place.

Then we reminded Him of His promise, “Surely I will be with you always,” but He said He didn't realize when He said it that it meant going two or three years without a break. He expressed His sincere regret and hopes that it will not cause anyone any inconvenience.

God may be contacted any time after September 1<sup>st</sup> at which time He hopes to get back into the routine. “Please defer all requests until then,” He requested.

**Aren't you glad God *doesn't* take the summer off?**

(And as you will see on the next few pages – neither do we!)



## *From the Desk of Rebecca Chase*

### Director of Community Care

*Activities for children and adults at FPCC are definitely NOT taking the summer off!*

#### **Camp Agape Tuesday June 25<sup>th</sup> to Thursday the 27<sup>th</sup>**

Bible camp all about Relationships—based on Bible characters

- David & Jonathan
- Ruth & Naomi
- Martha & Mary

Open to children ages 3-10 – especially focusing on Beginnings & Beyond Preschool and the churches on our campus – 9:00am until 12:00 noon starting in the Sanctuary.

Contact **Rebecca Chase** (676-7177 or rebeccac@fpccconcord.org) or **Marilyn Wollenweber** (672-2250 or wollenweber126@gmail.com) to register or volunteer!

#### **Children's Worship Themes for Summer**

Our children's Sunday school is going strong and will be looking at the following themes this summer.

- The new church in Acts: praying and helping others
- Elijah
- Jonah

#### **Groups Gathering This Summer ~**

**Men's Bible Study** (Tues 6:45am)  
Digger's Diner, 1895 Farm Bureau Rd. – studying 2 Samuel  
**David Dowell** (914-0429)

#### **Concord Adult Activities**

(Tues 9:00am–12:30pm)  
Fellowship Hall - Tai Chi (9:45-10:45am), Knitting/Crocheting for NICU & Veterans. Copper Enameling, Dominoes & Mahjong, Singing 3<sup>rd</sup> Tues, Potluck lunch 1<sup>st</sup> Tues, Pizza 3<sup>rd</sup> Tues.

**Susan Stanley** (510-512-4032)

#### **Bible Study**

(Wed 1:00–2:30pm)  
Fireside Room - *The Gospel of Luke*  
**LaVerne Herren** (682-3882)

#### **Small Groups**

**Wednesdays in June**  
(6:30–8:30pm, including light dinner) Fireside Room. *Christ in the Psalms*  
**Rebecca Chase** (858 805-5874)

#### **Wednesdays**

(7:00pm) Clayton - *Revelation*  
**Jim W & Marilyn W** (672-2250)

**Al-Anon Group** (Thurs 12:10pm until 1:00pm) - Fireside Room  
Family of Alcoholics support group

**First Friday Group** (1<sup>st</sup> Friday 6:00–10:00pm), Harvey's House, Concord. Young Adults Art/Culture discussion

**Eric & Kristin** (617) 584-8919

#### **Got Questions—Try ALPHA**

This Outreach Opportunity starts early July. Don't miss this chance to be involved in INVITING people to get to meet Jesus and ask the hard questions. Also looking for table hosts, helpers, food cooks, and servers. Talk to me or to **Ruth Stevenson** (709-8819). You will not regret this ministry opportunity!

#### **All-Church BBQ!**

Mark your calendar for Sunday August 25<sup>th</sup> at 2:30pm

- Games, Food, and Fellowship with our friends at the campus churches
- Contact **Ann Johnson** (676-4330) –especially if you have BBQ expertise! †

## *Worship & Music*

### by Andrew Cardiasmenos – Director of Worship & Music

To begin, I am very proud of our choir for all their hard work putting together the Spring Concert on June 2<sup>nd</sup>! We featured two new soloists, Mia Skolnick and Jose Hernandez, and showcased a variety of musical styles. It was a great way to close such a fulfilling season until we start fresh in the Fall.

In the meantime, beginning in July, we will start summer choir once again. Anyone is welcome to join us on a Sunday morning to sing in worship! The music will be very easy and fun to learn and

very low commitment – just a quick rehearsal before service starts. If anyone is interested, please contact me (718-928-4805 or andrew.cardiasmenos@gmail.com) – or simply come and see me after service ends! I hope to hear from you!

The summer is also a wonderful time to focus on developing the sound of our worship band, taking advantage of the extra rehearsal time to learn more up-to-date contemporary Christian songs for worship and experiment with different combinations of

instruments. We always welcome anyone interested in joining the band as well – even if you play an instrument already represented! Don't hesitate to contact me if you are interested! We always have a lot of fun praising God in this fellowship.

Finally, a couple goals I have for the summer include writing compositions for the Flock and the choir, and reaching out to the other churches on our campus for opportunities to join together in song – strengthening our community in Christ. †

## Praise in the Park – September 7<sup>th</sup>

By Darryl McCollum

It's that time of year again. Praise in the Park, year six is scheduled for Saturday September 7<sup>th</sup> from noon until 8:00pm. This year we are blessed to highlight local Christian artist and speaker Justin McRoberts. Many of us at FPCC have heard Justin take the pulpit here on a few occasions over the years. Justin spends much of his time traveling, sharing his gifts of song and story telling at churches and events around the country. In addition to Justin, singer songwriter Bob Kilpatrick, local Christian Hip Hop favorite The Lion's Den, and Praise in the Park alum SkaAmen will be featured at Praise in the Park.

Last year, 3000 people from more than 60 churches were in attendance throughout the day. In the first several hours of the event prayer team members reported 15 people either rededicating or coming to faith in Jesus. 21 local non-profits in service to the community were on hand to offer assistance and to provide opportunities for us to serve. We anticipate similar numbers this year as the event has become a perennial favorite among the valley churches.

I can't stress enough how blessed we are to have such a great partner as the City of Concord to work with in making this event a reality. We

have a great opportunity to be able to worship in the town square and release God's music into the world so that God can use the melodies and words to change hearts and improve the overall environment in which we live, work, and play.

Our FPCC mission to Love God, Love People...Serve, aligns very well with that of Praise in the Park whose motto is Faith, Love, and Service. Faith in God, Love for all, and service to each other and community.

If you are interested in volunteering at a booth, being part of a prayer team, or representing FPCC at the event please contact **Darryl McCollum** †

## Guess Who's Coming for Lunch?

by the Great Commission Team

Summer is here again, and your Great Commission Team has invited several of our supported missionaries to come and bring us up-to-date on what they are doing to reach out to folks who don't know Christ or help the less fortunate around the world. Some of our missions work locally, but this summer's guests are working abroad.

**July 14<sup>th</sup> – Christy Reiners** will be speaking about what *In His Steps* is doing to improve medical service for Palestinians, particularly to focusing on women with breast cancer, a scourge that is prevalent in Palestine. We should also get an update on her continuing struggle to be allowed back into Israel.

**July 28<sup>th</sup> – Carolyn Kurtz** will update us on the efforts of her organization, *Madeco*, to work with women's groups in northern Ethiopia to provide and install solar panels in villages that are far from the meager electrical grid that exists there. Imagine caring for a sick child or pregnant mother giving birth at night with no better illumination than flashlights!

**August 11<sup>th</sup> – Darla and Nathanael Gregoriev** will talk about their work in Cameroon. Come and hear about the 540+ of their "neighbors" attending a viewing of the *Jesus Film* and *Walking with Jesus Film*. They work with Wycliffe Translators to create and distribute videos in the various local languages, (and you thought Wycliffe just translated the Bible.)

To give you a chance to meet informally and chat with each missionary, the Team is planning a potluck lunch in the Fireside Room after each presentation. We'll provide salad fixings. Please sign up to come (so we know how much to prepare) and volunteer to contribute something, if you want. The sign-up sheets will be available in the Fellowship Hall after church and at the Sunday School class the two Sundays before each missionary is here. For more information, contact **Susan Lawson** at 285-4430.

We hope you'll be able to join us!

*Your Great Commission Team  
(David Dowell, Ann Johnson,  
Susan Koester, Susan Lawson and  
Maren Stanczak)*

## Introducing Rev. Dr. Keith Geckeler

### Bridge Pastor

*We briefly introduced Pastor Keith in our last issue, but thought we would give you a little more background:*

Rev. Dr. Keith Geckeler has been helping us out for the past couple of months and will be with us until a full time pastor is called. "Dr. G" or "Pastor Keith" are his preferred "titles" if you need to refer to him.

Dr. G is a native of Ohio who attended the College of Wooster in Ohio (same school Jim Allardice attended), dropped out to go into VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America – the domestic Peace Corps – now Americorps) and served in E. St. Louis, Illinois and at Crab Orchard Job Corps Center in southern Illinois.

Pastor Keith married Cheryl Carpenter in 1968, finished school at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale in 1970, and together they served as Volunteers in Mission with the grape boycott in Pasadena that summer.

In 1970 he began seminary at San Francisco Theological Seminary, living in Berkeley and attending classes at the Graduate Theological Union. His third year was an "academic internship" in Pt. Loma in San Diego County. He graduated in 1973 with his M. Div. and M.A., did an extra year in Pt. Loma, then took his first call as Associate Pastor in Escondido, California (where the wife of Montclair pastor was a member).

Their first son, Christian, was born there in 1974 and, wanting to get back closer to family in the Midwest, he took a call as solo pastor to a little church in Brighton, Illinois in 1976 and served there until 1981, adopting their youngest son Paul in 1978. He then took a call as pastor to the Greencastle Presbyterian Church in Greencastle, Indiana, home to DePauw University. During this time he completed his Doctor of Ministry from McCormick Theological Seminary.

In 1989 the Greencastle sanctuary was destroyed by a tornado, and the downtown, landlocked congregation chose to buy 7 acres on the edge of town and start over. The experience convinced Pastor Keith of a call to church administration, and in 1991, he accepted a call as Stated Clerk, Treasurer, and Business Administrator for the Presbytery of Whitewater Valley (Indianapolis, Indiana) as an Associate Executive. That proved to be a great fit, and for the next 15 years he enjoyed working for one of the most innovative and healthy presbyteries in the in country, eventually becoming a Co-Executive.

Their granddaughter was born in 2006 in Berkeley, and wanting to be closer to their expanding family, Pastor Keith moved to Orange County California as Associate Executive and Stated Clerk. As in Indiana, in addition to administrative work, Keith took the lead in much Committee on Ministry work, in



mission (including a Partnership in Mexico and camp in Indiana), and in the national church (serving as Parliamentarian at 14 General Assemblies and on the Advisory Committee on the Constitution of the GA.)

Retiring to Walnut Creek, Keith and Cheryl both continued working (Cheryl is a medical social worker having spent 15 years in Hospice and 6 years now in Home Health), enjoying grandchild and son and daughter-in-law – most recently as Transitional Stated Clerk for the Presbytery of San Francisco.

Keith loves his golf (with Jim Allardice as playing partner), reading, and working with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

Having worked with the PNC here at Concord since they began work, he was pleased to step into the position as Bridge Pastor, having come to love the people and the church of First Concord – and, while he is as eager as the PNC for there to be a new full-time, installed pastor, he looks forward to serving the congregation during the bridge period.





FIRST PRESBYTERIAN  
C O N C O R D

1965 Colfax St., Concord, CA 94520

Change Service Requested

## ***First Press***

**Deadline for Sept/Oct Issue:  
Monday, August 26, 2019**

*Thank you for your contribution.  
Submit all news in writing. Digital  
photos are also welcome as long as  
we may use them on our website.  
Please contact the church office  
with address changes!*

### ***Office Hours!***

Open Weekdays  
10:00 am to 4:00 pm

### ***Mission Vision & Values***

#### **Our Mission:**

*Love God, Love People ... Serve*

#### **Vision:**

*As a community hub, connect  
with the needs of people, joyfully  
sharing Jesus and serving where  
God calls.*

#### **Values:**

*Guided by Scripture and prayer,  
we are a welcoming place  
where people, service,  
and God's love meet.*

*Focused on hospitality,  
inclusiveness, and spiritual gifts,  
we worship God with delight.*

*Unified in Jesus Christ,  
we are led by the Holy Spirit  
to invite, engage, and share  
God's Truth with each other,  
our community and the world.*

## ***ALPHA Course – Coming early July***

"Got question? – Try ALPHA." Come see how YOU can participate.  
For more information contact **Ruth Stevenson**.

## ***Camp Agape (children's summer camp)***

Tuesday June 25<sup>th</sup> to Thursday the 27<sup>th</sup>

## ***All-Church BBQ!***

Sunday August 25<sup>th</sup> at 2:30pm

## ***Praise in the Park***

Saturday September 7<sup>th</sup> Starting at Noon

### ***First Press Distribution***

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