

Faith's Happenings...

July, 2023

Happy Birthday

Carl Despreaux	4th
Bernita Bulwan	7th
Jean Matz	8th
Margaret Murphy	12th
Jonathan Armen	22nd
Debbie Porter	29th
Jack Fitzgerald	30th

Happy Anniversary

Jim & Autumn Hardenstine	1st
Les & Cathie VanAllsburg	8th
Gary & Jennifer Boehler	19th
Harold & Linda Schultz	22nd
Bill & Sara Speth	25th
John & Laura Kohler	28th

If we missed your name/date, we're sorry.
Please notify Barbra in the church office
to have your special dates added.

July at a Glance

Mark your calendars now!
Independence Day: July 4
Men of Faith Breakfast: July 11
Ladies Luncheon: July 12
Holy Grounds: July 22





Breakfast

Men's Breakfast Change

Men, please take note: the first Tuesday in July is Independence Day. Therefore, we are moving the men's breakfast at Stefano's to the following Tuesday, July 11. This is for July only!

Long Term Prayer Update

This prayer list is for those who need continued, long-term prayer. We try to keep the weekly prayer list short, so people named may be moved to the newsletter after a few weeks in the bulletin. If you want to add someone to this list, contact Barbra in the church office (697-3313). Please keep these folks in your prayers: Sarah, Hester and Carter Newton, Joanne Best, Kathy Kanak, John Schleede, Carl Jaspers, Lois Howell, Ethel Hunn, Jackie Magee, Gary Wilkins, Neal Schattauer, Scott Schultz, Alex Hoops, Tom Jackling, Ginny Linsberg, Dave & Cathy Deitrich, Jack Myers

"July is hot afternoons and sultry nights and mornings when its joy just to be alive. July is a picnic and a red canoe and a sunburned neck and a softball game and ice tinkling in a tall glass. July is a blind date with summer." – Hal Borland

July Ladies Luncheon

The Ladies Luncheon will be held on Wednesday, July 12th, at Libee's, in the Lemon Bay Plaza (next to Big Lots). Meet us there at 11:30 am. Their menu is on the bulletin board in the narthex. I recommend the Shrimp Corn Chowder, which we have requested as the soup of the day for us. Excellent!! Very nice menu. The restaurant has been remodeled since it was Norma Jean's, and is a comfy place for lunch. Please sign up on the sheet in the narthex! See you there. Need more information? See or call Kathie Wiley (941-662-5383).



As we prepare to celebrate our nation's birth, we do well to pause and reflect on our freedom and place in the world. Our nation has experienced conflict and division that gives us pause. And yet, for all of those dark clouds, our nation is still a beacon of light and hope for many people in our world. The modern phrase, "With great power comes great responsibility," is an adage popularized by Spider-Man. That truism is likely based on Jesus' teaching in Luke 12.48, "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."

As Christians, we are especially blessed with the freedom and opportunity of living in the United States of America. While we all have our challenges, we also have opportunities to help those who have greater challenges and are in greater need. In James 1:27 we read, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows..."

This verse was the basis for our devotions at the last congregation council meeting. As we think about what it means to live our lives in Christ, the answer from James is to look after orphans and widows.

At the time of the early church, as throughout most of history, the most vulnerable people in any society were the orphans (children without parents) and widows (those without a “man”). While we have the witness of many strong women in scripture and across history, we recognize they are the exception rather than the rule. Life and the order of society was skewed in favor of men.

Our priority as Jesus people is to be there for those who are most vulnerable. Look around us today at our neighbors, family and friends, those we see at the store, bank, boat launch and beach. Do we take notice of those sitting alone on a bench, walking down the street pushing a cart or stroller, or riding a bike? Who are the vulnerable today? The answer is found in the lives of those around us. We are the hands, feet, heart and voice of God in our world today, tasked with “looking after” the vulnerable who are not able to meet their own needs.

Opportunities to make this difference can be as simple as acknowledging someone’s presence with a smile or nod. It can be listening to and sharing a burden for someone who has no one to listen. It could be finding a way to use a Thrivent Action Team grant to help an individual or fund a ministry that is meeting community needs.

Beyond the actions of caring for orphans and widows as James highlights, we are to have a heart for others like Jesus did. Whenever Jesus met someone in need, he opened himself to helping them. This is a lifelong lesson for us to put into practice. As you are active in our community or traveling this summer, remember you are God’s presence in our world. Look for, meet, greet

and embrace opportunities to care for others in Jesus’ name.

Blessings in service and witness,
Pastor Brian



Christmas in July

Join us for the “Christmas in July Holy Grounds” coffee house on Saturday, July 22nd, at 6:30 pm. We will transform the sanctuary to a cozy coffee house setting where folks will have the opportunity to relax and enjoy a variety of music and other talents. This includes some of your Christmas favorites, performed by anyone that wishes. Throw in some baked goods and fellowship, and a great time will be had by all. Sign-up sheets for performing, supplying baked goods, setup/teardown are posted in the Narthex. Hope to see you.

It's Vacation Time

Our secretary, Barbra Davis, will be taking vacation weeks from July 17 to July 21, and again from August 14 to August 18. If you would like to experience being “secretary for a day” on one or more of those dates, call her in the church office (941-697-3313). Time is 9:00 am till noon, and duties only include greeting guests and answering the phones. Your help is much appreciated.