

The Communicator



First Christian Church, Russellville, KY July 2019
website: www.fccrussellville.com find us on facebook.

As I reflected on what I might write for the July newsletter, Patriotism and love for my country first came to me but quickly reality set in. I thought of the horrific events of the last several years of mass shooting in our own churches and synagogues and I was drawn to the words found in the song America the Beautiful. The fourth verse of the song contains the following words: "America! America! God shed his grace on thee and crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea!" America the Beautiful is a patriotic song that is in our hymnal and often sung in church on days such as Memorial and Independence Day. It is also sung at all Major League Baseball games and most sporting events and has even made it on the pop charts in the past. The words were written by Katherine Lee Bates in 1893. The original poem was titled "Pikes Peak" and later changed to "America". The music is from a tune titled "Materna" which was written by Samuel A. Ward in 1882. After some changes in the lyrics, the song America the Beautiful was published in 1910.

I thought about the brotherhood exhibited by nine African-American Christians who were killed by a hate filled individual who attended a Bible study at Emmanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina on June 17, 2015. Or the 26 killed and 20 others wounded Nov. 5 2017, when a deranged individuals walk into Sutherland Springs Baptist Church in Texas. And more recently Oct. 27, 2018 where another crazy person killed 16 and wounded 6 in the Synagogue shooting in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. America did not seem as beautiful to me as the details of the killings emerged. Years of memories crossed my mind all the way back to the Holocaust and more recently to the ethnic segregation of the 1950's and now outright hatred toward all types of religious people.

We still live in a world that tends to cluster together in small groups who do not want to associate with folks outside the group. We do this on a state basis, we do this on a regional basis, we do this on a town basis, we do this on a religious basis, and we do this on an ethnic basis. We focus on ourselves so much that we fail to notice that everyone in this world is a child of God the same as us. When it comes to opening ourselves to those who are very different from ourselves, we limit the extent to which we are willing to embrace. It seems that communities are becoming more and more insulated. Fear and a desire to be with those who are similar have resulted in some places being more segregated than in the 1950's. We know it is right to walk side by side, yet we don't. We have made great strides in the last 50 years, but so much more needs to be done. This is what led me to this patriotic song so appropriate for a month in which we celebrate our nation's independence.

Grace was poured out on all humankind on the cross. God set for us an example of how we are to live with one another. God cancelled sin and overpowered death so that we might see and follow a more perfect way. *God's good was crowned with brotherhood.* Pure love is what was passed down to us through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Not guarded love. Not love with reservations. God told us to love one another unconditionally. It is that kind of love that was shown in these churches & synagogue. We could say, if they had been more guarded in their love, they might still be alive. We could say they should have locked the door to keep strangers or non-members away. But deep in our hearts we know that they were keeping the greatest commandment to love God with all your heart, mind and soul, and the second to love your neighbor as yourself. As we celebrate our Independence on the 4th of July may we take time to pray that God will shed His Grace on us and spread good brotherhood across this great land we call America.

Pastor Bill Clement

GOD BLESS *America* LAND THAT I LOVE

Listen up!
 Pastor Bill will be
 Giving Inspirational
 Message on
 WRUS
 Each day July 1-6
 8:20 am

Vacation Bible School at United Methodist Temple
 In coordination with First Christian and First Presbyterian
 July 7-10 5:00—7:30 pm
 Block Party Registration is Sunday, July 7th
 Registration Forms in Office



Campbellsville University Students Outreach Service
 Will present our Sunday Worship Service July 21st
 Lets Welcome them - Invite your Friends and Family
 Lunch will be served after Service

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 Phone: 270-726-2586
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 Email:
 billclement99@yahoo.com
 Secretary: Sharon Fuller
 fccsharon.fuller@gmail.com
 Moderator: Shannon Gorrell
 Moderator-Elect: Gayle Goley
 Treasurer: Ellen Nealy
 Secretary: Vicki Kemp
 Accompanist: Shannon Gorrell
 Sunday School: 9:30 am
 Worship Service: 10:45 am

Board Meeting
Sunday, July 28th
After Services

Veterans Program
at First Presbyterian
Tuesday, July 30th 6pm

Serving in July 2019
Elders: Vickie Kemp, Jesse Tapp
Deacons: Linda Robertson, Rita Dilliha, Barbara Wilkins
Greeters: Volunteers

Prayer Concerns:			
Danny Anderson	Jean Gragg	Mike McCormick	Barbara Allen
Bob & Patricia Hedges	Donna Riley	Don Firchow	Lauren Riley Stafford
Amy Varble	Ken Mercer	Sara Grayson	Donna Greer
Connie Brown	John Blandford	Lori McClure	
Lana & Bud Lawson			