



**First Presbyterian
Church of Palm Bay**

A small church that does big things!



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JULY, 2026

The CHIMES

Pastor's Thoughts



What are the “big issues” that will be heard at this year’s GA?

There are a lot of items of business that will be heard

at this year’s General Assembly. Several things have gained a lot of attention within the denomination and the press already. Here’s a few of the big topics and brief explanations as to why they’re getting so much attention.

Reorganization actions and consequences: For the past 10 years, the PCUSA has been working on re-structuring it’s Offices and Staff. This included merging the Office of the General Assembly and Presbyterian Mission Agency. This shift was to streamline staff and require less funds, particularly as historic reserves were running out of money to balance the budget. In the last year, that restructuring led to the elimination of several ministry areas, including the Office of Theology and Worship, a large number of PCUSA Mission Co-Workers and Peacemakers (reduced to 30 from 300 fifteen years ago), and other programs and personnel. There are several overtures related to this process as the structural changes become permanent,

including re-writing a lot of policies and manuals, answering questions and taking accountability for programs that were ended, and addressing concerns questions about the ethics involved in how Mission Co-Workers were let go.

Continued implications from past actions: At the previous General Assembly, an overture was approved, and later ratified by Presbyteries, to add gender identity and sexual orientation to the list of persons protected from discrimination in our principles of participation and representation. Candidates for ordination would be asked if they would be able to fulfill this requirement, while also referencing principles of freedom of conscience. Now, there is a lot of confusion about what these changes mean and several overtures seek to clarify it.

A New Confession? There were several overtures sent leading up to GA that called for a new confession to be written to address issues of our day. In response to this, a special committee worked on such a confession and it will be presented. Some people think it is important to act now, while others think this was too rushed and are calling for more time to be taken to “do it right.”

Many other potential hot items based on social issues: There’s a lot of additional items that have been sent in requesting the Assembly or denomination address social issues like pay equity, gender , relationship and race matters, climate change, calls for peace in the world, health care, and more. Because people can be very passionate about these items, any one of them has the potential to become a news item.

And Miscellaneous stuff too: changing healthcare plans for ministers, future GA meeting structure, the next GA meeting location, there are a lot more items that look boring but people are paying attention to because they affect a lot of people within the church, even if it’s not necessarily a news item.

What am I looking forward to the most? It’s not an issue or specific overture. This will be the first time I am present with people from every Presbytery in the country all at once. I think it will be an amazing experience of experiencing our connectional church and seeing the breadth of work God is doing!



A Prayer for the 250th Birthday of America

Holy God, Creator of this world and of all that is in it, of every people and every nation. We know that you show no partiality; yet on the occasion of the 250th birthday of the United States of America, we give thanks for this nation in which we live and ask your blessing upon it.

We give thanks for the ideals that have shaped our national life and that continue to inspire us to become our best selves: freedom, equality, opportunity, exploration and self-sacrifice.

We give thanks for inspiring leaders and courageous dissenters who have called citizens and institutions to reflect upon their practices, to live more faithfully into their ideals, and to remember that a nation can continually improve through effort, accountability, and mutual respect. We give thanks for the beauty of this land and its people. Help us to rejoice in our diversity, recognize our common humanity, and seek what is best for one another and for generations to come.

Bless this country and its celebrations. Help us to cherish the opportunities we enjoy, not as privileges to be taken for granted, but as gifts to be stewarded wisely. Renew in us a sense of shared purpose and common life, that we may see one another as brothers and sisters, united in both the blessings and the responsibilities of this remarkable nation.

And grant that, as we remember the past with gratitude, we may face the future with humility, courage, and hope, striving always toward a more perfect union and a deeper commitment to justice, liberty, and the common good. Amen.

Special Offering in July

Our July Special Offering is once again a partnership with Operation Hope for their back to school drive! The list below was supplied by Fellsmere Elementary School and includes supplies for all grade levels. There are lots of school supplies on sale right now, so if you see something on the list, pick up some extras to help make sure that kids can go to school with backpacks full of supplies! We will start collecting items in the Sanctuary July 5th and finish on the 19th.

- backpack (no wheels)
- set of headphones
- boxes of tissues
- hand sanitizer
- containers of disinfecting wipes (Clorox/Lysol)
- box of quart size Ziplock bags
- box of gallon size Ziplock bags
- #2 pencils
- large pink erasers
- boxes of Crayola crayons (8-count)
- packs of glue sticks (5-6 count)
- Fiskars scissors
- pack of dry erase markers (EXPO brand)
- composition notebooks
- plastic pocket folders with prongs (red, blue, yellow, green)
- Highlighter
- Fine Point EXPO Markers
- one inch 3- ring binders
- box of colored pencils
- pack of cap erasers
- packs of Post-Its (3"x3")
- packs of pens (red and blue)
- package of scotch tape
- package of loose leaf paper



Going Further to Help Students

Mark your calendars now for the Special Offerings coming up in the next couple of months, and keep an eye on the next edition of the Chimes for more information:

- Our Shoe Mission offering will be taken up on August 2nd
- On September 6th we will take up an offering for the Children's Hunger Program

Word from the Herd

We've had several recent prayer requests—please be in prayer for the following: Brian Clark's mom, who has started radiation; Draven, the Dudas' great-granddaughter, recovering from heart surgery; Art Irvine, undergoing wound care; Loyal, Penny Slechta's husband, for ongoing health issue.



Hurricane Season Reminders

Hopefully, you have your plans and supplies in place in case of a hurricane—but as you check your plans and supplies over, don't overlook this item: letting the church know where you plan to be should a storm come! We have Emergency Plan Forms in the office and on our website. These let us know whether you plan to stay or evacuate, let us know if you need help in preparations or clean-up, and also if you have the ability to help someone else if needed.

Letting us know your plans is a help to the church, as we try to reach out to everyone before and after a storm headed to our area. If we can't reach you, we have contact information for your family and friends to make sure you are safe and well, and if we know you're planning to evacuate, we won't panic if we don't see you in church or if we stop by for a check. Please consider filling out one of these forms before the season picks up!



*Please
join us!*

**Sunday, July 5th
following worship we will
have a picnic and ice cream
social - please bring a side to share!**



**It will also be t-shirt /
Hawaiian Shirt, or
patriotic shirt day so come
comfortably dressed!**



Volunteers Cleaning Out CE Building and Sanctuary

Part of our preparations for the future is doing a major clean-out of items in the CE building which the church no longer uses or needs. Jim and Marsha Corton along with Terry Twardzik have filled two dumpsters with books, old decorations, and dilapidated craft supplies. They also helped empty out the old Costume closet in the sanctuary, with Anna Wood taking home a lot of costumes in order to ensure the fabric was donated. There is still a lot to sort through in both buildings, and we could use the help continuing this work! Thursday mornings at 10am we are meeting at the CE building and staying until the dumpster is full, usually about an hour. If you can help, please let Pastor Debra know!

Sunday School Class

The Sunday School class is continuing its study in the Knowing the Bible Series: Ruth and Esther. These books recount two incredibly moving stories in the Old Testament: Ruth, a displaced widow in search of a new home whose steadfast love for her mother-in-law inspires those around her, and Esther, a courageous queen willing to risk her new position to save her people from destruction. The class meets most Sundays at 8:45 a.m. In July, the class will not meet on the 12th or 19th. If you have questions or want to confirm class meeting times, check with teacher Chris Cox!

Wednesday in the Word Bible Study

The Wednesday Bible Study is continuing read through and discuss the Gospel of Luke and its lessons for us today. All are welcome to meet in the CE library on Wednesday at noon. You can bring a lunch or snack along with your curiosity and questions! In July, the class will meet on the 8th, 22nd, and 29th. It will not meet the 1st or 15th.

Flower Chart Signups

Do you enjoy the flowers we have in the sanctuary each Sunday? Are there special people or occasions in your life you wish to honor with flowers? Please sign up on the chart in the sanctuary or call the office at (321) 725-8484 to reserve your desired spot(s).



Gary & Vicki Christensen
July 13

Won & BooCha Park
July 13

Penny & Loyal Slechta
July 24

Jim & Betty Gaidry
July 28

Richard & Heidi Edwards
July 29

Senior Luncheon



Senior Luncheon for July will be held Thursday, June 30th at Shells, 1490 W. New Haven Ave, Melbourne. Please contact Marsha Corton at macarter1950@yahoo.com for more information. Last day to sign up will be July 26th.

Thank You to Those Who Blessed Us in Worship in June

Elder of Month: **Brian Clark, Judy Irvine**

Ushers: **Jim & Marsha Corton, Carolyn Teal, Brian Young, Nancy Cox, Evelyn Cox**

Flowers Donated By: **Sam & Barb Musgrave, Donna Aguilera, Sue & Vince D'Imperio, Marsh Corton**



Betty Gaidry
July 1

Mavis Mattadeen
July 1

BooCha Park
July 3

Rose Fausey
July 6

Heather Nokes
July 9

Jamie Woods
July 10

Michael Doran
July 11

Amy Carter
July 12

Annette Anastasia
July 14

Dalip Singh
July 15

Sue D'Imperio
July 18

Chris King
July 25

Stan White
July 26

Jim Stanfield
July 28



Session Summary

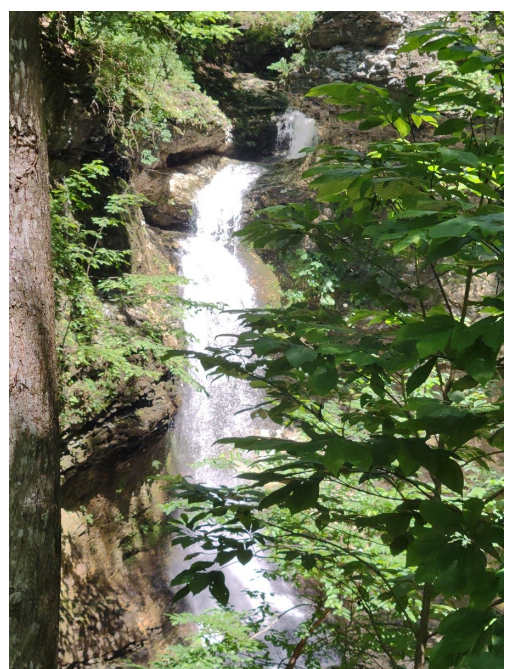
The Session met on June 16th for their regular meeting. Matters discussed included the following:

- Session approved a request from Pastor Debra to take her final week of Sabbatical leave from July 14th through the 21st. She will be going to the Montreat area with family.
- Session approved David Lindemer to be the pulpit supply preacher for both June 28th and July 19th.
- Session reviewed progress being made to go through items in the CE building and Sanctuary and plans being worked on to move the office to the sanctuary building.
- Note: there will be no July Session meeting.
- Treasurer's Report: We had some unexpected repairs that needed to be made, which has seen us slip from surplus to deficit, but we are still doing well budget-wise for the year.
 - Avg monthly expenses: \$17,093.17
 - Actual May expenses: \$18,678.52
 - Contributions in May: \$15,707.96
 - Income year-to-date: \$96,139.32
 - Expenses year-to-date: \$97,508.19
 - Deficit year-to-date: \$1,368.87

Road Runner Adventures

John and Monia are working hard in Alabama and taking some time to do exploring of their own! They went into Missouri to see wetlands, the Mingo Wildlife National Refuge, and Big Springs. They also went to see the Ozark National Scenic Riverway and the Lost Valley Train in the Buffalo National River area .

At work, they had a fun day stocking a shipment of stuffed fish and animals—very cute work! Their boss gave them some home-grown eggs that turned into delicious omelets. They got to watch the baby trout get moved into big indoor containers. Some will be returned to the ponds to grow some more, others will be delivered to Missouri and Illinois. Visitor Center days sound pretty good—they're able to be in the A/C and enjoy seeing all the people who come, especially when they buy fish food! They've had some hot weather and rain, but they've kept busy doing puzzles, watching for interesting train cargo, and exploring the local area. They have also, of course, been seeing wildlife. Hawks, herons, deer, squirrels raiding bird feeders, a tortoise and some lovely butterflies have all gotten mentioned in their emails.





Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
5 8:45 am SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:00 am WORSHIP COMMUNION SERVICE BACK TO SCHOOL MISSION CHURCH PICNIC	6 12:00 noon AA 6:00 pm AA—LADIES ONLY	7 6:00 pm CUB SCOUTS 7:00 pm BOY SCOUTS	1	2 5:30 pm PLATINUM SHOW CHORUS 6:15 pm NA	3	4 HAPPY 4TH 
12 10:00 am WORSHIP BACK TO SCHOOL MISSION	13 12:00 noon AA 6:00 pm AA—LADIES ONLY	14 6:00 pm CUB SCOUTS 7:00 pm BOY SCOUTS	8 12 p.m. BIBLE STUDY	9 5:30 pm PLATINUM SHOW CHORUS 6:15 pm NA	10	11
19 10:00 am WORSHIP	20 12:00 noon AA 6:00 pm AA—LADIES ONLY	21 6:00 pm CUB SCOUTS 7:00 pm BOY SCOUTS	22 12 p.m. BIBLE STUDY	16 5:30 pm PLATINUM SHOW CHORUS 6:15 pm NA	17	18
26 8:45 am SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:00 am WORSHIP 5¢ A MEAL	27 12:00 noon AA 6:00 pm AA—LADIES ONLY	28 6:00 pm CUB SCOUTS 7:00 pm BOY SCOUTS	29 12 p.m. BIBLE STUDY	23 5:30 pm PLATINUM SHOW CHORUS 6:15 pm NA	24	25
				30 5:30 pm PLATINUM SHOW CHORUS 6:15 pm NA	31	

IN THE WORD

Daily Devotion

June 28th through July 4th:
Read Jeremiah 28

The story of Jeremiah and Hananiah is one of competing prophets. Judah has been under Babylon's control and Jeremiah has worn a yoke as a prophetic sign of this control for years at the point when Hananiah offers a competing prophecy that all will be well, setting himself up to become the main prophet in Judah. Jeremiah's reaction is to claim he hopes Hananiah's message is true, because he would like to see Judah's oppression end, while warning that lying to the people and falsely representing God comes with consequences.

- **June 28:** At the beginning of Zedekiah's reign, Hananiah offers a prophecy saying that the oppression Judah is at an end. Why do new beginnings give us new hope?
- **June 29:** The restoration foretells that all will be back to the way it was, including the old king returned—why would going back be a good thing? A bad one?
- **June 30:** Jeremiah's response is supportive at first—why does Jeremiah agree with what Hananiah is saying?
- **July 1:** Jeremiah quickly turns to warning—prophecies of peace rarely come to pass. Why is this?
- **July 2:** How did Hananiah respond to Jeremiah? Is it certainty, stubbornness, or something else that drives him?
- **July 3:** Jeremiah finally calls out Hananiah as a false prophet. What is the biggest offense he identifies?
- **July 4:** Why is it tempting to follow false prophets? What is attractive about their words? How do we test and discern what people say in the name of God?



July 5th through 11th
Read Matthew 11:16-30

This passage has some pretty harsh words from Jesus. He had been to several cities, teaching about the kingdom and doing deeds of power, yet they still did not believe in him or repent of their sin. Jesus is frustrated with the constantly-changing narrative of what they are looking for in order to listen. Ultimately, Jesus points out that they don't want to repent, they don't want to change their practices, and at the reasons they offer are just excuses they make for themselves about why they don't have to change. While they may be satisfied with their self-justifications, Jesus warns that they will actually be held to a higher standard by God, as they were witnesses to what was being done in front of them. Being ignorant, having doubts, or refusing to acknowledge God's work done before your eyes are treated differently in the day of judgment.

- **July 5:** Jesus first targets the criticisms of John the Baptist and himself—rather than seeing them as fulfilling promise and prophecy, everyone is eager to discount them both—why do you think that is?
- **July 6:** Have you ever experienced demands that kept changing? How did you react?
- **July 7:** Tyre and Sidon were Phoenician cities associated with Baal worship, secular power, and exploitative trade practices. If even they would have repented upon seeing the deeds Jesus has done, why won't the Israelite cities?
- **July 8:** Tyre and Sidon were besieged and destroyed by Babylon generations earlier. What makes the Israelites around Jesus so confident they won't be destroyed too?
- **July 9:** Jesus prays to God and thanks him for not allowing the wise to perceive what he is doing, yet revealing his intent to children. What does Jesus mean by this statement?
- **July 10:** Jesus says that only God understand him, and the only ones to understand God are himself and those he chooses to reveal God to. How do we reveal God to one another?
- **July 11:** Jesus ends this section with words of comfort and promise—following him is a hard thing, but we don't walk alone. Jesus is with us and helps us with the burden. How does this promise make it easier to walk with him?

First Presbyterian Church of Palm Bay Daily Devotion

July 12th through 18th:

Read Isaiah 55:10-13

This beautiful passage is a reassurance that God's word, action, and effectiveness is never in vain. His word will be fulfilled, his plans for creation will come to pass. This is a wonderful promise and inspiration for us. There are many times in which we will not be aware of the effect that we are having on others around us, and not seeing the results of our work can be demoralizing and lead us to want to quit. But that is not how it works with God, or the work we do in God. There will be a day of vindication and understanding when we will know the effect of what we have done in God.

- **July 12:** The efficacy of the water that falls to the ground is a wonderful image of God's word—what other images come to mind?
- **July 13:** Have you ever had an effort "return to you empty"? What was it? What did you do next?
- **July 14:** When have you had an endeavor be successful? How did it inspire you? What did you do next?
- **July 15:** What does going out in joy and being led back in peace look like to you? How do you picture it?
- **July 16:** Who can you think of that might most want to experience this moment of God's promises coming into being before their eyes?
- **July 17:** All of nature celebrates with God's people in the moment, shaping even what plants sprout up and grow. If you were planting a garden that represented God's love, what would you put in it?
- **July 18:** Memorials are places of remembrance and celebration. What are the moments or experiences of God's presence, blessing, and promise that you can hold as memorials in your heart?

July 19th through 25th:

Read Isaiah 44:6-8

This speech of God's is both challenge and comfort. God establishes that he and he alone is the authority, foundation, and ruler of all that is. While that can be very frightening, it is also a comfort—there is no one or no thing that can take us away from God, or cause him to be unable to reach us, save us, or bless us. Consider this week how God's power can be something that makes us want to stand back from his presence and draw close as well.

- **July 19:** This passage references both the Lord / the King of Israel and his Redeemer / the Lord of hosts. Christians read this as an early mention of Jesus. How does that make you think or feel?
- **July 20:** It is a comfortable or uncomfortable thought that God stands before all time and will be present after all we know? Why?
- **July 21:** How many times do we as human beings set ourselves up on the same place as God, to make decisions or impact others? How would we respond to the challenge of God to say we are like him?
- **July 22:** At the end of the day, we are not God, and the best we can do is know and serve him. Why is this a blessing to us?
- **July 23:** What does it mean to you to fear the Lord? How does our awe, respect, and relationship keep us humble and make us bold?
- **July 24:** God calls us his witnesses—what can you speak of to others about what God has done for you?
- **July 25:** If we are not trusting in God, we are building our life on a different foundation. What are the options you see around you? How do they compare to the Lord?

June 26th through August 1st:

Read 1 Kings 3:5-12

Solomon starts out his reign in a very good place with God. He knows that the way to be an effective and successful king is to be in good relationship with the Lord. His request for understanding over victories, riches, or long life, God is pleased and grants his request. This week, consider the request for wisdom and understanding, and what other good gifts we could ask from God. What would help us to be in better relationship, and through God, help us to be effective sons and daughters of his in this world?

- **July 26:** Solomon describes David as faithful, righteous, and upright in heart. What do you think those mean when put together? How can we be the same?
- **July 27:** Solomon asks for an understanding mind and the ability to discern between good and evil. How is that different than David?
- **July 28:** Would you rather ask for an upright heart or a discerning mind? What leads you to that choice?
- **July 29:** Paul lists the fruit of the Spirit as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Which of these do you with you had in more abundance?
- **July 30:** The fruit of the spirit are not gifts we can receive, but the result of closer relationship with God. Does this seem easier or harder to have them flourish in you?
- **July 31:** Are there other qualities you would like to have in your life? How do they relate to God and his presence in you?
- **August 1:** By the end of his reign, Solomon was selfish and distant from God. How could his discerning mind lead him away from the Lord?