

*“But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him.*

*They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”*

**Jeremiah 17:7-8**



August  
2024

# The News

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### Newsletter Team

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# Providence: The Light that Shines in the Darkness

July 13, 2024 seems forever ago with the lightning speed pace of the news cycle. While hearings and investigations continue into the assassination attempt on former President Trump, there was a flurry of theological discussion that emerged from that moment. When details came out on the great improbability of Mr. Trump surviving the assassination, many pastors, and lay people instantly Ephesians 6:11 chalked it up to providence. How else could it be explained? The rounds that were fired travel at 3,300 feet per second. A turn of the head at that exact moment meant that round grazed his ear instead of entering into his skull. Angels were credited in protecting him. The shots were fired at 6:11 and some made the connection to Ephesians 6:11 which describes the armor of God. (Be on the lookout for a sermon series on the armor of God, which was planned almost a year ago. Providential?) Even some atheists and agnostics appeared to acknowledge that certainly, this was not just luck or chance.

But there are always two sides to every coin. A colleague and college classmate of mine wrote an article, and I'm paraphrasing, that God does not spare one life and take another. This of course is in reference to Corey Comperatore – the man who died from the assassin's bullets while protecting his family. How can you claim God protected one person and not another?

All of this is good to chew on theologically. Our quick answers are often attempts to make sense out of something that does not make sense. How did his head turn at that exact millisecond? Why did an innocent man, husband, father die? Backing out from the events from Butler, PA, we wrestle with the question of providence often when facing the evils of the world: war, famine, disease, cancer, murder – there is no shortage of examples. The doctrine of providence deals with our struggle to see and find God at work in the midst of evil. At the minimum, we need reassurance that God is here in the first place.

From my personal experience, I have learned to be patient when wrestling with the question of providence and God's will. Sure, I can be just as quick as anyone to credit good things to God's will and be perplexed in the face of bad and evil things. The most prominent example of God's providence at work in my life goes

back to the end of my first call as an associate pastor. I felt a change in call that was leading me into military chaplaincy. I went through all the steps, all the interviews, and I found the only church that was willing to call me as their pastor and share me as a chaplain in the Army Reserves. I moved to Greenville, TX confident this was God's plan and call on my life. I kept working hard to move along the process. I kept working hard to train to be physically ready. And in that training, the asthma I thought I had outgrown reappeared one day. I jokingly say the Army has no need for asthmatics and I completely understand why.

What I did not understand was how this happened when God had obviously called me down that path. I was now at this church in a small town (small to this Dallas city boy's standards) not knowing what I was supposed to do. Well, over the course of a few years, God used another colleague and myself to pull off a pretty improbable church merger that is still going strong today. It was through serving at that church that an elder's wife introduced me to her second cousin from Dallas. Her name happens to be Chelsea. Maybe you've heard of her! We were married and started our family out there. It took a matter of years for me to look back and believe it was God's providential will to bring me to that church at that time with a specific purpose. How I got there made no sense to me. And that is what I am most confident when it comes to the doctrine of providence. The answer of, "I don't know," is completely legitimate.

In the film Rudy, he goes to the chapel and receives some great advice from a priest when he says, "Son, in thirty-five years of religious study, I've come up with only two hard, incontrovertible facts. There is a God, and, I'm not Him." That is always a good thing to remember when the chaos of life pushes us to want to make quick decisions. Was Butler, PA an instance of providence? Maybe. Maybe not. I don't know. And that is perfectly okay.

In Shirley Guthrie's classic book, Christian Doctrine, he wraps up his chapter on providence with this. "We do live in a dark world. But there is a light shining in the darkness, and the darkness will not be able to overcome it. How do we know? Because even in the darkest days and years we remember the God from whom we come; therefore, hope in the God toward whom we go; and therefore, despite everything, can recognize and serve the God who goes with us on our way."

Pastor Chris

[chris@firstprestexas.org](mailto:chris@firstprestexas.org)

# Finance Update

**For the month of June 2024:**

	Monthly	YTD
Income:	70,796	498,951
<u>Expenses:</u>	<u>(90,407)</u>	<u>(536,185)</u>
Variance	(19,610)	(37,234)
Donors Income:	64,235	444,626
<u>Budget:</u>	<u>75,817</u>	<u>454,900</u>
Variance	(11,582)	(10,274)



## Comments:

We are always so grateful for your generous donations. Because of your support, we were able to:

- enjoy our Vacation Bible School where children 4 years old to 6th grade enjoy games, arts and crafts, a Bible lesson, snacks, and spending time with friends. The theme this year was Start the Party, celebrating the Good News of Jesus.
- have a great time at our musical "Rescue in the Night" depicting the story of Daniel and the lion's den, prepared and performed by our children and youth musicians of FPCA.
- organize a successful Embrace Grace Baby Shower honoring our group's Brave Girls and their babies.
- host the opening ecumenical worship service for the Ulster Project bringing teenagers from Northern Ireland to engage in the holy work of peacemaking and reconciliation.
- As of June, our Capital Campaign fund balance is \$817,551.

We are doing well, and, because of you, we can carry out the ministries that are calling to our FPCA family. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns, at [jeanne@firstprestexas.org](mailto:jeanne@firstprestexas.org).

# Children`s Ministry

## Preschool



### MONTHLY OVERVIEW

Have you ever watched a cooking show where kids are doing the cooking? They are SO creative! A little of this and a little of that and voila! A culinary delight! Now imagine God creating each and every person . . . even more creative, right? Two brown eyes, some curly black hair, and a splash of freckles. Then, God adds a dash of compassion, a spoonful of kindness, a large cup of creativity . . . and voila!

Psalm 139:14 says, "How you made me is amazing and wonderful." **God made me wonderful!** God made you wonderful. God made every person on the planet wonderful!

Our prayer for preschoolers is that they will know that **God made us, God loves us, and Jesus wants to be our friend forever.** We're cooking up a lot of fun to go with these foundational truths. We hope this month leaves you and your preschoolers smiling with confidence as you look into a mirror because you know that **God made me wonderful!**

WEEK	BIBLE STORY	STORY FOCUS
<b>ONE</b>	God Made Me* Genesis 1:27; Psalm 139:13-14	God made me.
<b>TWO</b>	God Made Me in His Image Genesis 1:26-27; Psalms 28:7, 104:24, 121:2; Proverbs 2:6; Acts 17:24	God made me to create, think, and help.
<b>THREE</b>	God Knows Everything About Me Psalm 139:1-4; Matthew 10:30	I am important to God.
<b>FOUR</b>	God Loves Me John 3:16; 1 John 4:9-10	God loves us so much that God gave us Jesus.

*\*Monthly Story for Toddler Curriculum*

MEMORY VERSE	KEY QUESTION	BOTTOM LINE
"HOW YOU MADE ME IS AMAZING AND WONDERFUL." PSALM 139:14, NIRV	WHO MADE YOU WONDERFUL?	GOD MADE ME WONDERFUL.
<b>GOD MADE ME.</b>		



**ELEMENTARY**  
AUGUST 2024

**MONTHLY OVERVIEW**

**GOD VIEW:**

**THE CONNECTION BETWEEN WISDOM AND GOD'S CHARACTER, AS SHOWN THROUGH GOD'S BIG STORY**

Sometimes it's easy to know what the wise choice would be. Let's say you're choosing between having expired milk with your cereal or eating some fruit and a sandwich. You probably aren't reaching for the milk! What about choosing to stay up all night when you have a road trip the next day, or getting some sleep because you're driving first? Every decision you make starts out with a choice. As we "dive deep" into the Bible this month, we'll discover that God is always there to help us make wise choices. God has given us people who can help us make those wise choices too.

<b>WEEK ONE</b>	<b>BIBLE STORY</b> Jesus Grows in Wisdom Luke 2:41-52	<b>BOTTOM LINE</b> Wisdom is worth searching for.
<b>WEEK TWO</b>	<b>BIBLE STORY</b> Speck and Plank Matthew 7:1-5	<b>BOTTOM LINE</b> When you see yourself clearly, you can make the wise choice.
<b>WEEK THREE</b>	<b>BIBLE STORY</b> Rehoboam Listens to Fools 2 Chronicles 10 (Supporting: Proverbs 13:20)	<b>BOTTOM LINE</b> Hang out with wise people.
<b>WEEK FOUR</b>	<b>BIBLE STORY</b> Renew Your Mind Romans 12:2	<b>BOTTOM LINE</b> Never stop growing in wisdom.

<b>MEMORY VERSE</b>	<b>IF ANY OF YOU NEEDS WISDOM, YOU SHOULD ASK GOD FOR IT. HE WILL GIVE IT TO YOU. GOD GIVES FREELY TO EVERYONE AND DOESN'T FIND FAULT.</b> JAMES 1:5, NIRV
<b>WISDOM</b>	<b>FINDING OUT WHAT YOU SHOULD DO AND DOING IT</b>

# Youth Ministry

## *How to Successfully Ease Out of Summer and Back to School*

Jon Acuff

The hardest part of the summer ending is pretending you're not happy about it as a parent.

Hiding your joy from kids who get mad at even seeing the back-to-school products in Target is difficult. Does that mean you haven't enjoyed the extra time with your kids these last few months? Of course not. It just means you're excited for the school year to get started again.

The transition from summer to school can be a difficult one. There's a lot to navigate, but here are three simple ways you can start the school year off right:

### **1. Start getting up earlier.**

I have teenagers. Right now, they tend to sleep until 9:00 AM each morning during the summer. When school starts though, they have to get up at 6:00 AM. That's a huge difference. As a parent, I need to help them prepare for that steep learning curve. So, for the last week of summer, they get up at 7:30 AM. I didn't make them get up at 6:00 AM, I'm not a monster, but I did give them an opportunity to ease back into the early rise. Reduce their stress by giving them a few mornings to practice.

### **2. Don't give in to the end of summer blues.**

You set the pace with your kids. You set the vibe. You are the emotional barometer in a lot of ways. It's common for parents to dramatize the end of summer, exaggerating how horrible it is to go back to school. That's stupid. If you tell your kids that summer is ending and so is all happiness and sunshine and swimming pools and fun, don't expect them to have a great start. Instead, remind them of how much fun they'll have seeing their friends. Help them recognize all the great things that a school day offers. Don't oversell the end of summer.

### **3. Have a full summer.**

The problem with summer is that it ends at most stores in June. That's when they start selling school supplies. It's the same problem with Christmas. I don't want to see a single wreath in a store until mid-November. The number of stores that have Christmas products out in October is crazy. Don't end your summer too early. Enjoy it to the very end. Go on a last-minute blueberry picking trip days before school starts. Have a water balloon fight the week of. Stay at the neighborhood pool until they kick you out. Wring every last drop from your summer instead of giving up early.

The summer is a magically fun time and although your kids might not want it to end, it's going to. Make the transition as painless as possible by being deliberate about it.

Start getting up earlier.

Don't give into the end of summer blues.

Have a full summer.

Blessings,

Adrian

# Monthly Food Bank

Join us Saturday, August 10, starting at 8:30 a.m. to distribute food, or bring your neighbors to receive food, at the Arlington Charities mobile food bank.

St. Andrew's United Methodist Church -2045 SE Green Oaks Blvd -  
Arlington, TX 76018

It is just east of New York Ave, so if you're coming from the west, make a U-turn at Sherry St. Volunteer parking is just south of the church and food is distributed on the west side of the church.



## Welcome Team – help us welcome guests!

We want to make sure that guests are always welcomed when they enter our church, and that someone is available to answer any questions they may have. They may need help finding the nursery, the restrooms, etc. We have two Welcome Team members each Sunday currently, but soon will need four, when the current phase of construction is complete. Beginning June 30, there will be a Welcome Team poster and sign-up sheet in the Narthex where you can sign up to be part of the team for a particular date. Welcome Team members arrive at 10:30am and are available at a designated entrance. One team member will need to remain in the narthex for the entire service and the others can join the congregation in the sanctuary approximately 10 minutes after the service starts at 11:00am.

Help us show guests that we are glad they are here! Help us make guests feel welcome! Help us show God's love to guests by greeting them warmly and answering any questions they may have.



# This Month



## Bible Studies

### Men's Bible Study

The Men's Bible Study group meets every Wednesday morning at 8:00 a.m. in the parlor. Men of all ages meet and enjoy great fellowship and a prayer session. All men are invited to join this study.

### Women's Bible Study

The Wednesday Women's Bible Study will resume on September meeting on the second Wednesday of each month at 1 p.m. in the parlor. Questions? Contact Debbie Richardson at 817.675.2867 or Sheri Quick at [sheriq@aol.com](mailto:sheriq@aol.com).

### Tuesday Morning Bible Study

Men and women of all ages are invited to meet in the parlor every Tuesday morning at 10:30 a.m.

### CWF Women's Bible Study

Meet virtually every Wednesday at 7 p.m. EXCEPT the last Wednesday of the month they meet at FPCA in the Parlor.



## Music Ministries

### Chancel Choir

Will Resume on Wednesdays August 7 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Chancel Choir.

### Ring of Praise Handbell Ensemble

Will resume on Wednesdays September 4th, at 6 p.m. in room 106.

### Youth Choir

Will resume on September 7th Sunday, from 12:45 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. (lunch for participants 12:15 p.m.).

### Children's Music Ministries

Will resume on September 7th on Sunday, from 12:45 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. (lunch for participants 12:15 p.m.).



## Church Leadership

### Deacon Meeting

Thursday, August 15, the Diaconate meets.

### Team Meeting Night

Thursday, August 8, at 7:00 p.m., all teams meet for ministry planning and coordination.

### Session Meeting

Monday, August 22, at 7:00 p.m., the Session meets to oversee the ministry of the church, indoor worship, budget, Generis, and other matters. The work of the Diaconate, church administration, and all Discipleship, Worship, Facility Management, and Mission and Evangelism ministries will be discussed.



## Fellowship

### Happy Quilters

This group meets on Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. to quilt, sew, knit, crochet, embroider, and just enjoy being together. Bring your project and join in! Bring a sack lunch and join the ladies for lunch at noon.

### Senior Flexibility Class

Come get fit with us! The Senior Flexibility Class will meet each week on Tuesday and Friday from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

If interested, contact Mary Spencer at 817-689-0526 for more details.

First Presbyterian Church  
1200 S. Collins Street  
Arlington, TX 76010

**Deadline for the September issue of The News is August 15!**

## Prayer Ministry

**Prayers for those with health and other concerns:** Billie Jo Campbell, the family of Jerry Tees, Carol Browning, Bettye Burdett, Cyprain Engwenyi, Betty Farrell, Ken Floyd, Bobbie Fowler, Ivone Franzolin, Mary Lou Garrison, Joe and Lila Glenn, Pat May and her son Tim Karnes, Graciela Lopez Montero, Mathias Mbeng Ndip, Charlie Nieman, Tina Paulk, Sheri Quick, Aileigh Rodriguez, Eleanor Schernbeck, Tonya Scrabeck, Lorna Snyder, David Spencer, Larry Spencer, Susie Thurston, Donna Vickers, Nancy Welborne, Patrick Welborne, Sherry and Shelby Wolfe, Danny Womble.

**Prayers for our family serving in the armed forces:** Colin A. Peden, Christopher Young.

If you are a member with a family member who is on active duty in the armed services, please contact the church office at [info@firstprestexas.org](mailto:info@firstprestexas.org) with the name and their relationship to you.

**Prayers for our homebound members:** Madge Casselman, Lucy Cleaver, Betty Snowden, Dee Uhri, Richard Whitenight.

Pray for those who do not know Christ!

If you have any congregational care needs, please contact either Pastor Chris Campbell or Parish Pastor Jim Shroyer at 817-274-8286.

