

From the desk of Pastor Jan

There are a lot of ways at looking at the passage of time. There are minutes, days, months, and years. And within a year there are seasons, both official and unofficial. Take 'summer' for instance. Officially summer began on June 20 and will end on September 22. But for school children and parents it begins and ends with the school year. For the fashion world it begins on Memorial Day and ends on Labor Day.

Regardless of your definition of summer, July Fourth is viewed as the middle. The stores are displaying school supplies and fall fashions. And many are looking at the not-too-distant future when schedules return to normal. FPC for instance will return to its regular time schedule.

But this year things feel different. After 15+ months of a pandemic, it is hard to remember what 'normal' is. Will Bible study resume? How about Sunday school? The women's luncheons? What about the church music programs? It is not just the summer schedule that we will say good-bye to, but maybe the pandemic schedule too?

Sorry, but no promises. Since coming here, I have been amazed at the number of people who have stepped up during the deepest valleys of the pandemic to missions of the church moving forward. Worship services, communications, service projects, and the list goes on. What a faithful and dedicated congregation this is!

But as we move forward, we need to look ahead, not backward. The pandemic period has given us time to think about and to realize what is most important in life. We took many things for granted and did not realize their importance until they were gone. And we have found that some of the routines of our lives were of little significance. Traditions are important, but if we do not feel a connection to them, understand their meaning, then they have lost their purpose.

As we move ahead, we should be considering two things. First of all, we need to remember and value the traditions of the church. But for traditions to have meaning we must be knowledgeable of their history and meaning. Secondly of all, we need to be willing to let go routines that have become ruts. We are after all Presbyterians. We believe in the 'church reformed and always reforming'. Sometimes we have to let go of the old and weary to make way for the new and dynamic.

To these ends there will be opportunities over the next few months to learn about the traditions of the church. And there will also be times for members of the congregation to weigh in on what is and is not important for worship and the mission of the church.

I can **feel** the Holy Spirit working in this congregation. I sense a time of revitalization, of moving forward with anticipation and excitement. But this must be a congregational thing. We must be willing to make missteps now and then, admit them and move on. We must all be willing to move forward, to listen and respond to the call of the Spirit. Just one question. Are you with me?

In Christ,

Jan

Church Picnic, 2021



And a good time was had by all!