

# The Newsletter

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Kilgore, Texas

May 2021

Volume 38 No. 5

## FROM THE PASTOR

Gallup recently published startling statistics regarding faith community (churches, synagogues, mosques) membership in the United States. For the first time in eight decades, membership has fallen below 50 percent. Even more unsettling is that the figure was above 70 percent as recently as 1999. Gallup found that the downward trend in affiliation is also generational: 58 percent of baby boomers and 36 percent of millennials have formal ties to a faith community. What do we make of this?

My initial response to the Gallup report was one of sadness because I deeply love the church. I've given my life for the church in my service to Jesus Christ. I do not like to watch something I love so much in such stark decline. Indeed, I've sometimes wondered if there will be much of a church left by the time I reach retirement age (around 40 years from now!). As I began to digest this news, I was somewhat relieved to read that church is not the only declining institution in American society. Movie theatres, service clubs, even bowling leagues have all experienced steady decline over the last several decades. I was shocked to find out that the television audience for Sunday Night Football has decreased by 21% in the last year! Since 2015 young adults are watching 77% fewer minutes of television. My point: it's not just church that is changing, everything is.

Let's think about all of this from a historical perspective; church membership has not always been so high in this country. In the colonial period it was around 17%, and in 1875 it had doubled to around 35%. The influx of immigrants in the early 1900's, along with revivalist movements here and there, and post-war explosions brought the figure up around 70% at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. So, from a historical perspective, that fact that a majority of the country is not affiliated with a faith community is nothing unusual. In fact, it is the norm and not the exception.

But the question remains: is the church on a fast track to extinction? No! While "membership" is becoming a thing of the past, spiritual hunger is not. Spiritual hunger, in fact, is at an all time high. And, judging from history again, Christian communities will continue to be places where some, not all, but some, will seek refuge and meaning. Furthermore, the church—the gathered community of saints called by God into existence—will continue as long as God says so. Sociological trends can't stop the working of the resurrected Christ who continues to call and redeem and form communities of worship and service. The insight of Samuel Rutherford gives me hope: *"It is our Lord's wisdom, that His kirk (Church) should ever hang by a thread; and yet the thread breaketh not, being hanged upon Him who is the sure Nail in David's house (Isa. xxii. 23).* Will there be a church left in 20, 30, 40 years? Yes, and it will be just as alive as it has ever been because Jesus Christ himself is the source of its life. Soli Deo Gloria!

Grace and peace,

Will



## Stewardship

	<u>Tithes and Offerings</u>
<u>Month of February</u>	
Anticipated Tithes/Offerings	\$ 28,669
Actual Monthly Tithes/Offerings	\$ 27,815
Actual Monthly Expense	\$ 42,421
Overage/ (Deficit )	\$ ( 14,606)
<u>For the Year 2021</u>	
Anticipated Tithes/Offerings	\$ 343,669
Actual YTD Tithes/Offerings	\$ 102,919
Actual YTD Expense	\$ 124,269
Overage/ (Deficit )	\$ ( 21,350)

Thank you for your tithes and offerings!  
Without your faithful giving, ministry and missions would not be possible.

## P W News

PWCT will meet on Monday May 3, 2021 at 9:30 in the Fellowship Hall. We will be making plans for next year.

Thanks to all who participated in giving to the annual P W Birthday Offering. So far, we have collected \$513.

The birthday party at the Willows will be May 19, and we will be delivering Meals on Wheels during July and August.

We will meet in August to finalize the plans for next year.

Sarah Camp  
Moderator



## Session Highlights

- Had devotion time together.
- Christian Education-Missions Committee reported on plans for Senior Night, and VBS. They are currently seeking another staff member to work in the nursery.
- Property Committee reported:  
Water pump and condensers for Sanctuary A/C have been repaired; 2 of the Sanctuary lights that shorted out have been repaired; Once plumbing repairs are complete, restoration of the parlor will begin. Organ pipes will be removed in June, in order to re-plaster and paint the damaged walls in the chambers.
- The Visitation-Evangelism Committee reported of making Visitor Bags which have been placed in the pews for visitors to take home. They are in discussion on how to further reach out to the community.
- Worship-Fellowship Committee reported:  
Next Communion date of May 2, 2021;  
Recommending that ushers resume passing the offering plate during worship;  
Planned to help the Men of the Church host the Annual Fish Fry on April 28;  
Discussed the upcoming non-member wedding scheduled for May 15, 2021.
- Shared joys and concerns, and prayed for members of our congregation.

For property questions or concerns, you may contact Jim Griffin by email: [Propertyfirstpreskilgore@gmail.com](mailto:Propertyfirstpreskilgore@gmail.com)



### **From Gala**

As we head into the summer months, the Chancel Choir and Handbell Choir would like to invite you to join us in providing music for summer worship services. A minimal amount of time is required and as a bonus, you will have loads of fun in our rehearsals!



**Make a Joyful Noise!**



This Month for our Monthly Missions we will be supporting the upcoming Kilgore ISD school supplies drive!

## **Thoughts and Prayers**

Verner Laird  
David Nixon

Kamryn Mann  
Tine Zapata

Raymond Bazinet  
Joe Brown  
Linda Curkan  
Kenzie Hyatt  
Tillman Latham  
Donna Marshall  
David McElroy  
Larry Perkins  
Charlotte Reed  
Glenda Reid  
Carly Wimberley

Sylvia Bolding  
Max Brant Crim  
Ashley Haden  
Shirley Grubbs Latham  
Nancie Love  
Rex McCubbin  
Dayne Neal  
Bill Pybas  
Gordon Reed  
Larry & Linda Willis

### **In Service to our Country**

Jacob Conner  
Robert Gray

Brent Duvall  
Gavin Jackson

# **Monthly Missions**

The best way to contribute to this ministry for the children of the Kilgore ISD schools, is to donate financially!

If you have any questions, please see Ruth Anne or Blake.

# Children and Youth!

Children's Sunday School is Back!

We will be meeting in the Children's Classroom  
after worship until 11:30 each Sunday.

Children's Event—End of School  
Party!

May 22nd @ 2:00pm  
Pre-K—5th grades

We will have our next children's event on  
Saturday May 22nd from 2pm to 4pm!  
We will celebrate the end of the school year,  
and the beginning of the summer!!



VBS Day Camp!! July 26-30

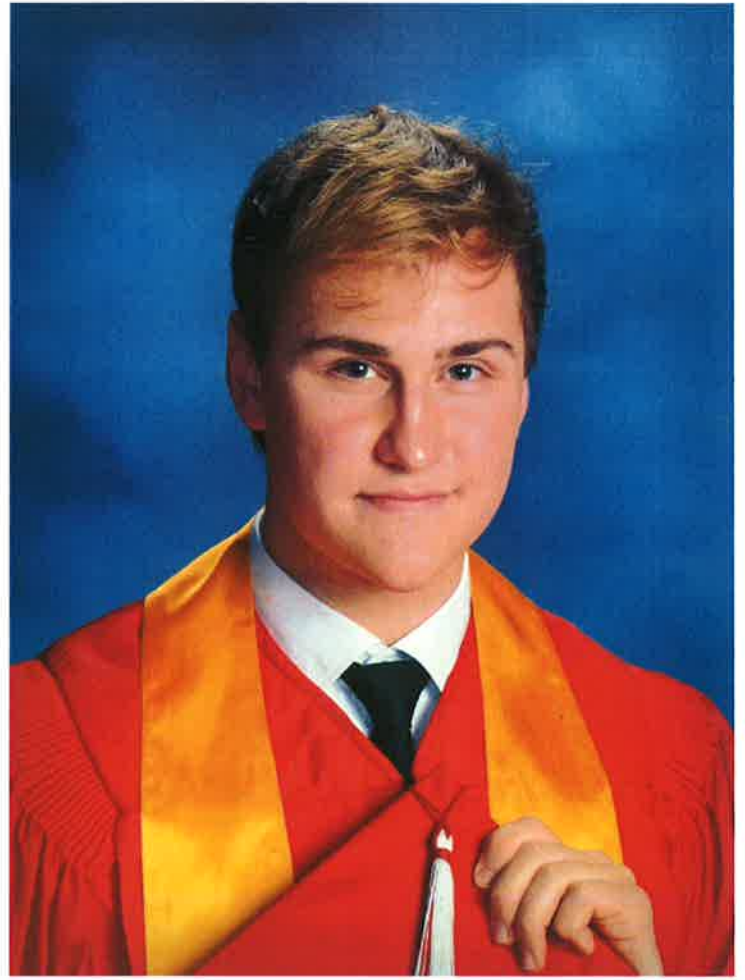
YES! WE WILL HAVE VBS DAY CAMP  
THIS SUMMER!!! YAY!!!

Be looking for the sign up outside of  
Mr. Blake's office soon, and save your spot!

More info will be coming soon!



Kace Murphy



Jonathan Whisenhunt

## Senior Night

Wednesday, May 5, 6:00 PM in Fellowship Hall  
Join us to honor our 2021 KHS Graduating Seniors!

FPC  
**KILGORE**  
YOUTH MINISTRIES

Youth Group  
Every Sunday @ 5:00pm  
6th—12th grades

We are back to our regular Youth Group Format!  
If you would like to volunteer to provide a meal or  
sponsor a Youth Group Evening please contact Blake.



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**Facebook: First Presbyterian Church of Kilgore**



- |                                       |                                                     |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Donna Shupe                         | 14 Sydney Bates                                     |
| 2 Richard Leppert<br>Phillip Mitchell | 18 Jim Griffin                                      |
| 4 Holly Sartor Long                   | 19 Will Terrell                                     |
| 6 Caden Covnet<br>J Mitchell          | 22 Francye Phillips                                 |
| 9 Shea Morton                         | 23 Hunter Dickerson                                 |
| 11 Sarah Morton                       | 26 Jenae Baggett<br>Taylor Schleier<br>Robert Shupe |
| 12 David Stanley                      | 29 Jeff Thrower                                     |
| 13 Camelia Griffin<br>Jeana Walters   | 30 Shawn Waldo                                      |