

The Tower

July 2025

Finishing the Race

The Session, upon the recommendation of the Finance Committee, recently approved a fundraiser entitled, "Finishing the Race." The effort is to help pay off the remaining \$97,000 of our west entrance building addition. The main entrance project began with construction starting in 2018.

The project allowed us to upgrade our electrical system, add an elevator on the west side of our building, add air conditioning in the sanctuary and make general improvements to the entrance area. The entrance has been a positive addition to our building. The fundraiser begins on August 1, 2025 and concludes on July 31, 2026. Look on page 15 of the Tower for more information.



**First
Presbyterian Church**
340 South 5th Avenue
Saint Cloud, MN 56301
Telephone: 320-251-8277
www.fpcstcloud.org

Church Staff

REV. DARIN SEAMAN
Pastor

JULLIAN EUTENEUER
Music Director

LORA HANSEN
Youth Director

BRAD JOHNSON
Facilities Coordinator

PATTY SCOTT
Custodian

DON ONDRACEK
Assistant Custodian

Pastor's Reflections

I'm still a little perplexed at the events that took place in the Twin Cities in June. To imagine elected officials assassinated in their own home is hard to understand. Trying to imagine someone doing this to multiple individuals is beyond comprehension.

My thoughts varied as I reflected on what transpired. I am grateful this did not turn out even worse than it did. I am grateful for law enforcement and the work they did to apprehend the suspect. I am saddened for the Hortman family who lost both parents in this horrific act. I am saddened for Sen. Hoffmann and his family even though it sounds like both he and his wife will recover. I am saddened for our state because June 14 will forever be associated with an act of violence. Forgiveness is fleeting for me right now but it will eventually come because of God's grace.

Some would argue that we shouldn't be surprised at such an act. Political assassinations are nothing new. Sin is, after all, universal. Violent acts have been happening for centuries and there is "nothing new under the sun." Yet, it still bothers me to see this senseless kind of violence.

Please remember to pray for all elected officials and their safety. Remember to pray for good mental health and for us to resist any form of evil in the world. Remember to pray for our civil discourse and the words we use. Remember to pray for those who grieve (Romans 12:15). Remember to pray for the suspect and his family.

Give thanks for law enforcement and elected officials who seek to make our communities better. Give thanks for the media and others who kept giving information in order to help law enforcement.

Give thanks for the One who came to redeem our broken world.



Rev. Darin Seaman

July Sermon Titles

July 6
"Star-Spangled Jesus"
Matthew 7:15-23

July 13
"Water as a Symbol of the
Holy Spirit"
John 7

July 20
"Water as a Symbol of
Healing"
John 5:1-14

July 27
TBD

Darin

New Countertops

There are new granite countertops in the kitchen. We are grateful to several donors including the Bake Sale Committee who made this possible. Thanks as well to the Property Committee for helping tear out the old countertops and prep for the new 'tops.



To our church family, we are thankful for all the cards and well wishes we have received for our 60th anniversary.

Thank you - Jan and Bert East

Did You Know?

Why do we have confessions in our worship services? We have confessions because we are fallible human beings, prone to error, and inclined to forget who and whose we are. We need guidance and continual reminders about what we believe.

Confessions develop out of a need to clarify beliefs and to contradict heresies. For the covenant community of Israel, the “*shema*,” the affirmation of one God, stood over against the surrounding culture that offered various gods or idols. For the earliest Christians to say that “Jesus is Lord” was a clear renunciation of the Romans’ claim of Caesar’s lordship.

The church soon found it necessary to say more than simply “Jesus is Lord.” By the fourth and fifth centuries, the church had become far removed from the direct disciples of Jesus and any eyewitnesses to the events of the crucifixion, resurrection, and Pentecost. The **Nicene and Apostles’ Creeds** emerged in response to concerns about whether or not Jesus Christ could be both divine and human.

The core of the Apostles’ Creed reinforces the historical life of Jesus the Christ, underscoring the fact that he was “born of the virgin Mary,” that he suffered “under Pontius Pilate” (a historical figure), that he “was crucified, dead, and buried.” The Nicene Creed emerged as correction to the heresy of the theologian Arius, who declared Christ unequal to God. It reaffirms the historical Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ and confirms the Trinitarian nature of God.

Three of our confessions (the Scots, Second Helvetic, and Westminster Confessions) and all three of our catechisms (the Heidelberg and the Westminster Shorter and Larger Catechisms) developed out of the conflicts between newly emerging Protestantism and medieval Roman Catholicism. The Scots Confession condemned such medieval church abuses as the selling of indulgences, in which church members could pay sums of money to atone for sins prior to committing them. The Scots Confession also emphasized the faithfulness of God’s Word in Scripture.

John Calvin inspired the writing of Second Helvetic Confession, which, like the famous technical precision of Swiss watches and clocks, describes the specifics of church work and administration. The Second Helvetic also outlines our doctrine of salvation, contrasting the Reformed understanding of salvation as God’s gift in Jesus Christ with medieval Roman Catholicism’s stress on human merit (see specifically 5.053). The Scots, Second Helvetic, and Westminster Confessions all strongly assert the centrality of Scripture.

Nearly four centuries passed before the church formed and adopted another confession. Within the past six decades, the church has embraced three new confessions: the **Declaration of Barmen**, **Confession of 1967**, and **A Brief Statement of Faith**.

(Continued)

The Declaration of Barmen raised its voice against Hitler's in post-Weimar Republican Germany. It reaffirms the church's profession of the sovereignty of God, the authority of Scripture, and the salvation of Jesus Christ. In those affirmations, we hear a resounding denial of Hitler's hostile, Nazi claims of sovereignty, authority, and salvation.

The Confession of 1967 frequently repeats the term *reconciliation*. In response to civil rights struggles, American involvement in Vietnam, and our first view of our planet from outer space, the church expressed a renewed commitment to reconciliation: with God, with each other (within and outside of the church), and with the planet (God's good creation, of which we are stewards).

The Presbyterian Church's reunion of Southern and Northern branches in 1983 prompted yet another 20th-century confession: A Brief Statement of Faith. This newest of confessions, says the Preface, "celebrates our rediscovery that for all our undoubted diversity, we are bound together by a common faith and a common task."

From our denomination's website

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Chris Rothstein and Mariah Benn. The two were married on June 21 in downtown St. Cloud. Parents of the couple are Jeff & Jackie Benn, Jodi & Bill Neirhausen, and Jerry Rothstein & Lori Greenway. Pastor Darin officiated the ceremony.



Youth Director Comments

Confirmation - This month we celebrated Mnena Andzenge, Nathan Hounkpati, Lauren Lenzmeier, Sara Rebeck and Ariel Yu for their hard work and dedication to growing in their faith through confirmation. Congratulations to all of you!



Brat Sale - Thank you to all of the volunteers that came out to help with the brat sale. This is a fund raiser that goes directly to helping our youth attend the Clearwater Forest Camp. We were able to collect over \$100 just in tips. Thanks to all those who came and supported our youth.



Fall Carnival - Unfortunately, we had to cancel the carnival due to the weather. We are planning on rescheduling the event in early fall. If you have a carnival activity that you would like to be included, please reach out to Lora Hansen. Face painting, Bingo and a cake walk will be added to the rescheduled event. We will be looking for a lot of volunteers to reach as many members of the community as we can.

Youth Summer Activities

Service Community Project - The first Monday of every month the youth will begin doing service projects around the community. Our first community service project for the summer will be the 7th of July from 4 to 6 pm at the Tri County Humane Society. To participate in this ministry youth must be 10 to 17 years old. Youth 10 to 14 years must be accompanied by an adult to interact with the animals. Closed toed shoes are a **MUST!** You will not be allowed to serve if you do not have closed toed shoes. Contact Lora Hansen to complete liability waiver.



Who's Who in the Pew

Tell us about yourself.

My name is Carrie Butter. I grew up in St. Cloud, graduated from Cathedral High School in 2001 and attended St. Cloud State University. I started with the intention of getting an elementary education degree but instead graduated with a Bachelors in Criminal Justice.

After graduating, I got a job as a Correctional Officer at Stillwater Prison, a maximum security prison for men. I worked there for six years before moving to the retail side. I worked at Burlington and then Nordstrom in Asset Protection, apprehending shoplifters. As I moved up the management ladder, I became interested in internal theft and joined the company board of internal investigators, investigating employee theft over multiple stores.

I commuted for two and a half years and finally decided to get a job in St. Cloud. I currently work at Microbiologics. I make sure clinics and hospitals have the most current variation of diseases to give their patients accurate information.

In my free time, I practice yoga and pilates, read mystery/thrillers and true crime books. I also love to cook and bake. I can also play the clarinet.



Carrie Butter

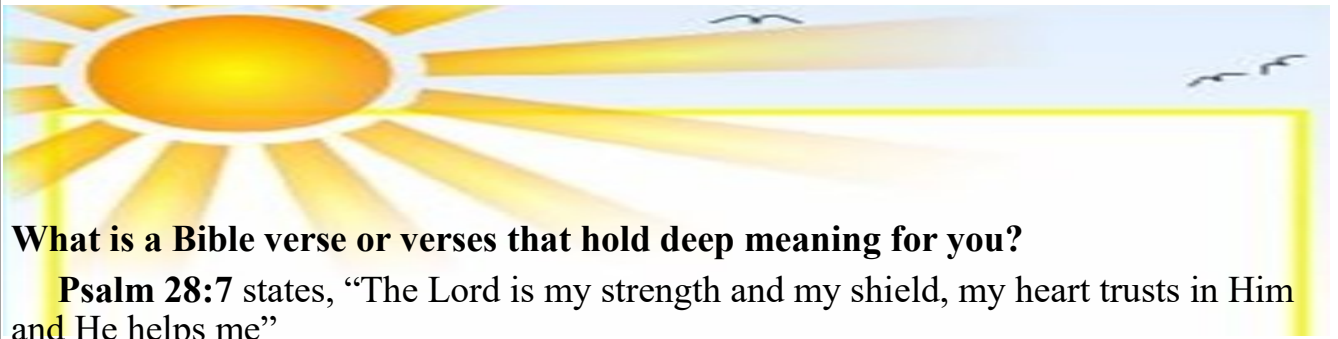
How long have you been attending FPC?

I have been attending First Presbyterian Church for as long as I can remember. I attended Sunday School, had my first Communion and was Confirmed at FPC. I also attended Youth Group and enjoyed bringing non-church going friends to the activities. I have taught Sunday School and Vacation Bible School, worked in the nursery and am a worship leader. Two of my favorite memories are ringing the bells in the belfry, calling everyone in to church. The bells were so heavy they lifted me off the ground.

My other favorite memory was being presented the Good News Bible by Reverend David Reiter in front of the church on May 17, 1992 (There is a commemorative sticker on the first page). He told everyone in my class that he wanted us to use the Bible, highlight it and mark it up and when it fell apart, to bring it back and the church will give us a new Bible. I still have the Bible and it is in good shape.

Share anything you wish about your family/children.

As you may know, my parents Bob and Nancy Butter also attend FPC. I share an apartment with my younger sister and one cat. I do not have any children.

**What is a Bible verse or verses that hold deep meaning for you?**

Psalm 28:7 states, “The Lord is my strength and my shield, my heart trusts in Him and He helps me”

Psalm 46:10 states, “Be still and know that I am God”

These verses come from my favorite book of the Bible. They remind me that the Lord walks beside me and is my counselor and guardian, with whom I am able to go to with everything. All I need to do is give it to God.

What are your favorite pastimes/hobbies?

I enjoy going for walks with my mother as it gives us time to talk and reconnect. I also enjoy gardening. I start my vegetable garden with seeds and young plants so I can harvest all season long. I also love to travel and experience new things. I have been to nine states outside of Minnesota and spent one month in Australia. I would like to visit all fifty states.

What are some small things that brighten your day?

Some small things that brighten my day are a good cup of coffee, a bright sunny day, making a new friend and doing something unexpected for someone.

Given the choice of anyone in the world past or present, whom would you enjoy as a dinner guest and why?

If I could have dinner with anyone, I would have dinner with my late Grandpa Robert. Everyone who knew him says he was a good guy who would do anything for family and that we would have gotten along well. At dinner, I would ask him about his life and any advice he has for me.



DEACONS CORNER

In last month's Tower Mike Rutter shared the importance of listening. The past year Paula Tift and I have had the pleasure of listening to longtime member Marilyn Skaalerud. She has many delightful tales of her lifelong friendships and family. She had many jobs over the years, one as administrative assistant here at church. She would add that she was very involved with Moe's pageant during that time, even following him to Arizona to lend a hand.

One of Marilyn's entertaining stories took place here at the church in the late 70's. It was new member reception day and down the aisle of the sanctuary walked a cat! Marilyn, along with co-admins Cleta Toohey and Barb Bowman as well as Herman Czech decided that the cat should be a new resident of the church. They named her Sunday. She would roam the church during the week but was locked in the office during services. Sunday was a good helper, even catching a bat and presenting it to Cleta, who fortunately loved cats! She did get outside occasionally and had 2 litters of kittens, named Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Eventually a new pastor arrived and was allergic to cats. A new forever home was found for her, comforting children whose father had recently died.

Bible verses that come to mind are Proverbs 12:10 - "The righteous care for the needs of their animals, but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel. Job 12:10 - "In His hand is the life of every living creature". - submitted by Karen Larson

Picture of Marilyn Skaalerud



Sketch of a cat - by Linda Addicott





Texas 4000

Thank you to those who donated and served while the Texas 4000 bicycle riders stayed at our church on Friday, June 20. Every year Texas 4000 competitively selects University of Texas students for an 18-month program designed to cultivate the next generation to lead the fight against cancer. Texas 4000 empowers each student to raise \$5,000, ride 2,000 training miles with his/her team, volunteer in the community, and play an active role in planning the ride. They look for students with a passion to fight cancer, who can serve as an ambassador for the organization, previous organizational involvement, good communication skills, and a demonstrated ability to work well with a team. Previous cycling experience is not a requirement, and the fundraising, training, and volunteering all take place before the summer ride even begins.

The 70-day ride travels multiple routes from Austin, Texas to Anchorage, Alaska—the Texas 4000 summer ride is the World's Longest Annual Charity Bike Ride. Each rider logs more than 4,000 riding miles throughout the ride. The riders arrange all accommodations in advance during the training year, relying on the generosity of host families, churches, and schools for shelter, and are prepared to camp when housing is not available. St. Cloud marked the group's halfway point. The group averages 75-120 miles per day on their bicycles.

Riders are self-sufficient, rotating the duties of driving support vehicles, setting up rest stops, securing food donations, and preparing meals. Messages of prevention and early detection are shared with communities large and small, and community members can sign the team's dedication banner, which riders carry on their journey to Alaska. Wherever they are along the journey, the riders begin their day with a Ride Dedication Circle to reflect on their shared mission to fight cancer.

If you would like to learn more about Texas 4000 or see their route, visit www.texas4000.org.



Missions

Did you know?

(KNSI) – A ribbon-cutting ceremony in June celebrated the opening of St. Cloud’s second Community OutPost (COP) and upgrades at 10-10 Park.

The new facility represents the culmination of years of planning that gained momentum when the city secured a federal grant of \$475,000 in 2022. The Public Safety Foundation and its community partners then began searching for an appropriate location and settled on the former Promise Neighborhood building. The foundation was formerly known as the Greater St. Cloud Public Safety Foundation.

Police Chief Jeff Oxtan told KNSI News that the site would evolve to serve the neighborhood. “So, we’re going to start this out slow. We’re going to grow it as we see what the needs are, and we’re going to base a lot of the stuff off the successes we know happened at the South Side COP house.”

Oxtan says operations will start by mirroring the first location’s successful concept. “This is modeled a little bit more off of our existing COP house on the south side,” Oxtan explained. “I think we’re excited to engage with kids over here and families and get our kid programming going to really give kids a lot of options for fun things to do.”

Those options include basketball, fishing and soccer clubs, as well as the Women of Worth Club. Sherburne County is setting up a family resource center at the site, and St. Cloud Area School District 742 will also offer family assistance from the location.

Beyond the new cop house, the city celebrated significant improvements to 10-10 Park itself. The upgrades include new playground equipment, a splash pad, additional green space, improved lighting, and enhanced handicap accessibility features.

Mayor Jake Anderson emphasized the importance of quality park amenities for neighborhood health. “They’re vitally important. I mean, they’re about livability. A lot of folks don’t have basketball courts or playgrounds. Maybe their yards aren’t big enough. Maybe they can’t afford it, whatever the reason.”

The park improvements were funded through a voter-approved parks levy that will support \$20 million in neighborhood park enhancements over the next couple of years. Together, the new COP House and upgraded park facilities represent a significant investment in community resources and youth programming for southeast St. Cloud residents.

Promise Neighborhood is moving to a new location. A ministry site is still being determined.

Nuer Professional Network (NPN)

Mr. Thijin Gatwech - leader of the Nuer Professionals Network (NPN) with a degree in business. Thijin lives in St. Cloud and is networked to South Sudanese people throughout the region. He helps his people receive mental health education, as well as move toward financial independence and home ownership. Thijin will soon attend the Academy to become more equipped in his ministry. If you would like to assist Thijin's ministry, you can write a check payable to the church (memo: Thijin, NPN).

Other ways to donate include: Venmo:

@NPNempower, Cashaps: \$NPNcommunity,

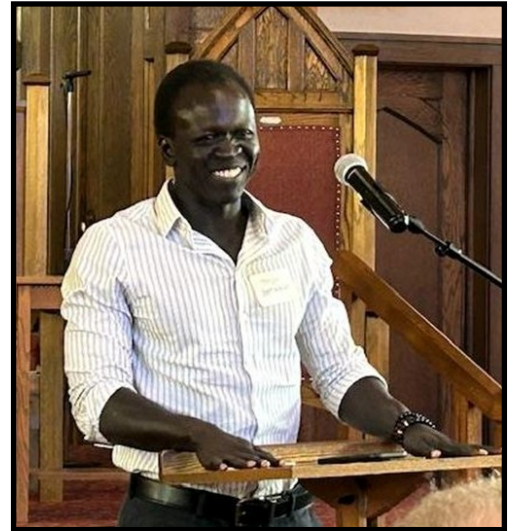
Zelle: info@nuerprofessionalsnetwork.org

NPN Links:

<https://youtube.com/@nuerprofessionalsnetwork>

<https://facebook.com/nuerprofessionalsnetwork>

<https://instagram.com/nuerprofessionalsnetwork>



Scholarship Awards

The Session, upon the recommendation of the Endowment Committee, approved college scholarships for the following members of our church: Andrew Giese (Central Lakes College), Gavin Owen (University of Minnesota), Bailey Seaman (University of Nebraska), Carrera Walters (University of Minnesota-Mankato).



The scholarships are provided from the **House-Holgren Fund**. Harold and Hulda House were members of our congregation for many years. Much of their time was spent in teaching. The two began the House Scholarship Fund. Many years later, after the death of Marvin and Joyce Holmgren, their family contributed to this account to expand the fund. The fund now has more than \$400,000 for future undergraduates.

We give thanks to God for those who give well beyond their living.



Service Group – July

Chairs - Bert/Jan East

David /Rachel Buchin

Sarah Dorn

Bill/Karen Ferkinhoff

Steve/Barb Isaacson

Randy/Arlene Wickmann

Don/Karen Ondracek

Linda Sarff

Leroy/Paula Tift

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVERS SCHEDULE

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Worship Leader</u> | <u>Ushers</u> | <u>Greeter</u> |
|----------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 6 July | Bobbie Lampi | Lynn Rae Olson/Carrie Raiche | John Hoffman |
| 13 July | Tami Calhoun | John Hoffman/Lori Smith | Phil/Jeannie Chu |
| 20 July | Mary Jost | Leroy/Paula Tift | John Bowden |
| 27 July | John Bowden | John Detra/Duane Scherbing | Stephanie Randolph |
| 3 Aug | Rickie Espelien | GailAalderks/Mike Rutter | Kari Ahles |
| 10 Aug | Bobbie Lampi | Phil/Jeannie Chu | Nancy Coleman |
| 17 Aug | Rhonda Siltman | Joe/Stephanie Jacobs | Karen Larson |
| 24 Aug | Jackie Benn | Ryne Pentz/Lori Smith | Carrie Raiche |
| 31 Aug | Dick Andzenge | Lynn Rae Olson/Carrie Raiche | Mike/Kim Tollefson |

As a reminder, if you are unable to serve on your particular Sunday, please switch with someone and notify the office staff of the change.

| | |
|------------------|-------|
| Mariah Benn | 07/01 |
| Robert Hobson | 07/01 |
| Betsy Hayenga | 07/03 |
| Cindy Justin | 07/05 |
| Gene Williamson | 07/05 |
| Joshua Wood | 07/06 |
| Nathan Hounkpati | 07/11 |
| David Buchin | 07/12 |
| Brenda Espelien | 07/12 |
| Erica Smith | 07/13 |



| | |
|------------------|-------|
| Cole Hedlund | 07/15 |
| Sandy Moorhouse | 07/17 |
| Andrew Giese | 07/18 |
| Susan Stocker | 07/20 |
| Zachary Ruble | 07/21 |
| NeSe Andzenge | 07/23 |
| Samantha Handley | 07/24 |
| George Hontos | 07/26 |
| Edward Bavery | 07/27 |
| Julee Sticha | 07/30 |

If we have missed anyone's birthday, please let the church office staff know (320) 251-8277

Finishing The Race (continued from page 1)

Hebrews 12:1-2

And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus.
(adapted for use)

Questions to be considered:

1. What can we do to help?

Pray and read through Hebrews 12:1-2.
Give to the fundraising campaign.

2. Why start in the summer?

In order to avoid confusion with our annual stewardship campaign, we are deliberately choosing a different time of the year.

3. What is the anticipated balance of the loan payback?

The anticipated balance is approximately \$97,000 or 6% of the original project.

4. What if I can't pledge throughout the year but can give a one-time gift?

Any and all gifts will be greatly appreciated.

5. What happens if we don't pay this off by next year?

The goal is to raise enough funds to avoid having to pull payments from the operating budget. If we were to put these payments into our operating budget, it would significantly impact our ministry. So far, we have not had to use any of the operating funds.

6. Is my money going for principal and/or interest payments on the loan.

Because we continue to make our monthly payments, all of these funds should go to principal.



| Finances | May | YTD |
|----------------------|------------|------------|
| Member Contributions | \$36,178 | \$179,175 |
| Total Revenue | \$38,228 | \$189,168 |
| Expenses | \$28,822 | \$150,316 |
| Net (over/under) | \$ 9,406 | \$38,851 |

First Presbyterian Church
340 South 5th Avenue
Saint Cloud, MN 56301
Telephone: 320-251-8277
e-mail: admasst@fpcstcloud.org
web site: www.fpcstcloud.org

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
PERMIT NO. 311
Saint Cloud, MN
56301

Our Mission Statement

*"Bringing the Living Hope of
the Gospel to the World by
Knowing and Serving Jesus
Christ"*

Our Vision Statement

*"The Kingdom of God made
known one sacred space at a
time"*

Office Hours

Monday - Thursday
8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
BIBLE STUDIES**

Tuesday 9:00 a.m.
Men's Bible Study

Wednesday 9:15 a.m.
Women's Bible Study

Friday 7:00 a.m.
Men's Bible Study

*You're invited to join a study that
works for you!*

JULY 2025

SESSION

Pastor Darin Seaman, Moderator
Bobbie Lampi, Clerk

Class of 2025: Rhonda Siltman (Mission), Randy Hammond
(Property), Lynn Rae Olson (Campus),
Mark Scholer (Worship & Evangelism)

Class of 2026: Tom Horn (Finance), Marsha Elg (Worship),
Bob Butter (Worship), Norine Schmitt (Personnel)

Class of 2027: Jim Anderson (Youth), Brenda Espelien (Fellowship),
Thijin Gatwech (Mission), Sandy Ross (Fellowship)

DEACONS

Class of 2025: Kari Ahles, Margaret Brooks, Karen Larson,
Julia Owen, Duane Scherbing

Class of 2026: Michael Rutter, Gail Aalderks, Audrey Taatjes,
Paula Tift, Mary Lease, Carrie Butter,

Class of 2027: Jacki Benn, John Johnson, Sharon Johnson, Linda
Sarff, Lori Smith