



The Compass

May-June 2021

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH—Portland, Indiana

A Pastoral Perspective Amid Increasingly Unchurched US Population

At this season of Easter into Pentecost following, I have been reading of recent trends in society's religious demographics among Christian communities on the continent.

"After seeing the [Gallup Poll study](#), which came out during Holy Week, that for the first time church membership in the U.S. has declined to less than half the population, Presbyterian News Service reached out to the [Rev. Brian Heron](#) for some insight. As Presbyterian for Vision and Mission in the [Presbytery of the Cascades](#), located in Portland, Oregon [where I attended the 222nd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) meeting nearly five years ago in 2016], Heron lives and works in *one of the least religious cities in the nation*."¹

Following the Memorial Day holiday weekend next month, I am planning to visit this area of our nation around a few hours' drive from where my eldest's young family has recently relocated in Washington state during the ongoing pandemic. As the Holy Spirit leads, I look forward to experiencing worship together there in an intercultural setting on the fifth Sunday of May at the church of another denomination where my son-in-law is now serving on their pastoral staff.

In our own Presbytery of Whitewater Valley, there have been a number of nearby church congregations that have closed over the past year during these prominently pronounced times of uncertainty. While the news might appear bleak to not quite bode well of things to come, there is some nuance of stats to be interpreted that possibly engenders hope for those identifying among mainline church populations.

"The latest available data from the General Social Survey, a major tool for sociologists, shows that the percentage of mainline Protestants in the U.S. recently increased for the first time in nearly 30 years, from 10.2% to 10.8%"² as Religion News Service has reported.

In our sovereign Lord's grace, presently, we remain abiding continually keeping on with keeping the faith of our forebears into the new millennium. Lifting intercessory prayers together toward the nascent revival of church tradition upon a renewed awakening may very well be in the offing for a religious renaissance to bear winsome witness among beloved communities in Christ.

I would be heartened to prayerfully participate with others in the Spirit of the Lord bringing about such empowering and equipping among many as yet to come before the throne of grace with confidence knowing God hears the cries of God's people for the Lord to "heal their land"³. As we endeavor to go on "for the healing of the nations,"⁴

I continue, with you

In Christ's service,
Pastor Rex

¹ <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/church-membership-in-us-now-less-than-half-the-population/> (emphases added)

² <https://religionnews.com/2021/03/31/behind-gallups-portrait-of-church-decline/>

³ 2 Chronicles 7:14

⁴ Revelation 22:2c

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EASTER AT FPC PORTLAND



After Easter services were cancelled in 2020 due to Covid-19, it was wonderful to celebrate the resurrection again in our Sanctuary. Thanks to Debbie & Dennis Ford for decorating the church in such a lovely manner & thanks to everyone who purchased flowers. *Photos by Debbie Ford.*





May

04 Eric Rogers
 05 Emiley Bailey
 Joey Bailey
 08 Jay Goodrich
 09 Reny Lingo
 13 Emily Byrum
 15 Jim Runkle
 19 Audi Ford
 28 Cassandra Byrum
 29 Eliza Hyatt
 31 Bruno Benirschke
 Lee Haggenjos

June

02 Christian Runkle
 03 John Young
 04 Rachel Vogler
 06 Gracie Shoemaker
 07 Dave Hyatt
 16 Stacy Lingo
 Barbara Cortner
 21 Christina Myers
 26 Bob Morehous



The Church Office
 will be closed

Monday, May 31 (Memorial Day)
 through Thursday, June 3

Family news from Bev Priest

Seth is living in Carmel now, still working for Krauss Maffei, but covering the sales area of Indiana, Ohio, and areas north and west.



Lucas graduated last May from BSU in Psychology and is full time with WorkOne in Muncie and part time for Ball State. He is still living in Muncie.

Tristan is with us here in our new house but working an online job in Covid Contact Tracing for Ball State.

Emma is in her second semester of courses online through Ivy Tech and will do another year of that next year, giving her time to take general education courses and decide what she'd like to do.

Jordan and Linda are fine and are helping me out greatly with household chores and handling the questions that have come up following Glen's passing.

Thank you to all church members who sent cards to me after Glen's death or for my birthday. I hope you are all well.

AUDIO/VIDEO TECHNICIANS SOUGHT

By Meg Mauger

The Worship & Music Committee is looking for volunteers to assist with the new audio/video system during Worship.

If you, or anyone you know, would like to be trained to operate our new A/V system, we would love to have you join the team.

Please contact Barbara in the church office with any potential names of people you know with an interest in A/V technology, that might be willing to volunteer their time and expertise.

- ♦ Watch our worship service live, or view it again on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FirstPCPortland/
- ♦ And view or download an abridged version of the Sunday bulletin along with the Children's Bulletin on our website www.firstpcportland.org.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Our Vision Statement

"To provide a ministry which will lead people to strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ and reach out with God's love."



CALENDAR



May

- 02 Communion
- 09 **Mother's Day**
Pastor Rex @ Winchester
- 11 6:30pm Joint Meeting Session & Deacons
6:45pm Deacons Meeting
6:45 Session Meeting
- 23 **Day of Pentecost**
Pastor Rex @ Winchester
Pentecost Offering Collected
- 30 Guest Preacher: Rev. Kevin Boyd
- 31 **Memorial Day-Office Closed**
Bread of Life Community Meal

June

- 01-03 **Office Closed**
- 06 Communion
- 08 6:30pm Session Meeting
- 13 Pastor Rex @ Winchester
- 14 9:00am Newsletter Deadline
- 20 **Father's Day**
- 27 Pastor Rex @ Winchester

BREAD OF LIFE

The next Bread of Life Community Dinner First Presbyterian Church will host is on Monday, May 31(Memorial Day).

If you want to help serve or if you would like to provide some of the food, please contact Julia Schwomeyer at 726.4761 or call the church office at 726.8462.



Sunday Morning Worship 9:30am
in person & via Facebook
www.facebook.com/FirstPCPortland/

Church Office hours:
Monday-Thursday 9:00am-3:00pm
Closed on Friday