



# The Chapel Herald

## A Nation Under God



As a Southerner, I guess I'm supposed to appreciate fireworks, especially on Independence Day; and who doesn't thrill to the "rockets red glare, the bombs bursting in air," even when enjoyed within the tranquil confines of a city park, a lakefront, or a country club? Still, I've always missed the connection between sparklers and Roman candles, with the sacrifice of patriotic Americans coming together for the first time, to put their lives on the line for a new national identity, united to set an example of freedom for the rest of the world.

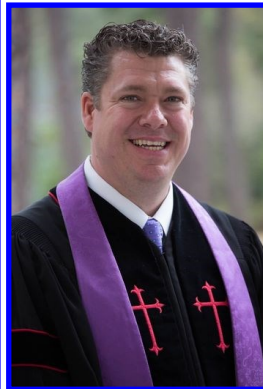
So let's imagine Independence Day, without the fireworks, the cook-outs, and all the ways we, as Americans, find to distract us from the real meaning of our holidays – both secular and religious. What's left for us to occupy our time and attention on Independence Day, that might give some meaning to what, for too many Americans, is just another "long weekend?"

Here's an idea: Let's consider how we might begin to talk about religion and politics in America, allowing for free expression in a civil and respectful way. It's a modest proposal, and yet, to the extent we've been unable or unwilling to try it, makes us an intellectually and spiritually impoverished nation - so distant and removed from the faith and unprecedented tolerance that inspired and united such a disparate band of brothers and sisters, to seek an independence previously unknown and unimagined by the human race.

Here's a question to illustrate how polarized we are on an issue covered by the First Amendment: Was America founded as, or has it ever been, a "Christian nation?" I'm speculating that a third of our country believes we were or are; another third would say we never were or aren't; and the remaining third has no opinion or couldn't care less. Guessing aside, let's address the question.

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## Small Group Ministry: The Future of TVC



Why small group ministry for The Village Chapel? What are the benefits for any church to implement small groups as a means of discipleship? The last directive Christ gave to His disciples and to the Church was to make disciples (Mathew 28:18-20). What did Jesus mean and how did He make disciples? Jesus used small groups! Out of so many who were willing to follow Him, He chose 12. Jesus knew He could spend more quality time with a small group than the masses. A small group allows more intimate fellowship, organic prayer, and effective service to others.

The same is true for small group ministry today. It's quite impossible for a large church of three services to fulfill the Great Commission one hour a week on Sundays. Sundays are for worship! And of course the scripture readings, music, and sermons are all a part of our spiritual formation. But discipleship is best done in small groups instead of mass gatherings.

Small group ministry allows believers to grow deeper in their faith through Bible study, and through theological discussions and exploration. The groups can share prayer requests with each other and pray together for issues their group members face. Small groups have an effective pastoral quality to them, as they provide personal accountability and spiritual support. Small group discipleship can replace TVC Shepherd ministry, that has become less consistent and less effective as a whole, when it comes to bringing people together for spiritual growth and nourishment. Besides, small groups can meet anywhere, at anytime, and are not limited to particular neighborhoods.

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Regardless of whether a majority of Americans are professing and practicing Christians, the U.S. Constitution and the U.S. Supreme Court's interpretation of the First Amendment, will not allow the majority to impose its religious beliefs on the minority.

So what benefit is there, to anyone – even Christians – to declare this a “Christian nation”? As for those who maintain our need to restore America to the Christian principles for which it was founded, consider this: When our founding fathers were constructing our constitution, they could have created a theocracy, stating that we are a Christian nation, and that the laws would promote and favor Christian worship, as well as providing privileges to Christians unavailable to non-Christians. Instead, they insisted on the First Amendment, which protects the free expression of religious beliefs, while forbidding the establishment of a religion, i.e. the authorization, organization, and funding of state-run churches. Imagine how ridiculous something like a “Church of America” or “Church of North Carolina” would sound, and what would they even look like?

Conversely, our founding fathers might have written a constitution and bill of rights that was entirely secular, with no reference to religion at all – but they didn't. While not mentioning God or Jesus Christ, our constitution allows for what Benjamin Franklin called a “public religion” to emerge; that acknowledges a belief in the existence of God – and God's role in the making of our country – while preserving private religious freedom, something no other nation had done previously.

And what is our “public religion?” While we've never publicly claimed that America believes that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior, we have always professed that, as a nation, we believe in the God who is responsible for our blessings – especially our freedoms – and the God to whom we are accountable for the use of the resources God has given us.

If you're skeptical, consider that every American president has quoted from the Bible at his inaugural address; and imagine the odds of a candidate for public office being elected while proclaiming that he doesn't believe in God. As Americans, we expect our public officials to believe in God, while making decisions within a statutory and constitutional framework – a political game played within the boundaries of our “public religion.”

And why is our public religion – that believes in

God but isn't necessarily Christian – important to us and essential to preserving the kind of country we want for ourselves and our survivors? Because we intentionally place our faith in Almighty God – and not a human being, especially a politician – we have avoided a Caesar, a Napoleon, a Hitler, a Stalin, or a Chairman Mao – in other words, a dictator on our shores. We elect politicians to represent our interests, and implement a government of laws, not men. But God help us should we ever pray to them, or put our faith and hope in them. Experience should at least teach us this.

We are, and always have been, a nation under God. In our various understandings of what that means, can't we be united – united as an example of freedom to the rest of the world; united in the divine providence that brought our ancestors to these shores; and united, for the sake of this great nation, in gratitude to the loving God who brought us here together? Is the “land of the free” and the “one nation, under God” brave enough for that?

May America bless God,

*Pastor John*

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Research supports the growth of churches as a result of implementing small group ministry. People invite co-workers, friends, and neighbors, and once the relationships are formed, the groups want to continue meeting indefinitely. Sometimes people belong, before they believe-- the same way St. Patrick evangelized Ireland.

As I write, our small groups are growing weekly, and there will be numerous opportunities for you to participate. So please consider getting involved. I can assure you, you will not regret it. For more information, please check the bulletin and website for current opportunities and opportunities that will become available this Fall.

Here's to a bright future of making disciples,

*Pastor Ashley*

## Meals on Wheels (MOW) of the Sandhills.

Significant changes were put into place this past year after being shut down at their original and long-term food source location as of 3/13/20 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. After more than 35 years, there was concern about where they would get food and how/where would the daily meals (70-85 Monday through Friday) be prepared and packaged for pick up by volunteers. Several churches stepped up immediately and daily text messages were sent to nine volunteers informing them where they would pick up meals. The overwhelming support received was absolutely wonderful! Rebecca Listrom, Executive Director of MOW, was able to continue operating the program from an administrative side from her home.

There are more changes on the horizon, again due to the generosity of many whom support this mission. Church groups gave donations. Realtor groups made gifts. Individuals stepped up with gifts. The Village Chapel as always was a significant contributor to our mission. Volunteers made larger monetary donations than ever. Client payments are seeing a slight increase. Currently, any new clients are charged \$4.00 per meal. Existing clients prior to June 2020 still pay \$3.75 per meal. Food costs have significantly decreased, mainly because MOW was supported for more than six months by many of the organizations/restaurants listed below free of charge:

- New Covenant Fellowship Church
- Christ Community Church
- First Baptist Church of Southern Pines
- Community Presbyterian of Pinehurst
- Chick-Fil-A
- Outback Steakhouse
- The Bell Tree Tavern
- Vito's on Hwy 5
- Country Club of North Carolina

The most exciting change is still in the works as a board member and her husband have purchased a building in Pinehurst and are donating about 1,500 sq feet to equip a kitchen, provide an office and storage area as well as a convenient area for volunteers to come each weekday and pick up meals. MOW will be recruiting a whole set of volunteers to begin cooking the daily meals with a board member as the on-site coordinator. The owner of the building will be purchasing all the commercial grade equipment up front and then MOW will reimburse over several years. Over time the equipment will be owned by MOW. This space is being donated rent free!!! It is exciting to have construction of the kitchen underway. Funds that might be received in the future could be utilized to purchase food or to also assist with equipment expenses. The target operation start date at the new facility is September.

Rebecca Listrom has been the Executive Director and only employee for going on 15 years! Meals on Wheels of the Sandhills has been in operations since 1974. The founder, Ida Baker Scott, would be proud of their work!

Rebecca's contact information is [rklistrom@yahoo.com](mailto:rklistrom@yahoo.com), mobile phone (910) 691-1517

Website: <http://www.mealsonwheelsofthesandhills.com>

Please consider volunteering your time as a meal preparer or deliverer on one of the nine routes currently served by MOW.

## **Pastor's Report: June 2021**

### **Pastor Ashley Neil Smith**

I am writing this report from the campus of Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA – beautiful campus. Our Youth Summer camp is going well here, and the students are whole-heartedly involved. We will return Friday, Lord willing.

Since the last board meeting, we have five new members (Total 16): The Rogers (8:15) and The Woods (11). Remember our goal is one member per week, so at this stage of the year, we are a wee bit behind, but anticipate an above-average membership uptick in the Fall.

The recent memorial services this month went well, with good attendance at each service. A special thanks to Pastor John, Stephen Gourley, Vickie Smith, and the Chapel choir for making these services meaningful for the families of the deceased. We currently have no upcoming memorial services scheduled at the time of this report.

Christian Education small groups continue to grow. We are now up to 13 class offering-- 2 more than last month-- that are scheduled to be available in the Fall. Tables of Eight has also grown to 4 groups—1 more than last month—with a total of 38 participants—up from 26 last month. God is good! Small groups are the future for The Village Chapel. Too many benefits to name in a brief report.

First Wednesday Fellowship (formerly known as Break Night) will begin Wednesday, September 1<sup>st</sup>. We will begin a 6 p.m. There will of course be a catered meal, music, hymns, and genuine Christian fellowship. These meals will be monthly and no longer be presentation-centered. However, we plan to use these meals to get people connected and update the participants on Chapel events and opportunities.

The Children & Youth Committee has been formed! The committee members are Agnes Fusselbaugh, Lindsey & Jeremy Lashmit, Greg Wetzelberger, Nathan Whitfield. The committee will be led by Pastor Vickie. The goal of the committee, initially, will be to have Heritage Hall fully operable with ministry taking place in every classroom, immediately after the dedication of the new building. Committee members may be added later, but for now, this committee will begin working toward its goal.

Stephen Gourley continues to bless us and our community, as he leads us in the worship of our Savior. He has taken the lead on many memorial services, and now, prayer services. Stephen is truly a “Renaissance Man.”

This is my report. Please don't hesitate to text, call, or email me, with questions or clarifications.

Welcome to Summer,

*Pastor Ashley*

## **Tables of Eight Fellowship Meal**

Tables of Eight is a great way to get connected at The Village Chapel-- across our three services and for new members with current members. You can start hosting a group or you can join a group that is already formed. The groups meet monthly to quarterly, and the venues vary. For more information please contact Julie Huggins  
at

[hugginsj4@gmail.com](mailto:hugginsj4@gmail.com).

## July Birthdays

- |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b> Carolyn Smith<br>Maru Nelson<br>Ronald Trawick                                                           | <b>15</b> Carty Davis<br>John Breting                                                                                      |
| <b>2</b> Seth Whitfield<br>Emma Lashmit<br>Dube Putz                                                              | <b>16</b> Don Auch<br>Brent Slosser<br>Alyssa Brosch                                                                       |
| <b>3</b> Tom Flanagan<br>Warren Pardue<br>Mary-Ellen Morris<br>Greg Page                                          | <b>17</b> Jasmine Walker                                                                                                   |
| <b>4</b> Dian Moore<br>Peter Kisver                                                                               | <b>18</b> Gene Horne<br>Louise Weiss<br>Ale` Scaletta<br>Chloe Bowen<br>Amelia Lashmit<br>Jules Shumski<br>Joan Montgomery |
| <b>5</b> Margaret Shaw<br>Marge Behning                                                                           | <b>19</b> Bud Fisher                                                                                                       |
| <b>6</b> Patricia McLean<br>Sallie Webster<br>Darlene Reeves<br>Greg Singer<br>Donna Brundage<br>Mike Fusselbaugh | <b>20</b> Sharon Trail<br>Shirley Aquino                                                                                   |
| <b>8</b> Jack Raffaele                                                                                            | <b>22</b> Jerry Townley<br>Charlotte Cable                                                                                 |
| <b>9</b> Nancy McNally                                                                                            | <b>23</b> Nancy Wetmore<br>Rob Barrett                                                                                     |
| <b>10</b> Laura Spence<br>Terry Prince                                                                            | <b>25</b> Josiah Lashmit                                                                                                   |
| <b>12</b> Donna Traylor<br>Jacques Wood<br>Maggie Ihde                                                            | <b>26</b> Darlene Skinner                                                                                                  |
| <b>13</b> Jean Williams                                                                                           | <b>28</b> Charles Clack<br>John Skvarla<br>Olivia Fox                                                                      |
|                                                                                                                   | <b>29</b> Doug Smith<br>Jim Schneider                                                                                      |
|                                                                                                                   | <b>30</b> Betty Austin                                                                                                     |
|                                                                                                                   | <b>31</b> Marc Granata                                                                                                     |

## Happy Anniversary

- |                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b> Rob and Katie Barrett                           |
| <b>2</b> John & Allison Orban                            |
| <b>4</b> Ron and Jan Kelly                               |
| <b>9</b> Dave and Tisha Edrington                        |
| <b>13</b> Ron and Ann Whitley                            |
| <b>15</b> Kenneth & Cynthia Eckard-Matthes               |
| <b>17</b> Jim and Jane Lewis<br>Jim and Eleanora Voelkel |
| <b>21</b> John & Harriett Riley                          |
| <b>28</b> Ham and Sallie Webster                         |
| <b>29</b> Mike and Kristen Obst                          |
| <b>31</b> Gary and Jean Ann Doern                        |

Please contact the office if your birthday or anniversary information is incorrect, or if you need to be added to the list.

Dear Village Chapel family,

I want to update you on my most recent medical appointment. Yesterday (June 28), Vickie and I went to Duke University Hospital for a second opinion on the unusual quality of my voice. The otolaryngologist found several lesions on my vocal cords. Surgery is required to remove them. It will be an outpatient procedure on July 27th. My recovery consists of 7 days of no talking, and several weeks of gradually reintroducing talking each day until my voice is healed and ready for normal vocal activity. Pastors John and Vickie have agreed to cover for me until I can return to normal service. I can't tell you how relieved I am to finally know the cause of the issue and to have a remedial plan to return to full recovery. I plan to attend every service during my recovery to show my support for our ministry team and to worship our Lord together. Please keep me in your prayers and I'm looking forward to an excellent quality of voice and effective pastoral ministry to our Village Chapel family.

With love and hopeful expectation,

*Pastor Ashley*



# MFUGE Camp Offers TVC Youth a Mission Experience!



TVC Youth wrote letters to area Police Officer's and delivered the letters to them personally.



TVC Youth, Lance Deuel, celebrated his 18<sup>th</sup> Birthday at camp!



TVC Youth raked leaves for a 90 year-old widow living alone in Lynchburg.



TVC Youth helped the Dahl Family with chores around their home in Lynchburg.



## Board of Trustees Nominations

During normal times we would ask you to return a nomination form to the Chapel office by September 30<sup>th</sup>, **but this year is different**. We are attempting to work around this virus while simultaneously making it easier for you. If you have a prospective nomination who:

- Is a member of the Chapel and dedicated Christian;
- Possesses business, financial, and organizational skills;
- Is congenial, a good communicator, a team player;
- Is willing to support the Pastors ministry efforts, uphold the Chapel's By-Laws and Mission Statement, and execute the directions in the Chapel's Strategic Plan,

**then please call that individual and seek his or her interest in being a nominee.** If the individual is "willing to serve," then simply contact any member of the Nominating Committee listed below by email or phone and they will assist you in moving the nomination forward.

**Rich Cowell** - [cowellr@aol.com](mailto:cowellr@aol.com), Home: 910-673-3779, Cell: 707-399-6055

**Carole Southon** - [dsouthon@nc.rr.com](mailto:dsouthon@nc.rr.com), 910-295-5385

**Peter Gross** - [SPGross@nc.rr.com](mailto:SPGross@nc.rr.com), 910-295-8045

**Carole Weaver** - [cdweaver5@embarqmail.com](mailto:cdweaver5@embarqmail.com), 910-975-0983

**Faith Clay** - [faithclay@icloud.com](mailto:faithclay@icloud.com), 248-765-7213

**Bill Bremer** - [billnshirleneb@aol.com](mailto:billnshirleneb@aol.com), Home: 910-215-6165, Cell: 910-690-4076

**Jack Raffaele** - [jackraffusa@gmail.com](mailto:jackraffusa@gmail.com), Home: 910=295-3031, Cell 919-389-8810

## Mid-Year Statements

The time has come to send out the mid-year statements. With the introduction of our Access ACS, we are encouraging members to utilize the abilities of this updated system so that we can work to minimize the cost. If you visit our webpage, [www.tvcpinehurst.com](http://www.tvcpinehurst.com), you will see a "Members" link in the upper right hand corner. Clicking this link will open a new webpage. Use your ACS login. If you do not have an ACS login, please contact Heather in the office and she will get this information to you. Once you have logged in, you are able to view your current giving information and even update your information. Along with financials, this system allows you to view the most current up-to-date directory, you can update your own contact information and pictures, you are able to access the calendar, communicate within the groups you are involved in, and so much more! Those who still wish to have a mailed mid-year statement will need to contact Susan Benefield in the office.



## *Steinway Piano Dedication*

Tuesday, August 17, 7:00PM

Dr. Kristina Henckel, pianist

Join us as we dedicate the newly-donated Steinway M studio grand piano with music of Beethoven, Liszt, Smetana, and Chopin offered by virtuoso pianist Kristina Henckel.



The *Chapel Herald* is a publication of The Village Chapel, 10 Azalea Rd., Village of Pinehurst, NC 28374; [www.TVCPinehurst.com](http://www.TVCPinehurst.com)  
Telephone: 910-295-6003; Fax 910-295-3729; The Care Cottage: 910-295-8026 ; Email [info@TVCPinehurst.com](mailto:info@TVCPinehurst.com)

*The Village Chapel*

The Village Green  
10 Azalea Road  
Pinehurst, North Carolina 28374  
[www.TVCPinehurst.com](http://www.TVCPinehurst.com)  
910-295-6003

**Return Service Requested**