

The First Presbyterian Church

P.O. Box 6 15 Main Street

Arkport, NY 14807

ArkportPresbyterianChurch@gmail.com

www.arkpres.org

PRESBYTERIAN POST



SUMMER 2019

...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

~ Galatians 5:22-23 ~



From the Desk of the Pastor

With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.

~ James 3:9-10 ~



Talking Like A Follower of Christ

It is a constant struggle for Christians to avoid taking on the culture and values of the world in which we live. This is probably true in many aspects of our lives, but in this article, I am writing about the way Christians express themselves. Scripture has a lot to say about both the power of the tongue and the corruptness of the tongue. When Scripture harps on a topic like taming the tongue or caring for widows and orphans, it is usually because: 1) it is important to God **AND** 2) people are bad at it. By *bad at it*, I mean people live in a manner that tends not to be faithful to God's design of us and not obedient to God's commands to us.

Life and death are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.
~ Prov 18:21 ~

I trust you would agree that we live in rather uncivil times when compared to yesteryear. Evil motivations are too easily attributed to ideas and people with whom we disagree, especially when they are political or cultural ideas. Once we can label our adversaries as *them* and their ideas as *evil*, there is license to consider them as morally inferior and treat them as such. [Let's be clear that this license does not come from God, who tells us to love our enemies.]

I am convinced that the new norm for social discourse is worse than the old norm, but this is not just an accidental result of some other changes in our culture (e.g., social media and the internet). In part, our discourse has become meaner as a result of intentional efforts of some wishing to transform our culture. [Presumably, we all wish to transform our culture, but most folks I know do not see angry discourse as a key enabler to the transformation they desire.] We should be aware that within the Social Justice Warrior (SJW) community there is the concept that politeness is a

Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

~ Proverbs 16:24 ~

“White Supremacist construct.” Within the SJW community, insistence on politeness in social discourse is seen as a means of silencing angry people who are trying to air their grievances. Whether or not you see any merit to this thought will depend upon your individual life experiences. Still, the reason I mention it is so that we would not be so dismayed by the recent rise in incivility; it is not an accident.¹

Of course, I have no interest in writing a social science commentary on why our society is getting meaner. My interest is in understanding what God requires of you and me and all his children. As you know, I am committed to sustained engagement with people with whom I cannot entirely agree. Out of this commitment to engagement, I know and communicate with a handful of self-identifying SJWs². Some these SJWs also self-identify as Christian. Here’s the part that breaks my heart; I usually cannot tell the Christian SJW rants apart from the SJW rants of my non-Christian acquaintances. To use James’ language, “this should not be.” These rants are full of *ad hominem* and ascribe evil intentions and motivations to people they couldn’t possibly know.

What does God have to say about this? Well, God has a lot to say and says it throughout Scripture (i.e., God harps on this – for reasons why, see the opening paragraph). Consider this from the Apostle Peter, “... all of you, be like-minded, *be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. For, ‘Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it (1 Peter 3:8-11) .’*” We find no license from God to engage in *ad hominem* insults or wishing ill upon another human being. Nor do we see a license for disengagement from those with whom we disagree; disengagement precludes seeking peace. Disengagement also makes it impossible to be God’s light to the world.

The Apostle Paul had this to say, “*No rotten talk should come from your mouth, but only what is good for the building up of someone in need, in order to give grace to those who hear Ephesians 4:29 (HCSB). Ad hominem and other forms of rotten talk are gravely at odds with building someone up. Moreover, our Lord taught that “... what comes out of the mouth comes from the heart, and this defiles a man.” Matthew 15:18 (HCSB).*” In other words, rotten talk comes from a rotten heart.

...can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

~ James 3:12 ~

¹ Of course, there are and always have been bullies and angry people who behave with meanness. They are mean out of self-interest and self-empowerment. They do not generally believe that the world should be an angrier or meaner place. Their behavior is for their own benefit and not seen as a virtue to achieve some higher societal good.

² All Christians ought to be eager to see justice within our society, but Christians carry a different lens on the matter than the largely secular SJW movement. While it is often fine for Christians to participate in secular movements and activities, it is never okay to take on the secular world view of that movement.

Christians are free to engage in public discourse, including political discourse. Still, we must remember that we are always ambassadors for Christ, and Christ does not need us to misbehave to advance his Kingdom. We do not need to slander or speak ill will toward our enemies (even when we perceive them as Kingdom adversaries) any more than we need to rob a bank to care for the widows and orphans. There are right ways to advance Kingdom values, and there are the alternatives, sin. Our God calls us to a standard of perceiving, thinking, feeling and acting that is quite different from the world's standard. While our world is deliberately getting meaner, we must hold to a biblical world view, in which we are called to love our neighbor as ourselves (**Mark 12:30-31**). The question, *who is your neighbor*, is answered in Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan. It is the one you distrust and whom you suspect of having very different values from you. Also, if our neighbor strikes us, we are to turn the other cheek (**Matthew 5:38-40**). As part of the Kingdom, we are part of God's plan to redeem the world. To act like the world instead of how God calls us to act is a faithless response to the brokenness around us.

Here is something I recently saw on Facebook:

Rules for Today
***DO NOTHING THAT YOU
WOULD NOT LIKE TO BE DOING
WHEN JESUS COMES.***
***GO TO NO PLACE WHERE YOU
WOULD NOT LIKE TO BE FOUND***

*Blessed is the one
who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,
but whose delight is in the law of the LORD,
and who meditates on his law day and night.*

~ Psalm 1:1-2 ~

THE PRESBYTERIAN POST

SUMMER 2019



AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

AUGUST 1 Nick Jones
AUGUST 2 Todd Haines
AUGUST 5 David Gates
AUGUST 6 Edith Piatt
AUGUST 6 Frank Owens
AUGUST 9 Diane Kendall
AUGUST 16 Audrey Whiteman
AUGUST 17 Duffy Elsenheimer
AUGUST 19 Noritta Smith
AUGUST 23 Dianne Jones
AUGUST 30 Linda Schroeder

ITEMS NEEDED FOR TURNING POINT

We have a list of suggestions for August and September for Turning Point. We will look forward to your items and donations at the back of the sanctuary. Thank you very much. Here is the list:

toothbrushes
toothpaste
bar soap
body wash
feminine hygiene products
toilet paper
deodorant



AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

AUGUST 25 Todd and Esther Haines



ELEVATOR SCHEDULE

AUGUST 4 Cluster Service at Hornell
AUGUST 11 Dan Lacy
AUGUST 18 Bob Osborn
AUGUST 25 Jim Robords

NEWS AND NOTES

CLUSTER WORSHIP SERVICE – AUGUST 4TH

The annual cluster worship service will take place at the Hornell Presbyterian Church on August 4th. Worship begins at 10:30 am with a fellowship hour to follow. There will be no worship service at the Arkport Presbyterian Church on that day.

COFFEE HOUR FOR THE STOVERS

There will be a coffee hour following worship on August 18th to thank Mark and Regie Stover for their dedicated service to our church and to wish them well as they start the next chapter of their lives moving to Pennsylvania to be near their grandchildren.

VBS

Another fun and successful vacation bible school took place at the end of June. Thank you to all who helped make this a memorable week for the participants.

SUMMERFEST FLOAT

Thank you to Mike Whiteman and his crew for the wonderful float they put together for the Summerfest parade. Thank you to Pastor Bruce and Bob Jones for providing the music on the float.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to the newest members of the Arkport Presbyterian Church. Peter and Roberta Gardner became members through transfer of membership from another church. David, Mindy, and Donovan Gates became members after completing membership classes.

THANK YOU

Pete and Roberta Gardner would like to say thank you for the warm welcome they received when they joined the APC. The plate given to them is a wonderful reminder of this special church family.

SAD NEWS

Our church family lost three special members in the past few weeks. Barney Glidden, Jean Stearns and Lance Schroeder all went to their reward with our heavenly Father. Christian sympathy is extended to the families of these three wonderful people. They will be missed by many.

Arkport Presbyterian Church

August 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29 ELDER OF THE MONTH: LORRAINE GLIDDEN	30	31	1 LADIES CLEAN IN THE EVENING	2	3
4 CLUSTER WORSHIP SERVICE AT HORNELL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - 10:30 AM	5	6 BIBLE STUDY - 9:00 AM	7 WINGS - 9:00 AM CASUAL WORSHIP - 6:00 PM BIBLE STUDY - 7:00 PM	8 LADIES CLEAN IN THE EVENING	9	10
11	12	13 BIBLE STUDY - 9:00 AM	14 WINGS - 9:00 AM CASUAL WORSHIP - 6:00 PM BIBLE STUDY - 7:00 PM	15 LADIES CLEAN IN THE EVENING	16	17
18	19	20 BIBLE STUDY - 9:00 AM	21 WINGS - 9:00 AM CASUAL WORSHIP - 6:00 PM BIBLE STUDY - 7:00 PM	22 LADIES CLEAN IN THE EVENING	23	24
25	26	27 BIBLE STUDY - 9:00 AM	28 WINGS - 9:00 AM CASUAL WORSHIP - 6:00 PM BIBLE STUDY - 7:00 PM	29 LADIES CLEAN IN THE EVENING	30	31