



First Press

2500 Church Street, Belton, TX 76513
254-939-2115 fpcbilton@gmail.com
www.fpcbilton.org



July 2021

From the Pastor's Desk

Tim Bowden, in his book *One Crowded Hour*, tells about an incident that happened during the confrontation between Malaysia and Indonesia in 1964.

A group of Gurkhas from Nepal were asked if they would be willing to jump from transport planes into combat against the Indonesians if the need arose. The Gurkhas had the right to turn down the request because they had never been trained as paratroopers. Bowden quotes an account of the story:

Now the Gurkhas usually agreed to anything, but on this occasion they provisionally rejected the plan. But the next day one of their NCOs sought out the British officer who made the request and said they had discussed the matter further and would be prepared to jump under certain conditions.

"What are they?" asked the British Officer.

The Gurkhas told him they would jump if the land was marshy or reasonably soft with no rocky outcrops, because they were inexperienced in falling. The British officer considered this and said that the dropping areas would almost certainly be over jungle, and there would not be rocky outcrops, so that seemed all right. Was there anything else?

"Yes", said the Gurkhas. They wanted the plane to fly as slowly as possible and no more than one hundred feet high. The British officer pointed out the planes always did fly as slowly as possible when dropping troops, but to jump

(Continued on pg. 3)



Clerk of Session--Penny stated that the Treasurer's report continues to be positive for year-to date, She reported on a meeting that she attended in Waco for the Southern Region Elders of Grace Presbytery. There will be a follow-up meeting on July 22nd, to be held at Grace Presbyterian Church in Temple. The Session approved a request from Rev. Kathy for well-deserved vacation time August 22-28.

Buildings & Grounds--Lynda reported that she has had electricians come to the church to look at our lights that need repair. Unfortunately, it is difficult to get materials and prices from suppliers at this time, so that job is on hold. The stained glass windows have been repaired and Bruce Vineyard is now in the process of painting the frames.

Other--The Tulloch-Vick Scholarship Committee set a deadline of July 15th for the submission of applications.



KEEP
CALM
AND
JOIN
THE CHOIR



Many thanks to Julie McPhail and Kay Atwood for the fabulous decorations for the 4th of July and to Susan Jones for the hot dogs and other delicious food that she prepared. Also, thanks to Erin Sims and her husband for repairing and painting our sign on Main Street and for removing the shrubbery that blocked it from view. In addition, many thanks to Lynda Allmer and Penni Rice, who did a great job of weeding the flower beds on our church grounds.

Total Income	\$37,451.39
Total Expense	\$27,689.38
Net Income	\$ 9,762.01



2

Pastor's Desk (cont.)

from 100 feet was impossible, because the parachutes would not open in time from that height.

"Oh," said the Gurkhas, "that's all right, then. We'll jump with parachutes anywhere. You didn't mention parachutes before!"

Parachutists prefer to pack their own parachutes. I get that as an independent thinker. Jesus is our parachute. What I often miss is the relational aspect of being a follower of Jesus Christ. My prayers (which include you all) are often one-sided rather than conversational. Asking for healing, help, wisdom, etc. is easier and quicker **than listening for God's voice.**

Recent events have caused human losses on a personal and national level. The tragic events in Surfside, Florida are a stark reminder of our finiteness and fragility. Our congregation has lost a beloved member recently after fervent prayers for recovery.

Last evening, I received a reluctant call from friends from a church I served for 14 years, sharing the sad news of the passing of a dear mutual friend and church member, Pattie. I recalled I had not received a Christmas card from Pattie for the first time in decades. Well, my friends reminded me, Pattie was 92 and in declining health. Still she was one of those vibrant souls who seemed immortal. The learning from these **recent events is "pack your parachute."** Make certain you are conversing with God regularly and putting into action the wisdom gained from those conversations. Do not delay connecting with your family, friends, neighbors and church family.

Generally, I resist making these kind of **definitive "go and do" statements.** My pastoral care training leads me to ask open-ended questions to allow seekers to make

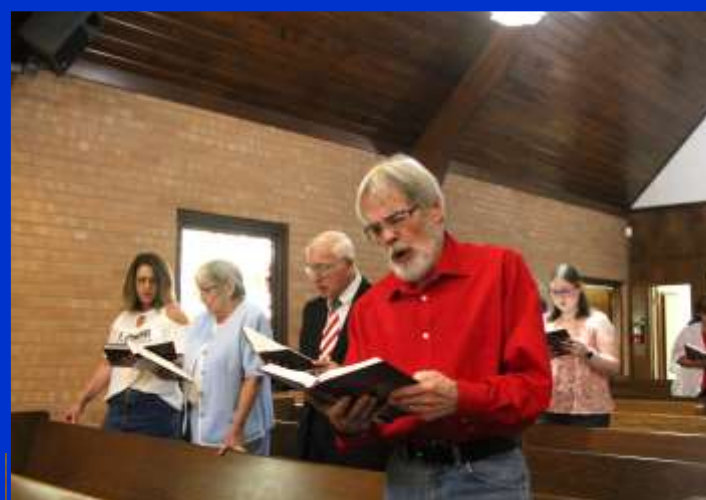
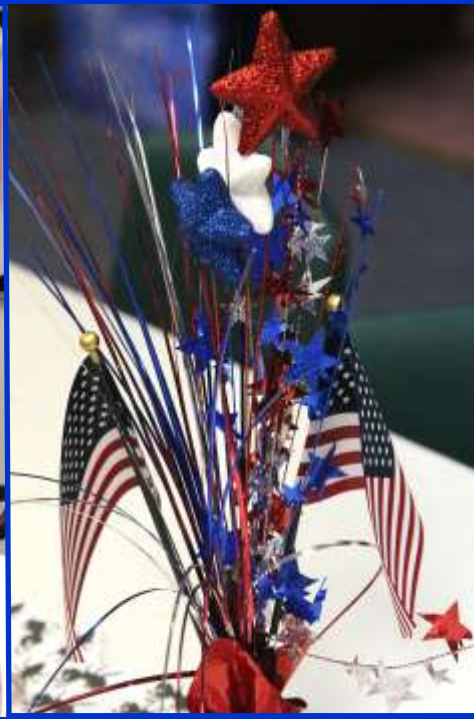
their own decisions. The Psalmist wrote an antiphonal song to be used in "going up to Jerusalem." In it, worshippers are reminded of their relational nature with God and one another; praise and worship of God is accomplished in community:

A Psalm of David (Psalm 24)

- ¹The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.
- ²For He has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the waters.
- ³Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place?
- ⁴He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully.
- ⁵He shall receive blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.
- ⁶This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face. *Selah*
- ⁷Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.
- ⁸Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.
- ⁹Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.
- ¹⁰Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory. *Selah*

How does this Psalm and these memories of past relationships inform you today and into tomorrow? Pray with God and the Beloved Community in which you are set and remember you are never alone. You have a Parachute in Jesus.

Kathy E. Vineyard, HR





**Alyssa & Tyler
who are off
to College**

May the LORD **Bless** you
& keep you.

May the LORD make his face to
shine upon you
& be **gracious** unto you.

May the LORD lift his
countenance upon you
& give you **peace.**

NUMBERS 6:24-26 amen

