



First Christian Church

Community Partner... With Family Focus

SOARING SPIRIT

Monthly News Letter - **July** 2026

SOME OF JULY CONTENTS

Pg 3: From the Pastor's Desk;

"Pagan Traditions Dangerous to the Modern Church"

Pg 4: Assoc. Pastor Andy Clark on

"July Activities during Summer Break"

Pg 5: Church Signs X

Pg 6: America's July 4th Birthday

Pg 7-8: America's Capitol History Prts 1, 2

Pg 9: Peru, IN Circus History



Up Coming Sermons for July

5th *"What Kind of Church Member Are You?"*

12th *"Why Support Missions"*

19th *"What's the Difference Between God's Way and Man's Way?"*

26th *"Who's in Charge?"*



SUNDAY BUS RIDES

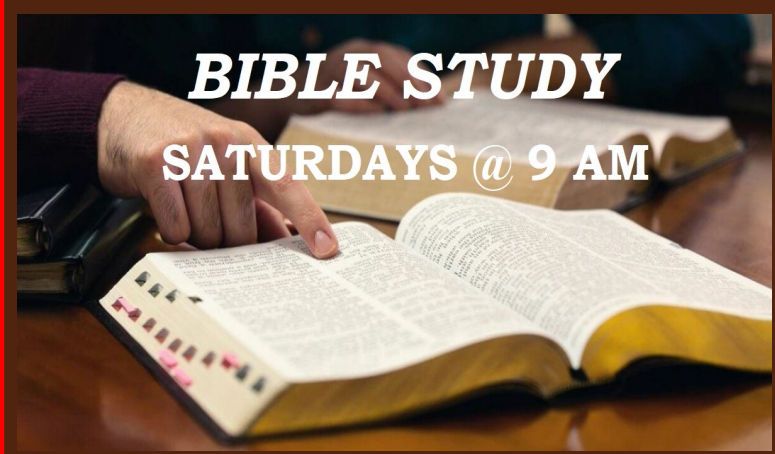
Need a Bus Ride to
Sunday Service?

CALL Church Office

765-473-3105

Call by Friday 3pm,

Otherwise we may not
be able to pick you up.





**STAFF @
FIRST CHRISTIAN
CHURCH**

JAMES LOFT Ph.D.
Senior Pastor

ANDY CLARK
Associate Pastor

VICKI BURTON
Office Manager
Sunday Bulletin Editor

BARBARA KUHN
Children's Program Director

JOHN FRANKOVICH
Firehouse Schedule Manager
Soaring Spirit Editor
Security Lock-up

KELLY BIDDLE
Firehouse Custodian

KRISTEN ROBSON
Church Custodian

CINDY WATSON
LYNN BOCKOVER
Pianists

ANDY CLARK
DAVID WILLIS
KRISTEN ROBSON
Worship Team

Elder for the Month
for **July:**
* CARL COMERFORD



OUTREACH COMMITTEE

****Lynn Bockover**

Becky Catey

Bob Catey

Dan Ray

Nancy Cunningham



FIREHOUSE COMMITTEE

****Lynne Ream**

Barbara Kuhn

Becky Catey

Carl Comerford

Carol Biddle

ELDERS BOARD

****Mike Hileman**

Becky Catey

Carl Comerford

Jim Clary

Michael Riley

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

****Michael Riley**

Carl Comerford

Barbara Kuhn

Becky Catey

Dan Ray

Lynne Ream

Nancy Cunningham

Jim Clary

TRUSTEES

****Carl Comerford**

Ron Morris

Dan Ray

Dave Willis

Ralph Benedict

July Birthdays

{If your name should appear on the birthday list and doesn't, please notify the office.}

July 12 Barb Hileman

July 26 Amanda Cook

July 13 Madilyn Clark

July 27 Ben Crispin

July 14 Mike Hileman

July 18 Judy Musgrave

July 20 James Cook





From The Pastor's Desk:

"Pagan Traditions -

Dangerous to the Modern Church"

By Dr. James Loft

Pagan traditions are considered dangerous in the modern church and in modern Christianity primarily because they are viewed as spiritual compromises that deviate from Biblical doctrine, potentially leading worshippers away from the exclusive worship of God.

Syncretism: the blending of distinct beliefs, cultures, or philosophies to create a new, unified system.

1. The *amalgamation* or attempted amalgamation of different religious, cultures, or schools of thought.

"interfaith dialogue can easily slip into syncretism."

2. Linguistics, the merging of different inflectional varieties of a word during the development of a language.

...pollutes Christian worship and can lead to spiritual deception, moral confusion, and the eventual erosion of faith.

Theological Compromise and Syncretism:

A major concern is the blending of non-Christian rituals, symbols, or spiritual beliefs with Christian worship. This is seen as breaking the First Commandment by adopting the ways of other "gods," which scripture warns against.

Deviation from Biblical Truth:

Paganism and occult practices (e.g., tarot, divination, horoscopes, or worshipping nature) are believed to be deceptive counterfeits of true spiritual life, leading people away from the Gospel's truth, according to Biblical doctrine.

The Problem of "Control" over God:

Some argue that modern Christianity often adopts a "pagan" approach of trying to manipulate or appease God to gain blessings through ritualistic acts (like the prosperity gospel or certain deliverance ministries), rather than building a relationship based on faith.

Spiritual Danger and Demonic Influence:

From a Biblical standpoint, many theologians view paganism not just as a different tradition, but as being rooted in spiritual forces that are not neutral - often categorized as demonic.

Erosion of Moral Standards:

It is argued that pagan traditions bring with them moral relativism, which leads to the abandonment of Christian moral standards regarding sexuality, family, and life, and to the embracing of secular or "neo-pagan" values.

Examples of Concerns

Neo-Pagan Revival:

The growth of modern paganism (Wicca, Gaia worship) is viewed as a direct challenge to the Christian worldview, reintroducing ancient practices that are considered incompatible with Christianity.

"Christian" Holiday Roots:

Some believe that celebrating traditional holidays that have historic roots in pagan festivals is a way of "adulterating" their devotion to God.

Nature Worship:

The tendency to treat the earth as a divine being (Gaia) rather than recognizing it as a creation to be stewarded, is considered a dangerous deviation.

Ultimately, the argument is that pagan traditions are dangerous because they are not what God prescribes and, in fact, are often the opposite of what he prescribes, leading to spiritual "snares."

Pagan traditions entered the church primarily through syncretism - the blending of Christian faith with existing Roman, Celtic, and other pagan rituals, designed to make conversion easier as Christianity spread. This process involved adopting existing holy days, deities, and symbols, rebranding them with Christian meanings, especially during the 4th-century rise of Constantine.

Holiday Rebranding:

To align with existing festivals, the church adopted December 25th (birth of Sol Invictus) to celebrate *Christmas*. While the festival of Samhain was recontextualized as *All Saints Day*, and fertility rituals in spring were rebranded as *Easter*.

Missionaries often built churches on top of former pagan temples or consecrated pagan sacred spots, such as wells and groves, to Christian saints.

The church also adopted priestly vestments, the use of incense, candles, and the structure of local pagan religious organizations.

All the above listed was an assimilation that was largely a pragmatic approach to gain followers by allowing them to retain familiar customs under a new religious banner.

Pagan Christianity?

While some see this as a gradual compromise, others like the author of "Proven Truth" argues it was a deliberate addition to unify a pagan empire.



“Activities During Summer Break”

By Associate Pastor Andy Clark



If you are interested in helping the youth program at the church financially, you should know that there are a couple of ways to designate your giving. **The Team Kids** ministry continues much as it has been, faithfully serving our elementary age students (K - 6) with weekly programming and special events. You may continue to designate money to “Team Kids,” directly and exclusively supporting that work.

You can also make similar gifts toward the Youth Group **Jr/Sr High** (7 - 12) and simply designate them for “Jr/Sr High Events.” Any money given with that designation will go toward feeding students on Sunday nights (just like Team Kids does), other resources needed for weekly meetings, or to help pay for students going to special activities, such as the Ark Encounter. This should **not** be confused with money toward missions or money toward sponsoring weeks of church camp.

Thanks for your generous hearts for the young people here at the church and in the broader Peru community!

With no Sunday Night Firehouse Youth meetings between May 18th and August 15th, we’ve got to have some time together this summer! Here is our answer to any summer doldrums you may have. Below is an overview of planned activities, and spelled out in detail. However, keep your eyes and ears open for any more spontaneous activities that come up. Any questions or if you need transportation to or from the church for any event, call or text Andy at 859-445-3493. Hoping you stay connected to Christ this summer!

- Andy



June 4th, 2026

Hiking at Turkey Run State Park

***July 9 (Thurs) 9-6- Canoeing the Eel River (or possibly the Tippecanoe River). (Rain date, July 10)**

-Meet at the church parking lot at 9AM, return time of 6PM is approximate. Wear apparel appropriate for being on/in the river (wear a 1-piece or t-shirt over if wearing bathing suit). Picnic lunch on the river will be provided, personal snacks and drinks are acceptable. Cost is \$10 per person, transportation to and from student homes can be arranged.

***July 23 (Thurs) 8:30-8PM- Hiking at IN Dunes (Rain date, July 24)**

-Eat breakfast before meeting at the church parking lot at 8:30. We will head north to Indiana Dunes State Park. A trail lunch and drinks will be provided, but bring snacks and extra drink as desired. Dress weather appropriate (watch temperature and mud conditions). Be sure to also bring swimwear (wear a 1-piece or t-shirt over if wearing bathing suit) and sunscreen for the Lake Michigan beach! Bring money for dinner on the way home; return time of 8 PM is approximate. Transportation to and from student homes can be arranged.

CHURCH SIGNS X:

Creative Displays for the Passerby

Compiled By John Frankovich, Jr



I continue with more interesting Church Signs from around our nation, from the amusing to the thought provoking, in an effort to reach out to the everyday passerby.





America's "July 4th"

Part of America's 250th Anniversary Series

Researched & Compiled by John Frankovich, Jr.

Happy Birthday America! It has been a long haul and many times a tough road to get to 2026.

On the global stage, America, in comparison to many other nations, is still the young kid on the block.

Starting with the Pilgrims who landed on some land known as Massachusetts, just named 4 years prior, people have migrated to America to escape, seek a better life, to find their fortune, or seek freedoms not available in the lands they fled - this year, also marks 406 years of immigration.

1776 - the year of making a stance against a powerful empire, the Declaration of Independence listed grievances, not for the first time, but for the last time. It was realized that going forward, the only way to get justice established, to be properly represented as a people, and not to be the pawn of another government was to break the chains to London and employ force to do so, if necessary.

On March 4, 1789, the new government of the United States of America went into effect under a new constitution, a constitution that was hatched out after 116 days in a convention where many concerns, debates and arguments took place. Many premises were looked at and accepted as fact, such as, man has and will do evil. This is why it is acknowledged that our Rights come from a living God and not from a single person or a group of persons. That's why by design, men should be chained to the limits of Constitution rather than by mans changeable, personal whims of thought. They acknowledged that government can inflate itself into a tyrant, hence by design, 3 Branches of Government, and a system of checks and balances. Finally, it was also acknowledged that a Democracy, America should not be. In fact, the Constitution that was being formed, was not compatible with a Democracy.

Edmund Randolph, delegate to the Constitutional Convention from Virginia had said, *the general object of the convention was to provide a cure for the follies and fury of democracy.*

The Declaration of 1776 had no mention of Democracy. The 1789 Constitution had no mention of Democracy employed to the governance of the new nation.

Elbridge Gary and Roger Sherman were delegates from Massachusetts and Connecticut, had urged the Constitutional Convention to *create a system to eliminate the evils that flow from the excesses of democracy.*

The United States was founded as a Constitutional Representative Republic - NOT a Democracy.

A few key factors made this unique nation possible; a document that restricts man and government, based on the foundation of Judeo-Christian values that came out of the Bible, and a Bible based moral people to keep it in place. One other factor is important I will add, the "proper education" of the next generations of this history. Islamists will not keep it intact. Criminal immorality will not keep it intact. The embracing of numerous idiot-ologies will not keep it intact. Socialism will not keep it intact. Marxism will not keep it intact. Radical anarchy and lawlessness will not keep it intact.

Below I share how I have explained Democracy versus a Constitutional Republic using a typical western story:

The sheriff of a town locks up a vicious killer. His reputation as a killer is widespread, but now there are witnesses willing to come forward. Meanwhile, across the street at a local saloon, two people stir up a crowd to march over to the jail in unison, demand the killers release over to them, so they can execute the killer immediately via a lynching (illegal hanging).

The crowd grows and cheers for immediate justice. The rationalization is, "we know he is guilty, we say he is guilty, and we are the same folks that would be on a jury! So let's skip waiting on a trial and have done with it now!" The crowd volunteers in their agreement, they shout their agreement. So the majority of the gathering crowd march over to the jail to demand the prisoner's release. This is Democracy in action and in practice.

The sheriff comes out to meet the crowd. He states that the prisoner will remain in jail till the circuit judge arrives to effect a trial. The sheriff is a symbol of a *Constitutional Republic system*, and practicing the same. The sheriff may also offer; *if he is found guilty, he'll hang. But if he hangs, he'll hang legally, not by the say-so of a mob!*

The sheriff and the prisoner are in the minority, while the large crowd is the majority - the system of checks and balances built in the Constitution sifts through such issues such as described in a typically Western tale. Something else to ponder, if the sheriff does his sworn duty, and he can divert the crowd, he saved them as well, from a murder charge that could be applied to all involved, had they lynched the prisoner on their own, without the Constitutional *legal* process.

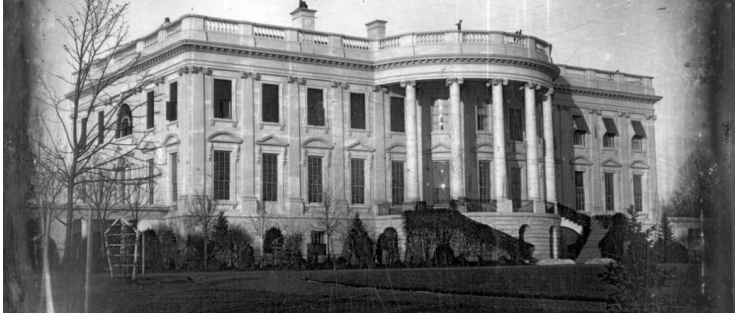
America; while many occupy the seats of governors, and mayors, seats of Congress and Senate who hate what you are, I say, despite their efforts, HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

America's Capital History Prt 1

Part of America's 250th Anniversary Series

Researched & Compiled by John Frankovich, Jr.

(White House in 1846)



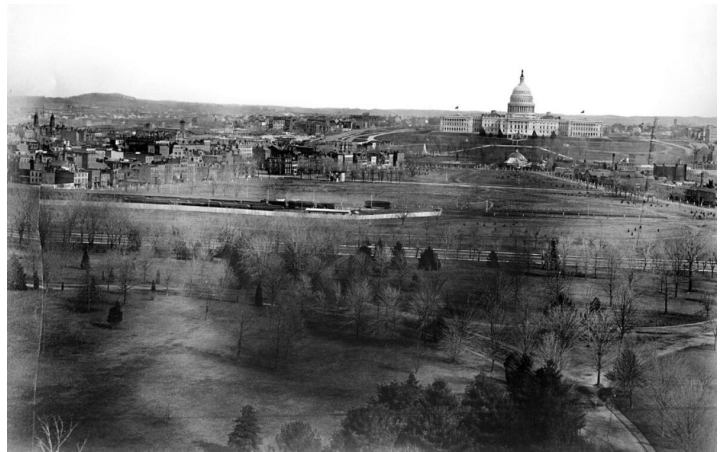
(Capitol Dome Construction in 1860)



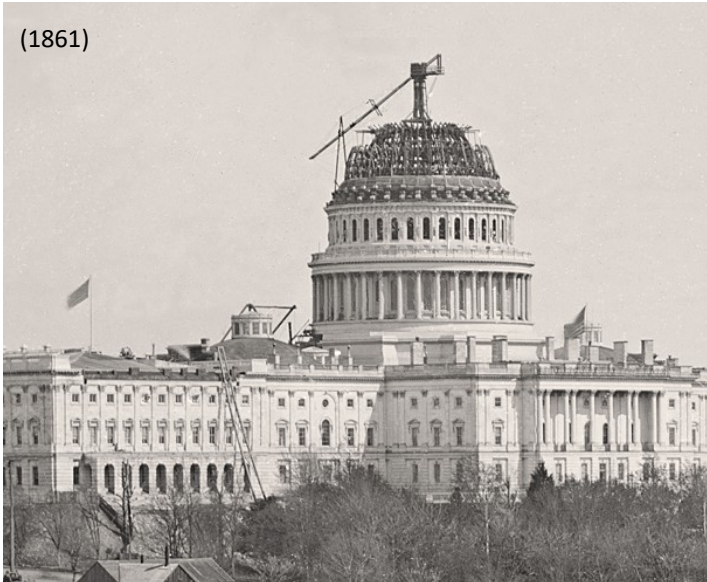
(The U.S. Treasury Building in late 1860's. The whole construction project took from 1836-1869 to complete.)



(The U.S. Capital in 1900)



(1861)



(Pennsylvania Avenue in 1919)



America's Capitol History Prt 2

Part of America's 250th Anniversary Series

Researched & Compiled by John Frankovich, Jr.

(Lincoln Memorial in 1920, was finished in 1922)



(The National Cathedral in 1925. Total construction lasted from 1907 to 1990.)



(Union Station in 1921. Built between 1905 to 1908.)

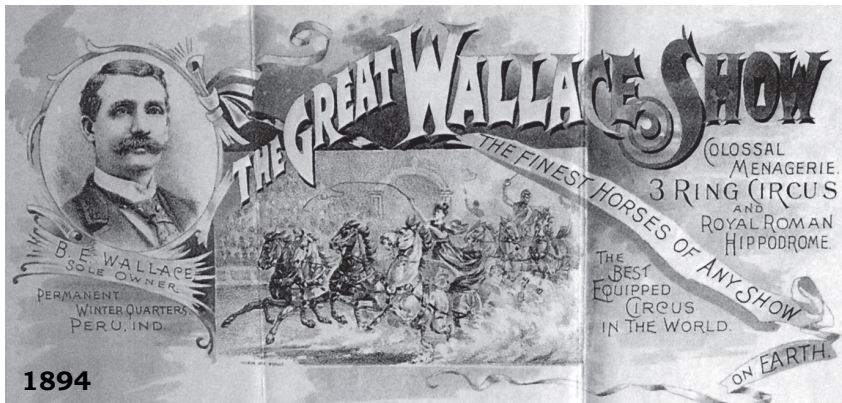


(U.S. Dept of Commerce Building in early 1930's. Total construction lasted from 1929 to 1934, covering 8 acres.)



(The National Archives Building in 1933. Total construction lasted from 1931 to 1937.)

PERU, INDIANA'S CIRCUS HISTORY



1894



1905



2019



2010



1965



SHOEBOX MINISTRY 2026

Operation Christmas Child Update –

This congregation has long supported the Shoebox ministry. Through the years we have gone through different ways of collecting boxes for shipping to children around the world. Individuals packing their own boxes, gathering supplies year around to pack larger numbers of boxes, and now; we are returning to individuals packing their own boxes again.

Since there are a number of supplies available, we will use some to complete more boxes. The supplies that have been left over from previous years can be combined into filler packages and placed in boxes at the packing centers. These are added to those boxes needing more items, or to replace restricted items that have to be removed. There is no shipping cost to forward these items for donation.

We hope you will continue to support this wonderful mission. In the past we have sent 130 to 150 boxes. Let's try to continue our support. Packing a box for a child shares the "Love of Jesus from Christians Around the World."

NOTE: Additional Christmas Shoebox's may not be available till the later half of July.

Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Challenge

Let our congregation begin a new Challenge Mission.

1. Pick up a Shoebox (as many as you wish to fill)
2. Pack for a Boy or Girl and choose an age.
3. Check out the flyers inside the box and look for items during the summer sales and begin planning and packing your box.
4. As you complete your boxes, add labels and include a letter or picture if you wish.
5. Return your boxes as completed anytime from August to October, and pick up more boxes if you wish.
6. Each box needs \$10 per box for shipping & religious materials. If you can contribute, **Do not place the money inside the box.** Place in envelope marked the "Shoebox Fund" and drop in the offering box.
7. If you are unable to shop for boxes and wish to help, please donate to the "Shoebox Fund" to help defer the \$10 shipping cost for others.

Note: You can also use regular shoeboxes or plastic shoeboxes.

Questions: please contact the Office: #765-473-3105

LOCAL MISSIONS IN PERU, INDIANA

If you are interested in any of these Missions in Peru, please call the Contact Number below or the Church Office if you would like to Volunteer.

**If you would like to Lead in any Ministry listed or just participate,
We would love for you to get in Contact with the Church.**

- > Volunteer with TEAM KIDS (working with Kids or Visiting Parents) Barb Kuhn #574-333-9232
- > Help mentor Jr/Sr High youth through conversation, meal preparation, chaperoning special events, making music, and using whatever gifts God has given you. Andy Clark #859-445-3493
- > Every 2nd Sunday of Each Month (Service at Water's) Church Office #765-473-3105
- > Every 1st Monday of Each Month (Game Night) Kelly Biddle #765-469-7386
- > Invitation Sundays (Every 5th Sunday of the Month) Church Office #765-473-3105
- > Shoe Box Ministry (Operation Christmas Child with Samaritans Purse) Church Office 765-473-3105
- > Bus Ministry (Need 1 Driver Sunday Morn. & 2 Drivers Sunday nights) Church Office 765-473-3105
- > My Father's House (Men's Ministry) Church Office #765-473-3105
- > Serenity House (Women's Ministry) Crystal Lewis #260-308-8984
- > Serenity House Bible Study (Women's Ministry) Tues Morn @ 10am Kristen Robson 765-592-5507
- > Feed My Sheep (One Wednesday of each month) Becky Catey #765-473-4283
- > Home & Hospital Visitation (as needed) Church Office #765-473-3105
- > Circus City Festival (6 Nights of Praying, Ministering, Handing out tracks, water to people in Peru) Church Office #765-473-3105
- > Court House Ministry (North Entrance steps each Wednesday, from 8:30-11:30am) Michael Riley #765-513-7602
- > Back to School Back Packs (at the Circus Building) Sherry Loshnowsky #765-469-2524
- > Cleaning Yards this Fall (Elderly & Widows) Church Office #765-473-3105
- > Clearing Driveways this Winter—Church Office #765-473-3105

Let's make 2026 a Great Year in Servant Evangelism



PRAYER Warriors

The *Prayer Warriors* encourage FCC members to join with them during your day to pray over the Prayer List. Prayer is the breath of the Christian life. We are committed to frequently practice the presence of Jesus and stand in the gap for others in prayer. Please **contact the office** at 765-473-3105 for your prayer requests **or contact Sandy Alspaugh** at 765-469-9802.

*{Please note: names will remain on this list for 2 months, **unless** we are notified otherwise. Thank you for your kind attention.}*

PRAYER List

Scripture tells us to pray and intercede for one another. Please remember the following members and friends in your prayers.



Baby Oakley
Becky Lukesh
Ben & Jeanine, Eric Crispen
Bob & Judy Musgrave
Brenda Abbott
Carolyn Everest
David Briner
Erma Clark
Jayson Robson
Jeff McElheny
Kay Weideman
Mark Hendrix
Maureen Cook

Patrick Spohn
Patricia Clary
Robin Riley
Samantha Trott & Daughters;
> Annabella, Kaitlyn
Shirley Kerns

****Mission to**
Peru, South America & Team

The Serenity House
Mahali Maisha (Dave Bell)

*For Israel
*Our FCC Church Family
*Our County, State & Nation

2026 Friendship Ministry Listings

Judy Musgrave

Aperion Care - Alzheimer Unit

Room 204

1850 W. Matador St. Peru, IN

Patricia Clary

Blair Ridge

Room 503

269 Meadow View Rd Peru, IN

OUT OF TOWN RESIDENTS

Arnold Presley

C/O Carol Penn

13103 N. Brick Chapel Dr.

Camby, IN 46113

Mildred Catey

Waterford Place, Rm. 517

800 St. Joseph Drive

Kokomo, IN 46901

Mrs. Viola Sommers

2677 Northwoods Dr

Kokomo, IN 46901-0708

TEAM KIDS BUS DRIVERS SCHEDULE



DRIVERS: If unable to drive, Please notify the Office, or Barbara Kuhn or John Frankovich. The more advanced the notice the better.

Thanks for helping in this Ministry!!

JULY

5th

19th

PICK-UP: <i>Sue Hawkins</i>	PICK-UP: <i>Sue Hawkins</i>			
DROP-OFF: <i>Mike Hileman</i>	DROP-OFF: <i>Mike Hileman</i>			

AUGUST

2nd

16th

30th

PICK-UP: <i>Sue Hawkins</i>	PICK-UP: <i>Sue Hawkins</i>	PICK-UP: <i>Sue Hawkins</i>		
DROP-OFF: <i>Bob Catey</i>	DROP-OFF: <i>Bob Catey</i>	DROP-OFF: <i>Bob Catey</i>		

JULY SERVER CALENDAR

	July 5	July 12	July 19	July 26	
<u>(TECH SERVERS)</u> Cameras Computer Sound Board 	Michael Riley	Michael Riley	Carl Comerford	Michael Riley	
	Dylan Hughes	Nancy Cook	Dylan Hughes	Carl Comerford	
	Mike Hileman	Mike Hileman	Mike Hileman	Mike Hileman	
<u>(KING'S KIDS)</u> 	Barbara Kuhn Angela Abbott	Barbara Kuhn Becky Catey	Barbara Kuhn Carol Biddle	Barbara Kuhn Lynne Ream	
<u>(NURSERY)</u> Sunday School Worship 	Barbra Hileman	Barbra Hileman	Cindy Beaver	Carol Biddle	
<u>(BUS DRIVER)</u> 	Carl Comerford	Jim Clary	Bob Catey	Sue Hawkins	
<u>(GREETERS)</u> Elevator Doors Sanctuary 	Nancy Cunningham	Ron Morris Connie Morris	Mallory Beaver Cindy Beaver	Jeff Ream Lynne Ream	

July at-a-glance

REPEATING WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

SUNDAYS:

- Elders Prayer Circle, 8:30 AM
- Sunday School, 9 AM
- Sunday Worship, 10 AM
- Women's AR, 2 PM
- Team Kids, 5 PM (5th & 19th)
- FH Youth Group Sundays, *Closed for Summer*

MONDAYS:

- Staff Meeting 9 AM
(except the week that has board meetings)
- AR, Noon

WEDNESDAYS:

- *Office Closed*

FRIDAYS:

- AR, Noon

SATURDAYS:

- BIBLE STUDY, 9 AM, Downstairs Room B-13
- AR, 10 AM

"Feed My Sheep"

> ***Will be Closed thru July***

JULY 1 - 3

> Deans Wilderness Camp

JULY 3rd

> ***Office Closed***

JULY 6th

> Elder's Meeting 6pm in Library

> Executive Meeting 7:00pm Library

JULY 7th

> KAIROS 7pm - Library

JULY 10th-18th

> Peru's Circus Week

> Circus Parade on 18th

JULY 9th

> Youth Canoeing Trip on the Eel River 9am-6pm

JULY 12th

> FCC Hosting Service at The Waters of
Peru Nursery Home 1:30pm

JULY 14th

> Needle Work Grp 6:30pm - Living Stones Rm

JULY 23rd

> Hiking at IN Dunes 8:30am - 8pm

JULY 26th - AUG 5th

> Mission Trip to Peru, South America

