



THE BRIDGE BUILDER

Changing lives. Making a difference.

Summer is upon us and with it our celebration of American Freedom. In times of national challenges and uncertainties, the phrase "God Bless America" resonates deeply with us. It captures a heartfelt prayer, an earnest plea for God's divine intervention and guidance in directing our great nation. In those three words, we are reminded of our shared desire to seek spiritual support and to navigate the complexities that shape our country. As for the song, "God Bless America", it emerged as a patriotic song in the early 20th century, written by Irving Berlin during World War I and later popularized during World War II. It has, becoming a symbol of unity and hope for our nation and all its people. It is a powerful invocation, singing of our longing for God's blessings upon our land, its people, and its destiny.

At its core, "God Bless America" is a prayer—an acknowledgment that we, as citizens, recognize our dependence on God. It is an acknowledgment that, despite our individual differences, we share a common belief in the transformative and guiding influence of a divine presence. Through this prayer, we humbly ask for God's assistance in shaping the path of our nation.

The prayer encompasses a multitude of aspirations. We ask for wisdom to guide our leaders, strength to overcome adversity, compassion to care for one another, and unity to bridge our divisions. We seek justice, equality, and peace for all. It serves as a reminder that our collective actions should be rooted in love, respect, and a deep sense of responsibility towards one another.

In times of crisis, whether it be natural disasters, economic downturns, or social upheaval, "God Bless America" unites us as a people. It reminds us to pause, reflect, and turn our hearts towards a God's desires. It prompts us to remember that, despite our challenges, we can find solace and resilience through faith and prayer.

Moreover, "God Bless America" encourages us to take an active role in our nation's well-being. It serves as a call to action, inspiring us to foster positive change within our communities and to work towards the collective betterment of our country. We are reminded that prayer alone is not enough; it must be accompanied by genuine effort and a commitment to embody God's desired values. As we continue on our journey as a nation, let us remember the profound significance of "God Bless America." It is a reminder of our interconnectedness, the power of faith, and the transformative impact of collective prayer. It encourages us to approach our national challenges with grace, resilience, and compassion, always seeking divine guidance to help us navigate the path ahead.

"God Bless America" serves as a heartfelt prayer for divine assistance and direction. It unites us, reminding us of our shared responsibilities and aspirations as citizens. Let us embrace the power of this prayer, and through our collective efforts, may we create a brighter more peaceful future for all.

May God Bless America,

Dayton

Session Highlights from June 2023

Moderator – Reverend Dayton Wilson

Clerk of Session – Lisa DeVane

Assistant Clerk of Session – Elizabeth Cole

Mission & Education: Teri Hawley stated that there were 27 children signed up for vacation bible school and 21 volunteers. Decorating for VBS will start Monday, June 12th at 6:00 p.m.

Finance Report: The finance reports were sent to the session prior to the meeting. Greg Martin reported:

General Fund Balance as of May 31, 2023:	\$383,452.85
Special Funds Balance as of May 31, 2023:	\$284,135.58
Total Offering Received for May 2023:	\$28,054.49
Total Budget Expenses for May 2023:	\$34,742.68
Net Income for May 2023:	\$-7,727.77

The church experienced a strong income for the month of May. There was an increase in expenses due to the installation of HVAC system as well as VBS supplies. Income is up 14% for the year as compared to previous years.

Worship: Hayes Petteway stated that we need a head usher for October and December. The church will be participating in communion on July 30th.

Operations: Connor Bullard informed the session that the committee has scheduled a meeting with the painters on Monday, June 12th to address some necessary touch-ups required on the exterior painting work that was previously completed. Additionally, the interior painting of the sanctuary will start soon. He announced that a delivery of mulch for the playground is expected this week. The committee is seeking volunteers to assist in spreading the mulch. Connor discussed the grass in the front and side of the sanctuary. A motion was made and approved to sod those two areas.

Endowment Committee: Hayes Petteway reported the endowment fund balances as of April 2023: Scholarship fund: \$1,119,837; Family fund: \$237,303; Regular fund: \$647,003

The endowment committee met thanked the session for the approval of \$25,000 from special funds be used to support the local organizations and charities within the community. Several thank you letters were shared with the session.

Pastor Report: Reverend Dayton Wilson announced his intention to accompany the youth to Montreat this year. He shared an article that emphasized our faith's connection to Jesus, highlighting the importance of aligning our worship life with our everyday life. The session provided examples of how the EPC community bridges the gap between worship and daily life, such as through charitable giving, offering scholarships to young women in the community, spending time together on Wednesday nights, organizing Montreat trips, and building meaningful relationships with others. Rev. Dayton acknowledged the busyness of people's lives and asserted that God calls even the busiest individuals. In light of this, he posed the question, "How can we encourage greater engagement with the church?" Rev. Dayton mentioned that if any additions were needed for the church website, the send the information to Teri Hawley. The church administration is still evaluating the need for posting church services on the website.

The session will meet on August 13, 2023.

July 2023

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

						1 Jennifer Duncan
2	3 Jerry Butler Claire Campbell Jake Suggs Katie Evans Vivian Edge	4 Jonah Duncan	5 Toni DeVane	6	7 Will Leggett Luke Fisher	8
9	10	11 Ann Warner	12 Willie Kay McDuffie Sky Moore	13	14 Danny Adkins	15
16 Savannah Ivey	17 Sam Inscoe	18	19 Mary Hill Evelyn Fisher	20	21 Anita Edge John Allen	22
23	24	25	26 Melissa Murray	27 Kent Hunt	28	29
30	31					

UPDATE

We are working on updating all membership information. See the insert in your newsletter. Please email or drop the completed form off at the church office by July 31st.



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Congratulations to Will and Morgan Clark! They were married on April 29th and will be making their home in Elizabethtown. Morgan is a dentist with Bladen Smiles and Will is a manager with Birdsong Peanuts in Bladenboro.



The Education Committee needs YOU!

Each Sunday we need a volunteer to teach the children who leave for Children's Church. Mrs. Hill has the curriculum prepared. She can get a copy of the lesson to you the week before so you can read over it and be ready to teach. It lasts for about 20 - 25 minutes each Sunday. While we hope the parents of our small children will sign-up, remember your promise, as the congregation, to help raise these children when they were baptized.

We also need a second adult in the baby nursery each Sunday. The Education Committee would like parents of infants to sign-up for a month. In signing up for a month, it will be your responsibility to find help for Kay each Sunday. Our thoughts are that by sharing the responsibility you will be reaching out to the church family to provide more support for our families with babies.

Sunday Worship Update

During the week of July 10th, the sanctuary will be painted. Due to this, Sunday morning worship for July 16th and July 23rd will be in the PAC. We will send out a reminder so everyone will be informed a little closer to the above dates.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Hero Hotline was a huge success. The scripture "Many hands make light work" stands true. With the many volunteers, teachers, children, youth, and our loving church family, a good time was had by all. We appreciate those who helped!

Crafts: Mary Hill, Doll Priest, Hank Roberson, Savannah Ivey, Rylee Brice

Recreation and Science: Kent Hunt, David Simmons, D Wilson, Holt Campbell, Jenna Brice, Emma Powell

Bible Story: Hawley Hunt, Meg Blue

Opening Assembly: Dayton Wilson, Marc Edge, Joy Brice

Two and Three-year-olds teacher: Lisa DeVane

Two and Three-year-olds volunteers: Irene Riel, Madison Romano, Christian Fisher, Toni Fisher, Hope Campbell, Jennifer Campbell, Katherine Edge, Cybil Campbell, Emily Campbell, Miriam DeVane, Michelle Wilson, Ella Campbell

Four-year-old teachers: Niki Dennis, Julianne DeVane

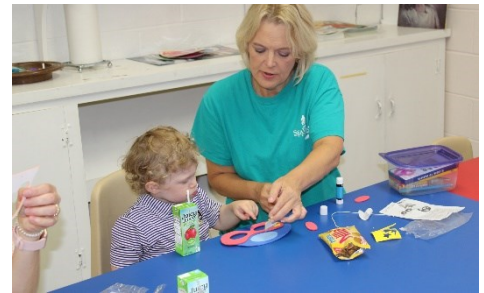
Pre-K, K, 1st-grade teachers: Susie Holland, Dru Carter

2nd - 5th Graders teachers: Claire DeVane, Lillian DeVane

Dinner/Kitchen Help: Wayne and Anita Edge, Kaye Dennis, Hayes Petteway

Other Help that moved around! Toni Cross, Debbie Kinlaw, Teri Hawley

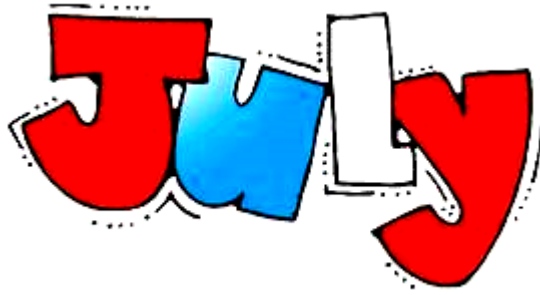
Sound: Danny Adkins





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Head Usher : Brett Pool

Date	Acolytes	Nursery Volunteers
7/2	Emily Campbell	Lillian & Julianne DeVane
7/9	Carter DeVane	Doll Priest
7/16	Ryne Priest	Claire DeVane
7/23	Julianne DeVane	Lisa DeVane
7/30	Claire DeVane	Lillian & Julianne DeVane