

CROSS ROADS

Where the Acts of Faith meet

An occasional newsletter of South Presbyterian Church

May-June 2023

Local Connection to the Birth of Memorial Day

[This article is taken from The History Channel [CLICK HERE FOR FULL ARTICLE](#).

Links from the article have been left active. If you click on it while holding the CTRL KEY, you will be redirected to that information.]



The [Civil War](#), which ended in the spring of 1865, claimed more lives than any conflict in U.S. history and required the establishment of the country's first national cemeteries.

By the late 1860s, Americans in various towns and cities had begun holding springtime tributes to these countless fallen soldiers, decorating their graves with flowers and reciting prayers.

It is unclear where exactly this tradition originated; numerous different communities may have independently initiated the memorial gatherings. And some records show that one of the earliest Memorial Day commemorations [was organized](#) by a group of formerly enslaved people in Charleston, South Carolina less than a month after the [Confederacy](#) surrendered in 1865. Nevertheless, in 1966 the federal government declared Waterloo, [New York](#), the official [birthplace of Memorial Day](#).

Waterloo—which first celebrated the day on May 5, 1866—was chosen because it hosted an annual, community-wide event, during which businesses closed and residents decorated the graves of soldiers with flowers and flags.

On May 5, 1868, General John A. Logan, leader of an organization for Northern Civil War veterans, called for a nationwide day of remembrance later that month. “The 30th of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land,” he proclaimed.

The date of [Decoration Day](#), as he called it, was chosen because it wasn't the anniversary of any particular battle.

Did you know?

Each year on Memorial Day a national moment of remembrance takes place at 3:00 p.m. local time.

Church Trends and Where We Stand

FROM THE PASTOR



When Paul Grier (VP of the Presbyterian Foundation) was here on May 22nd to meet with Kevin and Pastor Deb before spending half a day with Irondequoit Presbyterian Church, he shared some updates about our denomination (the PCUSA) that were quite revealing. Among other things, we learned that:

- COVID-19 accelerated a trend that had already begun:
 - Churches that grow are ones that are already large.
 - Small churches are getting smaller
 - Any members who will return post-COVID already have returned.
- What were previously known as Mainline Protestants are now call “Old Line Protestants.”
- All Old Line Denominations are facing the same types of trends. In the case of the PC(USA):
 - We have had a 38% membership decline since 2010 and a 50% decline since 2005.
 - The median size PC(USA) congregation has 65 members with a median attendance of 35.
(IPC has 47 members with an average attendance between 30 and 40.)
 - 42% of PC(USA) churches have fewer than 50 members.
- “A church’s ability to help members understand the unique significance of their lives and how to fulfill their God-given purpose is one of the critical distinctions between churches that are more vital and those that are not.”

On the other hand, as he travels around the country, working with churches that are trying to figure out what to do next, he continues to hold up South Church as one successful model for how to transition into the future. “I tell everybody I work with that if you want a model of de-centralized, mission-driven church, go to Rochester, NY and look at South Presbyterian.” When asked what it is that South did right, he answered: They made a decision before they ran out of money, they prayed their way through, they had excellent leadership.

The church world around us might be frightening to some (maybe even to many), but we don’t have to be frightened. We have everything we need to continue to be the people of God in this time and in this place:

Prayer, Discernment, Wise Stewardship, and Great Leadership.

Please continue to pray for our Deacons, Session Members, and Acts of Faith Leaders. Their guidance and commitment are amazing.





Continuing to Grow

Last month we told you about three new members to our eWorship Leadership team, members of Irondequoit Presbyterian Church. This month

we have added a fourth so now Linda B, Norma C, John H, and Tom S are in the regular monthly notation.

At the same time, Karen T has returned to the rotation after taking some time off to get her mother settled with her in Arizona.

Our Acting Presbytery Leader, Susan O, also asked to join the ranks and some of you saw her initial video in our online worship last month.

If you would like to become an eWorship volunteer reader, please let the office know. It takes about 15 minutes a month to record a portion of the service, and send it on to Kevin in the office. You don't have to improvise anything, all the words are prewritten for you, but time and again we hear how special it is to see multiple locations and meet new people for those who worship with us online or through our DVD's (roughly 35 views per week between the two).

Welcome to ANOTHER New Member



This June, we will welcome another new member to the church – Sally Lake, a resident of St. John's Meadows. Sally, who grew up a Presbyterian, spent four decades worshipping with the American Baptists as her husband, John, pastored various American Baptist churches. She says she is glad to be "coming home" to her Presbyterian roots. Currently, she is a part of three Acts of Faith: Senior Spirituality, Cuppa the Bible, and she worships with Fellowship of Faith. We welcome Sally and look forward to getting to know her better. **If you would like to become an official,**

voting member of South Presbyterian Church, please let Pastor Deb know.

**Thank You to All Who Contributed
to our Collection of Items for**



Hope Lodge®

**We donated over 30 items to them
and they are extremely grateful!**



The Church Office will be Closed on Memorial Day, and Kevin will be on vacation the remainder of that week. If you need pastoral support, please contact Pastor Deb directly.



A New Act of Faith?

Last month, we shared with you the online streaming series about Jesus and his followers titled *The Chosen*. Since then, there has been real interest in getting together to discuss what we are watching and how it is affecting us. Plans are still being discussed about a possible in-person gathering to do just that and there is also interest in an online discussion group, so stay tuned. We will figure out how we might do more than one group simultaneously (as some of you will remember we did when we read *The Story* a few years ago). **If you are interested in one or both of these groups, please let Pastor Deb or Holly Powell know.**



SPC Deacons

June Food Drive sponsored by the Deacons

Peanut Butter & Jelly



Collecting donations for Cameron Community Ministries

- > through Fellowship of Faith
- > by mail to the office
- > using electronic giving at SouthPC.org



You're the peanutbutter
to my jelly!

Financial gifts are also welcome.



Cameron Community Ministries is an outreach program in the Lyell-Otis Neighborhood of Rochester that was started 40 years ago as a joint venture of the Rochester Region of the American Baptist Church and the Presbytery of Genesee Valley. Both groups were honored recently at the 40th Anniversary Gala which also featured presentations and commendations from the United States Congress (presented by Representative Joe Morelli) and the City of Rochester (presented by Mayor Malik Evans).

The work that this agency does is astounding and effective, whether it's partnering with AT&T to develop a Digital Learning Center, or with Wegmans and several churches to provide hot meals during the week. Their programming for children and youth is known throughout the city. ([CLICK HERE](#) to learn more about Cameron Community Ministries.)



All Presbyterian Churches Are NOT Created Equal

At the beginning of Paul Grier's talk, he referenced that he lives in "the buckle of the Bible Belt" and that within his county there are 6 or 7 different kinds of Presbyterians. The fact that not all Presbyterians are part of the Presbyterian Church (USA) like we are was news to some in the room and might be to you, too.

Here are six of the most common Presbyterian Denominations in the U.S. today.

<p>Presbyterian Church (USA)</p>  <p>The Presbyterian Church (USA), abbreviated PC (USA), is a mainline Protestant denomination in the United States. It is the largest Presbyterian denomination in the country, known for its liberal stance on doctrine and its ordaining of women and members of the LGBT community as elders and ministers. It was formed in 1983 with the unification of the northern-based United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, and the southern-based Presbyterian Church in the United States. The two had been separated since the Civil War.</p>	<p>Presbyterian Church in America</p>  <p>The Presbyterian Church in America is the second-largest Presbyterian church body, behind the Presbyterian Church, and the largest conservative Calvinist denomination in the United States. The PCA is Reformed in theology and presbyterian in government. It does not ordain women or LGBTQ individuals as elders, deacons, or ministers, and acknowledges divorce only in the case of abuse or desertion.</p>
<p>Orthodox Presbyterian Church</p>  <p>The Orthodox Presbyterian Church is a confessional Presbyterian denomination located primarily in the United States, with additional congregations in Canada, Bermuda, and Puerto Rico. It was formed in 1936 because it opposed what it considered to be liberal teachings of the Presbyterian Church USA. It does not ordain women or LGBTQ individuals as elders, deacons, or ministers.</p>	<p>Cumberland Presbyterian Church</p>  <p>The Cumberland Presbyterian Church is a Presbyterian denomination spawned by the Second Great Awakening. In 2019, it had 65,087 members and 673 congregations, of which 51 were located outside of the United States. The word Cumberland comes from the Cumberland River valley where the church was founded. It was the first to ordain women and African-Americans in all positions of leadership. It was a historically African-American denomination in 1974.</p>
<p>Evangelical Presbyterian Church</p>  <p>The Evangelical Presbyterian Church is an American church body holding to presbyterian governance and Reformed theology. Separated from PC(USA) in the 1980's, and has 7 Essentials they all ascribe to. the EPC is more conservative than the PC(USA) on matters of theology and ethics, yet is more moderate than the major conservative Presbyterian denominations in the United States </p>	<p>Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America</p>  <p>The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America is a Presbyterian church with congregations and missions throughout the United States, Canada, Japan, and Chile. It believes the Pope to be the Antichrist and refuses to swear allegiance to any government, including the United States.</p>

We will be publishing a



of



In Late June / Early July.

Submissions should be sent to Pastor Deb and/or the Office

by

June 15th