
Murray Presbyterian Messenger

August 2023



Murray Presbyterian Church

P.O. Box 196, Main Street Murray, NE 68409

www.murraypresbyterian.org Tel: (402)235-2754

Featured This Month: Steller VBS Recap



**See page 6 for more photos
(and check out the video on the church Facebook page)**

Murray Presbyterian Church, Murray, NE
(402)235-2754
www.murraypresbyterian.org



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Upcoming Events

Sundays

9:00 am: Adult Sunday School

10:00 am: Morning Worship

Thank you for your ongoing financial support of Murray Presbyterian! Contributions may be deposited in the offering plates during worship services, mailed to the church at P. O. Box 196, Murray NE 68409 or made online at www.murraypresbyterian.org. Click on the "Give Now" button at the bottom of the homepage.

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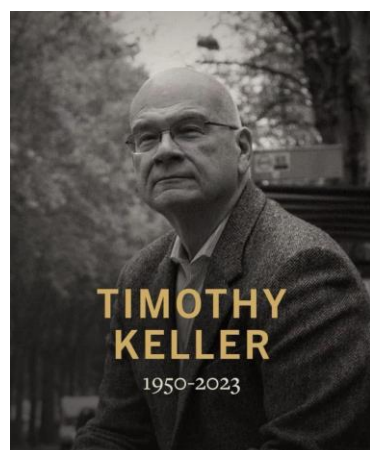
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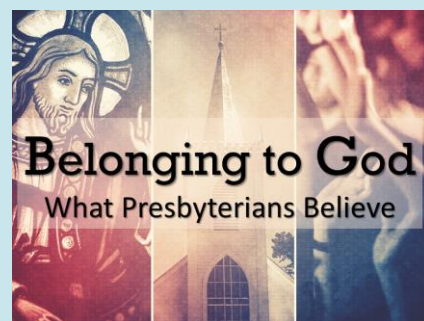
You wouldn't ordinarily expect a remembrance of someone's life to start off with a story about a very public snub they experienced. But when Dr. Timothy Keller passed away earlier this summer, the first article about him to appear on the *Christianity Today* website led off recounting an episode in which he had been unceremoniously dumped from receiving a major academic honor.

By the time this event took place in 2017, Keller had become a leading figure on the American religious landscape. Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan, where he was the founding pastor, regularly drew over 5000 Sunday worshippers, many of them young urban professionals deeply ensconced in the city's secular culture. Sometimes dubbed a "modern-day C. S. Lewis" or a "pastor to skeptics," Keller came to be known for his winsome, thoughtful, culturally-relevant presentations of Christian truths. His books became best-sellers, and he wrote for (and was profiled in) publications like the *New York Times*, the *New Yorker*, and the *Atlantic*. Joe Scarborough, a sometime worshipper at Redeemer, invited him to make guest appearances on MSNBC's "Morning Joe" program. He preached at the ecumenical service, attended by President Bush, marking the fifth anniversary of the 9-11 attacks, and was invited by President Obama to speak at the White House Easter Prayer Breakfast.

But it turned out that there was one place where he was decidedly not welcome: in the hallowed halls of Princeton Theological Seminary, our denomination's flagship theological institution. When Keller was selected to receive the 2017 Abraham Kuyper Prize, given at the seminary each year to recognize outstanding contributions to Reformed theology and public life, it seemed like an obvious choice. Keller self-consciously stood within the tradition of Neo-Calvinistic orthodoxy and style of cultural engagement exemplified by the award's namesake.

But as soon as his name was announced, left-leaning members of the seminary's constituency mobilized to have the honor rescinded. Though a Presbyterian, Keller was ordained, not in the PCUSA (our denomination), but in the Presbyterian Church in America, a conservative offshoot that does not ordain women and maintains a traditional stance on matters of sexual morality. Initially, the seminary president resisted the protests. But eventually, in the finest tradition of spineless academic administrators everywhere, he caved and revoked

Upcoming Worship Opportunities Summer Sermon Series



Join us this summer for a quick overview of what we believe as Presbyterians (and as Christians), based on the Presbyterian Church's "Brief Statement of Faith"

May 28: "In Life and in Death We Belong to God"

June 4: "We Trust in the One Triune God"

June 11: Guest Preacher

June 18: Guest Preacher

June 25: "We Trust in Jesus Christ, Fully Human, Fully God"

July 2: "Jesus Proclaimed the Reign of God"

July 9: "Giving His Life"

July 16: "Vindicating. . . Breaking. . . Delivering"

July 23: "Abba, Father"

July 30: "But We Rebel"

Aug. 6: "Yet God. . ."

Aug. 13: "The Holy Spirit, Everywhere the Giver and Renewer of Life"

Aug. 20: "The Spirit. . . Sets Us Free"

Aug. 27: "The Spirit. . . Rules Our Faith and Life"

Sept. 3: "The Spirit Gives Us Courage in a Broken and Fallen World"

Sept. 10: **GUEST PREACHER FROM NICARAGUA** (tentative)

the award. Now, the seminary was the target of criticism from other quarters—including a good proportion of the previous Kuyper Prize recipients. Some noted the irony that, based on the seminary's shifting standards, Kuyper himself would be ineligible for the prize named after him! Columns in the *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, and elsewhere faulted the school for undermining academic freedom and embracing “cancel culture.”

At that point, Keller provided the seminary with a face-saving compromise. He agreed to come and deliver the Kuyper lecture *without* receiving the customary award. The night of his appearance, the seminary president gave him what can only be described as a lukewarm introduction. Keller was gracious and thoughtful throughout.

Although in retrospect, it may have been a minor episode, it was highly revealing. It didn't just reflect Keller's trademark humility and generous spirit. It really grew out of what he believed and taught about the Christian gospel. Above all else, Tim Keller's life and ministry was devoted to the proposition that ***the gospel changes everything***. It's all summed up in the name of his ministry's media arm: “The Gospel in Life.” One way or the other, *every single sermon he ever preached* always got around to driving home that point that (as he said time and time again) **“We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope.”**

A simple formula—and yet one that, he insisted, affects everything we do. Our failure to really internalize that message is the source of all the things that are wrong in our lives. And when we finally grasp the implications of that message, when it finally permeates the deepest recesses of our hearts, it shapes our work, our relationships, our marriages, and, yes, even the way we handle criticism and opposition. If our self-image is based on the need to be perfect or on the need to meet the expectations of others, we invariably become prickly and defensive. It's only when our self-image is based on our identity in Christ that we are able to be humble, gracious, and open to criticism. The title Collin Hansen gave to the Christianity Today article mentioned earlier says it all: “Tim Keller Practiced the Grace That He Preached.” May we all!

For those who may be interested, a livestreamed memorial service for Tim Keller will take place on **Tuesday, August 15, at 2:30 pm**. (Details at https://www.redeemer.com/tim_keller_memorial). You should also know about one last, parting gift to the church that comes from Dr. Keller. All his sermons spanning about 25 years of preaching have long been available on the Gospel in Life website (gospelinlife.com), but there was always nominal charge to download them. Just weeks before his passing, they were made available free of charge. This is a resource I have used for many, many years, and I'd encourage anyone looking for good, solid, thoughtful, Reformed preaching to check it out.

Leadership

Session

Moderator

Rev. William McConnell

Clerk of Session

Debra South

Class of 2023

Denise Ayers

Melanie Honaker

Class of 2024

Kenny Drake

Dave Friedli

Class of 2025

Sharlyn Deterding

Debra South

Deacons

Class of 2023

Delaney Deterding

Dana Stahl

Ann Wieringa

Class of 2024

Kathy Friedli

Sherrill Konfrst

Julie Nickels

Mission & Outreach Melanie Honaker, Team Lead

Nicaragua Partnership



Lord willing (pending a successful outcome of the visa process), leaders from our presbytery's partner churches in La Concepción, Nicaragua will be visiting our area September 6-14, 2023. **And Murray Presbyterian Church has the opportunity to be one of a select handful of churches where a visiting Nicaraguan pastor will preach on September 10!** This privilege was afforded to us in recognition of our congregation's on-going involvement in this partnership, especially through the tireless efforts of **Ann Wieringa**. Stay tuned for more details throughout the month, *and by all means, plan to be in worship that day if the planned visit materializes!* We want to support and encourage our partners in this important relationship and be blessed by their witness! (The above photo is from the previous visit of Nicaraguan partners in July 2017.)

Keep Filling the SENCA Cart!



Thank you to everyone donating non-perishable food items to the SENCA cart in the rear of the sanctuary! With kids home from school, the theme for these summer months is "kids cook." All donations are welcomed, but you're especially invited to consider kid-friendly items or items (such as Ramen noodles, mac-and-cheese cups or peanut butter and jelly) that kids can prepare for themselves.



Leadership Teams

Worship and Family Life

Linnea Hill, Team Leader

Amanda Anderson

Jeff Anderson

Adam Gillaspie

Rebecca Gillaspie

Sherrill Konfrst

Laraine Young

Mission and Outreach

Melanie Honaker, Team Leader

George Collins

Sydney Honaker

John McConnell

Stacey McConnell

Deanne Slaffer

Dana Stahl

Ann Wieringa

Christian Education

Denise Ayers, Team Leader.

Sharlyn Deterding

Kathy Friedli

Julie Nickels

Linnea Hill

Properties and Finance

Kenny Drake, Team Leader

Dave Friedli, *Session Rep.*

Michael Stahl, *Session Rep.*

Sharlyn Deterding

Norm Koester

Gary Reike

Jerry Slaffer



Calvin Crest Events



Calvin Crest, our Presbyterian-related camp, conference, and retreat center in Fremont, NE, will host the **Annual Family Fun Day** on **August 19**. Activities run from 10 am until 5 pm and include crafts, worship, swimming, food, and fellowship for the whole family. It's a great end-of-summer gathering at a camp that holds many special memories for members of our congregation. The event is free, but there will be opportunities to support the event and the ministry of Calvin Crest through free-will donations and bidding on silent auction items. More information, including a schedule of events is available at www.calvincrest.org/familyfunday.

On August 19-20, Calvin Crest will host the second annual **INSTEADIUM** for middle school and high school youth. This event, created "instead of" Triennium last year, is a great (and short) event for students as they start the school year. The event begins at 5PM on August 19 and ends by 11 AM on August 20. Find out more information and register at www.calvincrest.org/insteadium.

Thank You's

I would like to say thank you for the scholarship. This will help me out a lot with college. I would also like to say thank you for all the memories at the church.

Ethan Avidana

Thank you for helping to raise me into the person I became today and for being such a major part of my life! I will forever be grateful ♥

All my love,

Delaney Deterding

Thank for awarding me this scholarship and helping me fund my college experience. I am grateful to be a part of this church family and I appreciate your support.

Sydney Honaker

Looking Back at Stellar VBS (July 10 - 13)

