

---

# Murray Presbyterian Messenger

---

July 2023 

Murray Presbyterian Church

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

[www.murraypresbyterian.org](http://www.murraypresbyterian.org) Tel: (402)235-2754

Featured This Month: Vacation Bible School

---



**Monday, July 10 – Thursday, July 13**

**6:00 – 6:30 Light Supper for all VBS Families**

**6:30 – 8:30 pm: Vacation Bible School Program**

**See page 4 for More Information**

**or go online to**

**[www.myvbs.org/Murray2023VBS](http://www.myvbs.org/Murray2023VBS)**



---

## 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](http://www.murraypresbyterian.org). Click on the "Give Now" button at the bottom of the homepage.**

---

## In this Issue

Featured This Month, p.1

Pastor's POV, pp. 2-3

Worship Opportunities, p. 2

Christian Education, p. 4

Mission & Outreach, p. 5





**Benjamin Rush statue  
Dickinson College campus**

On September 9, 1783—six days after the Treaty of Paris brought the American War of Independence to a close—the Pennsylvania legislature chartered an institution that would become the fledgling republic's first private college. Its founders included an assortment of leading American statesmen and patriots including John Dickinson (after whom the college would be named) and Dr. Benjamin Rush. It was Rush who designed a seal for the college, an emblem that reflects both the rationale for establishing this particular institution as well as the broader mindset that existed among our nation's founding fathers.

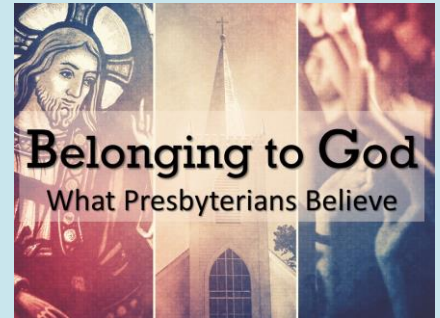


Three symbols are arranged in ascending order. At the top, there is a so-called "liberty cap," an ancient symbol of freedom. Below that, there's a telescope, an instrument from what was then the cutting-edge field of astronomy. Finally, at the bottom, the seal shows something that the college catalogue, during my student days at Dickinson, described as "an open book." It was only through reading early histories of the college that I discovered what Rush actually intended it to be: an open Bible. (Obviously, in today's multicultural environment, acknowledging that our seal depicts a Bible had become "politically incorrect"). The motto encircling these symbols explains their meaning: *Pietate et doctrina tuta libertas* ("Liberty is secured by piety and teaching").

As a Dickinson alum, I've always been partial to this traditional college emblem (as opposed to the modern marketing logo that is increasingly replacing it). It's only been in recent years, however, that I have come to appreciate the incredibly brilliant insight that it expresses. It's an insight that I often think about in connection with events in the modern world.

As we traversed the Eastern United States this past month, our family listened to the audiobook version of *The Man Who Ran Washington*, Peter Baker and Susan Glassner's illuminating biography of former Secretary of State James A.

## 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"

Baker. For me and Stacey, it was a trip down memory lane, carrying us back to the heady days after the collapse of the Berlin Wall when American policymakers thought democratic governance was on the ascendency and that it could simply be transplanted to all kinds of places where it had never existed in the past—from the Kremlin in Moscow to the capitals of the Arab world. It was an inspiring vision to be sure. But it did not come to fruition in the way we hoped. The authors of the Baker biography wistfully recount proposals that would have pumped more American aid money into the collapsing communist regimes, implying that it was a missed opportunity that may have changed the trajectory of history. Perhaps.

But much as we may appreciate and value our democratic heritage and much as we would like to see it take hold around the world, the assumption that it can be exported just like any other American export product is misguided. The founders of my alma mater (who also happened to be the founders of our country) were far more astute than today's punditry class. They recognized that democracy is something that we have to work hard to preserve. (It has to be "secured", as the motto puts it.) And it has some necessary preconditions. For starters, it requires "learning." In other words, there has to be an educated, well-informed citizenry to make it work.

And the whole enterprise rests ultimately on a religious foundation (represented, in the case of the seal, by a Bible.) Democracy can only function in an environment where there's a certain degree of civic virtue—an ethic of fair play and a concern for principles like justice, human dignity, and equality. Maybe a compelling secular basis can be developed for that style of virtue. But it's worth pointing out that, historically speaking, the basis for those democratic values has been a religious one and that religious foundation has been a predominantly Judeo-Christian one. With precious few exceptions (Japan comes to mind), democracy hasn't fared well in places lacking that kind of biblical heritage.

If the Dickinson motto has validity, it should also give us cause for concern about the present state of our country. Today's media landscape does little to cultivate an enlightened and well-informed citizenry. And the steady decline of biblical faith undercuts the traditional source of our nation's values and social cohesion.

It's eminently appropriate for us, as Christians, to celebrate the anniversary of our nation's independence this month. As we do so, we should also lift up thanks for the heritage of faith that contributed so much to the success of the American enterprise. And we should rededicate ourselves to the task of fostering that faith in our land. If the American founders were right, the future of our democracy depends upon it!

---

## 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



## Vacation Bible School



The countdown to Stellar VBS is rapidly drawing to a close, and if the appearance of the sanctuary is any indication, it's "all systems go." Starting Monday, July 10, students aged pre-school age to grade 6 will be going on a cosmic adventure as they explore space and learn how to shine Jesus' light in the world! VBS takes place Monday July 10 through Thursday July 13. Each evening begins with a light supper at 6:00 pm to which VBS students and their families are invited. The program runs from 6:30 – 8:30 pm. To volunteer or to register a child, go to [www.myvbs.org/Murray2023VBS](http://www.myvbs.org/Murray2023VBS).

## Confirmands



**Hunter Hill** and **Carson Honaker** went through the confirmation program this year. On June 4, they met with the session and read statements about their understanding of what it means to be a Christian and why they wanted to join the church. After being received into membership by the session, they stood before the congregation in worship and made their profession of faith by responding to a set of vows. We welcome Hunter and Carson into the active membership of Murray Presbyterian and look forward to what they will contribute to the life of our church in the future.



## 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 Slafter

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 Slafter



### Community Picnic (June 25)



This year's Community Picnic at Tyson Park helped people from our church and community form connections, figuratively as well as (in the case of the ice-breaker activity with a spool of yarn) literally. Stay tuned for information about another community outreach event coming up in the fall.

### 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.