

2026

MUSINGS...

by Pastor John Bethard



CHARLES TOWN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CT Press

Greetings!

Lately I have noticed that time is flying by. It feels like it's Sunday every three days. It feels like Easter was a month ago and before we know it, the holidays will be here. This is absolutely the function of getting older. The more years we have, the shorter each one becomes when compared to the whole of our lives. In less than eighteen months I will be sixty. And yet I still feel like there is some growing up to do.

Since I am now old (according to my kids), I thought I'd share some thoughts. We can call this "Observations From an Old Guy."

There is always something to be angry at. Right now, we're all side-eyeing data centers. We are irritated with billionaires. The government continues in its dysfunction. We are in an unpopular war. And that's just this week! People with power or who want power will always try and stoke our anger. Being angry at all these things all the time is exhausting and robs a person of their peace. Best to focus on one issue than all of them.

There is always more to learn. This is particularly true of our faith in Christ, but it is also true in general. None of us knows all there is to know, and the world is full of amazing people, places, and stories. As we get older it becomes easy to just let the wave of information wash over us, but learning is deliberate. Never stop learning.

Things will work out. They don't always work out the way we want, of course, but that doesn't mean they didn't work out. We get so bogged down thinking life needs to go a certain way. It doesn't, actually. What matters most is faithfulness to Christ. If that is our top priority we will find it easier to live in whatever place we find ourselves.

It's mostly small stuff. Think of the kinds of things that caused us to worry when we were in our twenties. We get worked up about a great many things, and frequently all that energy is a waste. As we get older we get perspective and experience. Hopefully, we learn that not every problem requires an elevated level of emotional engagement. Most of them, actually. So don't sweat the small stuff because most of it is.

God is faithful. In the course of my faith journey, I have questioned my faith, had doubts, been angry at God; I've shaken my fist at the sky and wondered if God is there. I have found that God has always been there, even when I'm struggling to find him. God is faithful and has provided everything I needed. In fact, because of his demonstrated faithfulness, it's the one thing I no longer question.

Many of you are older than I am, so I encourage each of you to think about the pearls of wisdom you've learned or have stuck with you. I hope these observations are helpful. Most of all, I pray that each of us finds God faithful.

-Pastor John

🎵 MUSIC NOTES 🎵 from Miss Penny

Attitude of Gratitude



This is my Father's world,
And to my listening ears
All nature sings, and round me rings
The music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world:
I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas--
His hand the wonders wrought.
This is my Father's world:
The birds their carols raise,
The morning light, the lily white,
Declare their Maker's praise.
This is my Father's world:
He shines in all that's fair;
In the rustling grass I hear Him pass,
He speaks to me everywhere.
This is my Father's world:
O let me ne'er forget
That though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the Ruler yet.
This is my Father's world:
Why should my heart be sad?
The Lord is King: let the heavens ring!
God reigns; let earth be glad!

I love how this hymn reminds us that all creation sings!
We sing praise to God for his marvelous creation!
We sing praise to God for his assurance that He is ruler of everything!
Let us remember that we are the stewards of this earth and are called to care for one another!
Let all creation sing!

Blessings,
Penny

Rainforest Falls VBS was a success!

30 kids attended! We had an exciting and fun filled week in the rainforest— and the weather cooperated...it was very humid! Kids responded to the love of Jesus with their smiles, voices, and actions. We formed friendships with many families and showed CTPC to be a caring community of believers who desire to answer the command, "Let the little children come".

We are so thankful for all the people who helped and participated and for the congregation who prayed and gave financially. The following are people who gave above and beyond:

Sue Flanagan and Rebecca Karos helped me organize

Chris Clark taught Wild Games

Allison Howard taught Imagination Station

Sharon Criswell and Doyle taught Sticky Scriptures

Lynn Pecheukonis and Patsy White taught Bible Adventures

Jeremiah , Cora, Kaden, Maddie were crew leaders

Rosalyn Lavalley, Laurel Odell, Sue F., Kathy Shue assisted everywhere

Laurel O., Carol Kable, Diane Mayhew, Rebecca and George Karos provided snacks

Hoyle Fulbright constructed the waterfall

Alex Haley used her artistic talents to create stickers for the kids.

Doug McDonough, Matt Henshaw, Brooks Kursey and others moved furniture and set up the back-drop

Pastor John set up the sound system

Sue, Marsha, Laurel, Rosalyn, and members of the congregation all helped with decorating

Asbury Methodist worked with us to gather, create and share decorations.

Thank you to everyone for a wonderful, God filled VBS,

Marsha Dibbern and the DFM team





A huge THANK YOU to everyone who helped in anyway with VBS - whether you provided snacks, or helped make palm trees and vines, or taught a class, or donated food for the Mission Project, or prayed for the program and people involved. We truly needed everyone's contribution to make VBS the success that it was.



Celebrations this month

Birthdays

Tommy Morgan
Linda Puster
Mike Kursey
Bennet Beeson
Jeannetter Tabb
Ann Workman
Daniel Beeson
Micaiah Robison
Mark Day
Lazan Rogers
Rebecca Karos
Mike Ishman



Joe Hardy
Emily Tansill
Debbie Henshaw



Anniversaries

Mike & Margaret Kursey
Chris & Sherry Clark
Mark & Debbie Stafford
Allen & Lazan Rogers
Peter & Signe Garms
Tim & Connie Casserly
Thane & Laura VanZomerem

Sunday @ CTPC

10:30am-Worship Celebration FaceBook

For a complete listing of all of the church activities, please click [here](#).



Yokefellows Sunday School

class is in need to two Sunday school teachers. Teachers are furnished with teaching materials from the Adult Bible Studies series. Teachers will only be asked to teach one Sunday per month. Please contact the church office if you are interested (304-725-5316 or ctpres@ctpres.org).



Yokefellows BBQ Pork dinner. Get your tickets now from any Yokefellow and plan to join us on Saturday, September 12, 2026, 4:30-6:30pm, for fresh pork BBQ, slaw, mac & cheese, baked bean, desserts, and drink provided. Tickets: \$15.00 adults; \$7.00 children under 12 years; Free children under 3 years. Proceeds from the dinner go to church ministries.



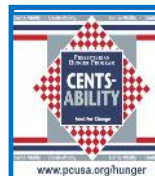
Current Needs

Juice Boxes
Werthers Candy
Pudding cups
Assorted chips
Fresh
Fruit, cookies, muffins
Love You

The CTPC Hospitality Center has created this wish list to assist in maintenance and growth. All donations greatly appreciated!



JCCM Food Pantry needs. Any assistance would be greatly appreciated: spaghetti sauce, canned fruit, canned meat (vienna sausage, spam, chicken, tuna), canned beans, canned vegetables (not green beans/corn), soups (hearty & condensed), canned chili, rice (small bags), instant mashed potatoes, jelly and peanut butter, syrup, instant oatmeal, crackers, boxed pancake mix, cooking oil, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, paper towels, toilet paper, dish soap, laundry detergent. Thank you, Kari Dean, Food Pantry Coordinator, JCCM



The Six-cents-a-meal offering, is collected on the 4th Sunday each month, and goes to the Presbyterian Hunger Program. To contribute to this offering please note on memo



Online giving helps you to bring your offering before God in a simple, and secure way. You can choose from The Presbyterian Foundation, Facebook, or PayPal, each of which have a nominal fee that you can include as part of your gift. The Presbyterian Foundation fee does help the organization's mission, and you can easily use a mobile app (Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement on Google Play/AppStore) to set up for repeating or one time giving. If you have any questions, please contact the church office. Donation options and tax information at www.ctpres.org (<http://www.ctpres.org>).