



First
Presbyterian
Church
of Waynesboro, Virginia

The Columns *Online*

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‘Heartened and hopeful’ to be part of the conversation in Uvalde, Texas

Two members of PDA’s National Response Team

share ‘the wisdom of those who have walked this difficult journey before’

by Mike Ferguson, Presbyterian News Service — The Rev. Katherine Culpepper, who goes by “Cully,” and the Rev. John Cheek, both members of the National Response Team for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, continued to minister to the Uvalde, Texas community this week, capped by a lunch-n-learn event Monday at First Presbyterian Church.

“We were grateful to be invited to share the love of God with the folks of Uvalde during this tragic and tender time,” Culpepper said in an email. “During our visit we were able to meet with individuals and groups and share information about the phases and patterns seen in human caused disaster. We also encouraged church and community leaders to be mindful of their own pacing and self-care with some strategies for building resilience,” Culpepper said. “And we were heartened and hopeful to share in a conversation in which faith leaders expressed a desire and commitment to work together for the good of the community.”

On May 24, a gunman killed 19 students and two teachers at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde. The next day, the Rev. Gini Norris-Lane, the pastor at First Presbyterian Church of Uvalde, led a moving hybrid prayer service. *continued*

Uvalde conversation, *continued.*



The memorial at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas. (Photo by Laurie Palmer)

“FPC is a small congregation in a small town. Ties in this community run deep and wide, and everyone in the FPC congregation personally knows grandparents, parents, children and teachers who were victims at Robb on May 24,” Norris-Lane said in an email. “It is not only those who were at Robb that Tuesday who are dealing with the trauma, though; it is the whole community as we navigate all of the complexities that emerge in a community after a human-caused tragedy.”

Norris-Lane said the church has received “notes, cards and donations from PC(USA) and other churches across the country during the past two months. In many ways, the outpouring of love and support has been overwhelming in its own way, as such an abundance and outpouring of love and support can be in the wake of heartache and grief; yet it has also reminded us all of the gift of the connectional church as we have felt the power of your support and prayers.”

“We were so grateful for Culley and John’s presence with us this past weekend,” Norris-Lane said. “Not only do they both have experience working with other communities after other mass shootings, but their pastoral presence and training put us all at ease as we shared around the table during Sunday school, in worship and during the session meeting.”

“One of the most powerful messages they shared was that even though there will be grief and disillusionment after a tragedy, and it will be hard, there is a bottom to it — it will not last forever,” Norris-Lane said. “Even more, even as emotionally raw as the community feels right now, there is healing and hope on the other side of the tragedy.”

Norris-Lane said one of the common sentiments she hears expressed around town is, “I pray that what is learned here in Uvalde will one day save other communities from going through the same thing we have.” *continued*

Uvalde conversation, *continued.*

Norris-Lane said that about a dozen faith and community leaders gathered Monday for the lunch-n-learn event led by PDA.

“The discussion ranged from how to care for our children and teachers as a new school year approaches to possible ideas for long-term collaboration,” Norris-Lane said. “Right now, our attention is focused on getting through the summer, but John and Cully shared that long-term recovery work can be an opportunity for Uvalde to reflect on the questions ‘Who have we been? Who are we now? And what kind of community do we want to be five years from now?’”

“Hope is on the way,” Norris-Lane said, “and good things can eventually come out of this tragedy as we each intentionally commit ourselves to the work.”

It was the hospitality provided by Norris-Lane “and the beloved community of First Presbyterian Church of Uvalde” that “made all this possible,” Culpepper said. “We continue to hold them in our prayers, and stand ready to help when they need us, with hearts and hands and the shared wisdom of those who have walked this difficult journey before.”

The Rev. Laurie Palmer, Stated Clerk of Mission Presbytery, was also in attendance.

“PDA provided a resource regarding a lifecycle in times of tragedy, which will be helpful as they walk forward one step at a time,” Palmer said. “I heard pain and grief around the shooting itself and the divisions it has stoked in the community ... It is still very raw there, understandably. Teachers would like to be asked, ‘What do you need?’ The consensus was that teachers are concerned about how they will protect their students in the new school year.”

The Rev. Jim Kirk, PDA’s Associate for National Response, said the National Response Team members deployed following mass casualty events “are among our most experienced people.”

PDA is working with other Compassion, Peace & Justice ministries, including the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, to address gun violence issues. Kirk pointed to this resource for preventing gun violence.

“Buffalo, Uvalde, Highland Park — those are just the ones we hear about,” Kirk said. “Gun violence events are just epidemic.” To learn more about the prevalence of gun violence in the United States, go here.

Liturgist this week: Jean Hashagen

Scripture lessons: Genesis 15: 1-6

Hebrew 11: 1-3, 8-16

Sermon: Faith IS action.



Music Notes for Pentecost IX.

This week, we will hear two pieces by **Lieutenant Colonel Dwayne Milburn (Retired)**. Roger worked with Milburn when Roger was Parish Organist at the Episcopal Parish of St. Matthew's in Pacific Palisades, CA, where Milburn (b. 1963) served as Composer-in Residence while completing his Ph.D. in Music Composition at UCLA.

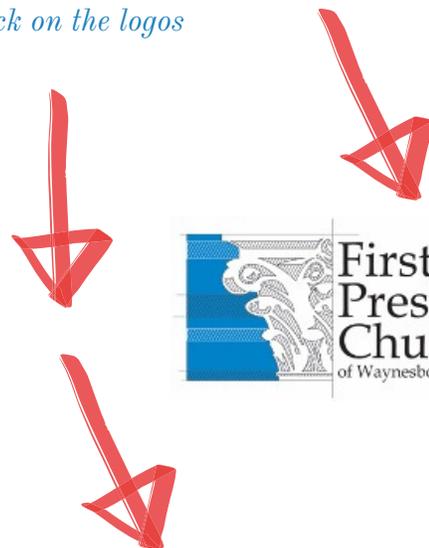
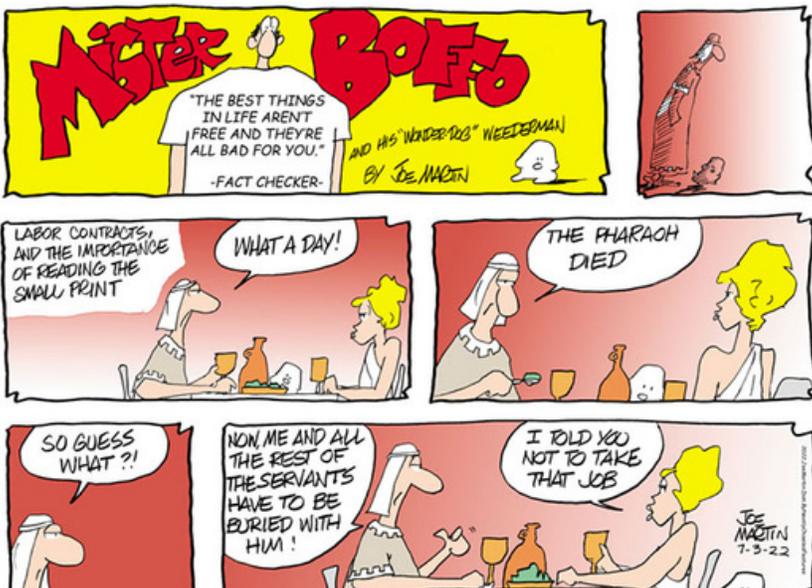
Milburn joined the Army in 1993, serving as Associate Bandmaster of the US Army Band "Pershing's Own." He was Director of the US Army Europe Soldier's Chorus in Heidelberg, Germany and Commander and Conductor of the Army Ground Forces Band at Fort McPherson, Georgia. He retired as Commander and Conductor of the US Army Europe Band and Chorus in Sembach, Germany and was awarded the Legion of Merit "for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services and achievements."



Milburn is now Director of Music at St. Matthew's, Music Director of the St. Matthew's Chamber Orchestra and lecturer in composition, orchestration and conducting at UCLA. He has composed scores of pieces, including a Mass from which this week's Introit – *Alleluia* – and the anthem – *The Disciples Knew the Lord Jesus* – are taken.

Our Worship Channels

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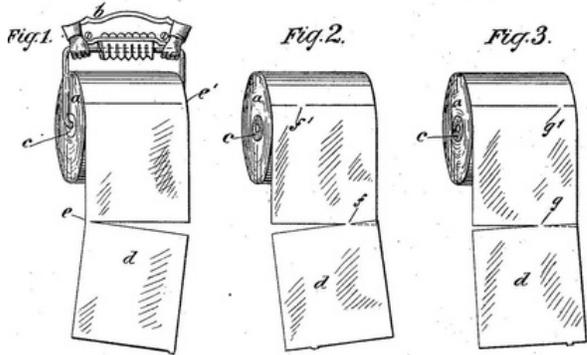
This Week in History.

(No Model.)

S. WHEELER.
WRAPPING OR TOILET PAPER ROLL.

No. 459,516.

Patented Sept. 15, 1891.

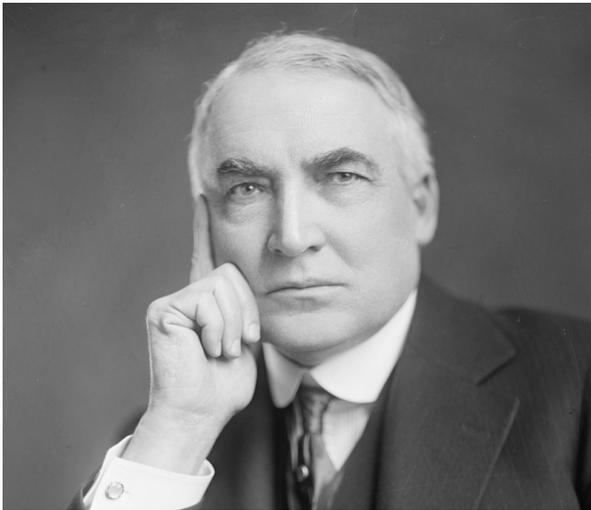


The U.S. Patent Office is created.
July 31, 1790



Anne Frank records her last diary entry. Three days later, she was arrested with her family and sent to Bergen-Belsen, where she died seven months later, at age 15.

August 1, 1944



President Warren G. Harding died suddenly while on a speaking tour of the western U.S.

August 2, 1923



Cristoforo Colombo sets sail from Palos, Spain in search of western route to Asia.

August 3, 1492



Barak Obama born in Honolulu, HI
August 4, 1961



Marilyn Monroe dies at age 34.
August 5, 1962