



First
Presbyterian
Church
of Waynesboro, Virginia

The Columns *Online*

January 18, 2022 | Waynesboro, Virginia | *a newsletter supplement*

Jesus shows us how to heal injustices

by Chip Hardwick | Presbyterians Today

Think for a minute about all the memories that you have in the church closest to your heart. Now imagine those memories literally going up in smoke.

A congregation in Sacaton, Arizona, worshipped in a historic sanctuary which, in 1955, hosted the funeral for Marine Cpl. Ira Hayes, a member of the Akimel O'odham tribe who was immortalized in the famous Iwo Jima memorial. The historic structure would have celebrated 101 years in 2019. Instead, on March 25, it burned to the ground, destroyed by three arsonists.



Photo by Chris Bauer.

Now imagine living out the words of Jesus from Matthew 5:22: *I say to you if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment, and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council, and if you say, 'You fool,' you will be liable to the hell of fire.*

continued

Jesus shows us how to heal injustices, continued

Despite quite understandable anger, somehow two elders from the Sacaton congregation met this challenge. They went to one arsonist's home and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, said that they held nothing against him. Somehow, they found the faithfulness to offer forgiveness — even when it was excruciating.

Forgiving those who have hurt us — even when it's excruciating. Keeping our promises — even when it's more difficult than we ever expected. These challenges that Jesus ties together in his Sermon on the Mount ([Matthew 5:21–37](#)) came together on a trip last October to New Mexico, Utah and Arizona, where the Synod of the Southwest invited executives to meet almost 20 Native American congregations. At once inspiring and sobering, we found congregations demonstrating stirring faith amid challenges rarely experienced by congregations in the dominant culture.

Those Sacaton elders, like virtually every other congregation we met, lead ministries in very difficult circumstances. Economic struggles on the reservations mean that very few churches have seminary-trained leaders. Their physical plants were the worst that I have ever seen in my many travels throughout our denomination.

In Fort Defiance, Arizona, we visited a church that was established by white missionaries. A local family had given land for a church, and the congregation was promised the physical property would be cared for by the larger church. But as funds diminished, the larger Church reneged on its promise to steward the property, leaving its indigent parishioners to worship in a decaying building. These experiences lead us back to our Scripture's second challenge — to keep our promises, even when it is harder than we imagined.

In 2018, the 223rd General Assembly established the Native American Church Property Fund so that finally our “yes” can truly remain a “yes” for these congregations and their buildings. You can learn more [here](#).



*The Rev. Dr. Chip Hardwick
is executive of the Synod of the
Covenant.*



SIMPLE MEAL



January 22, after Worship

Music Notes for January 22

The anthem for this week's Epiphany III service will be *Steal Away to Jesus*. The song is believed to have been written by Wallace Willis (c.1820-1880) a Freedman of the Choctaw Tribe. It is one of many spirituals with hidden codes containing messages for enslaved people to run away on their own or with assistance from the Underground Railroad.

Prior to the Civil War, Willis, and his wife, Minerva, and his wife, Minerva, were sent by their owner to work at the Spencer Academy, a Choctaw Boarding School. The superintendent, Reverend Alexander Reid, heard them singing the song, along with *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*, *Wade in the Water* and *Gospel Train*. Reid later transcribed the melodies and texts, sending them to the Jubilee Singers at Fisk University in Nashville, TN. Those songs became part of the choir's repertoire, popularized during a tour of the United States and Europe. It is said that, during a performance in London, Queen Victoria requested an encore of *Steal Away to Jesus*.



The Fisk Jubilee Singers.

OUR WORSHIP CHANNELS

click on the logos



Better Together: Presbyterians In Action

Last year, PC(USA) churches from Waynesboro and Stuarts Draft began meeting together on Sunday afternoons to consider the possibility of serving more collegially in ministry and mission. After many meetings, and a summer Back to School Bash, the group was named Better Together: Presbyterians In Action.

This year, a grant from Shenandoah Presbytery will fund a facilitator to lead six meetings on a bi-monthly basis. The meetings will take place at the churches on a rotational basis.

On January 29, 2023, Better Together is sponsoring a pulpit swap, as follows:

First Presbyterian Church
welcomes the Rev. Dr. Tommy Carrico from Finley Memorial
Hermitage Presbyterian Church
welcomes the Rev. Patrick Pettit from First
Second Presbyterian Church
welcomes the Rev. Jaci Smith Patman from Hermitage
Westminster Presbyterian Church
welcomes the Rev. Cait Hoy from Second
Finley Memorial Presbyterian Church
welcomes the Rev. April H. Cranford from Westminster

Looking ahead, the Better Together churches will partner during the week of March 13-20, 2023 to provide food and fellowship to the WARM cold weather shelter guests being housed at Augusta Expo Event Center in Fishersville.



Pastors participating in January 29 Pulpit Swap.
from left: Cait Hoy, Tommy Carrico, Patrick Pettit, April Cranford and Jaci Smith Patman.

This Week in History.



The Act of Supremacy is passed by the English Parliament, making Henry VIII the head of the Church in England

January 15, 1534



A Strategic Air Command B-52G Bomber collides with the KC-135 Tanker during refueling over Palomares, Spain. The Tanker crew of four perish, as do three of the Bomber's seven crew. Four hydrogen bombs were released; Three were found on land, while the fourth was recovered from the Mediterranean Sea after two and a half months.

January 17, 1966



Edgar Allen Poe is born in Boston, MA. An author and poets he is most famous for gothic tales of mystery and suspense.

January 19, 1809



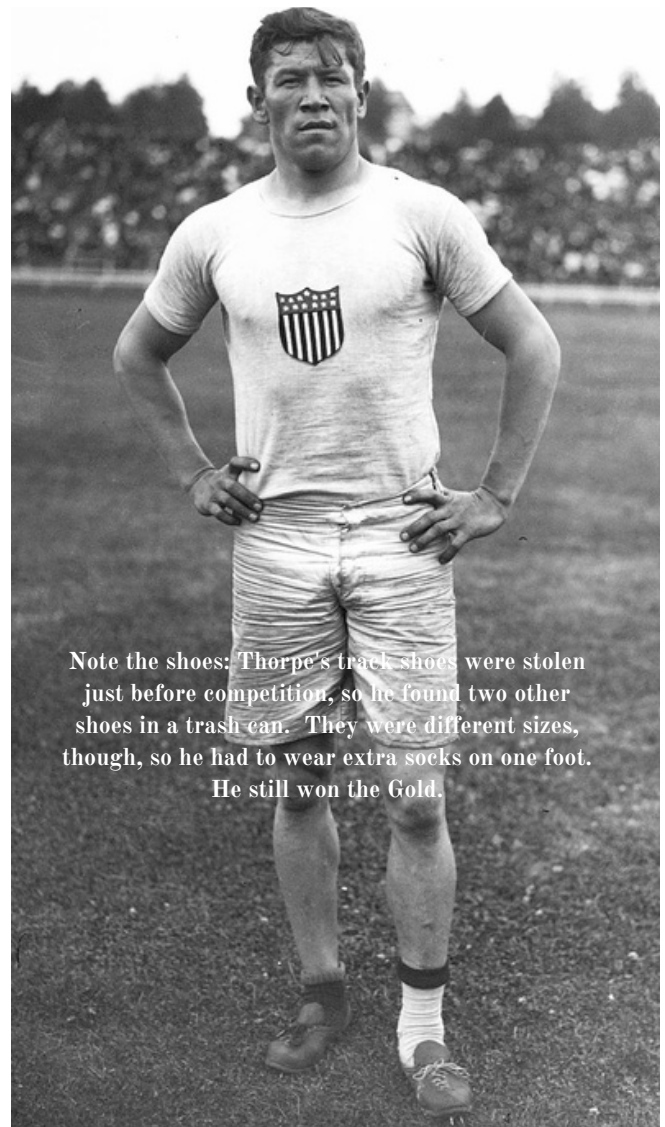
King George V of England dies at age 71. The grandson of Queen Victoria, he had reigned since 1910. During World War I, he changed the name of the royal line from "Saxe-Coburg and Gotha" to the House of Windsor, breaking the association with his family's German heritage.

January 20, 1936



Andre Michelin is born in Paris, France. He starts the Michelin Tire Company in 1888, which pioneering the use of pneumatic tires on automobiles. (Click on the right hand picture for the story of the Michelin Man.)

January 16, 1853



Note the shoes: Thorpe's track shoes were stolen just before competition, so he found two other shoes in a trash can. They were different sizes, though, so he had to wear extra socks on one foot.

He still won the Gold.

The International Olympic Committee officially reinstates the gold medals of Native American athlete Jim Thorpe after 110 years. Thorpe, a member of the Sac and Fox nations, won both the decathlon and the pentathlon at the 1912 Stockholm Olympics, but was stripped of his medals over trumped up allegations regarding his amateur status

January 18, 1983