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# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN NEWSLETTER JULY 2026

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## 250 Reasons – by Jodi Dodds

July invites us to reflect on freedom, gratitude, and the many blessings we have received. As we celebrate 250 years of America, we also recognize that every generation faces its own challenges. Ours is no different.

Our nation has endured wars and peace, prosperity and hardship, seasons of unity and seasons of division. Through it all, our ordinary people have continued to care for their neighbors, raise their families, serve their communities, and quietly do the right thing. That, too, is part of America's story along with hot dogs, apple pie, and baseball.

History reminds us that God's people have never been strangers to uncertain times. Jesus did not promise His followers an easy nation or an easy life. Instead, He offered something greater:

*"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." — John 16:33*

Our call today is simple: follow Him. The rest will work itself out.

History reminds us that the Church often shone brightest when the world seemed darkest.

May God bless our church, our community, and our country. And may we find 250 new reasons to stand beside her and guide her through the night with the light from above.



## Special Worship Schedule – Sunday, July 26



Please join us on **Sunday, July 26**, for a special morning as our Nalleli Rollf and our **Young Adult Bible Study Group** share highlights from their recent mission trip to Philippi and Moatsville, West Virginia on June 13-21. They served at the World Vision site in Philippi, and the New Vision Village in Moatsville.

To allow the entire congregation to hear about their experiences and the ways God worked through this mission, we will hold **one combined worship service at 10:00 a.m.**

We hope you will join us as we celebrate what God has done, hear inspiring stories of faith and service, and encourage our young adults as they share their journey with our church family.

### Guest Preachers for June & July

Worship Pillar has arranged for guest preachers for the upcoming months.

July 5 – Music Celebration and Communion

July 12 – Rev. Jill Burris Linn – Member at Large from Olathe

July 19 – Rev. Paula Isgrig – Hospice Chaplain

July 26 – YABS Mission Presentation

Aug 2 – Rev. Tim Soule

We are delighted to welcome our newly appointed Bridge Pastor, Bonnie Grabowski Monday, August 3, 2026. Many of you will remember Rev. Bonnie from her earlier service as our Interim Pastor prior to Rev. Kimby Young's ministry with our congregation. We are grateful that she has agreed to guide us through this next season in the life of our church.

### Monthly Financial Report

At the end of May 2026 our records show:

Total income for April is \$26,742.56

Total expenses for April are \$25,596.56.

The session and finance/operations pillar thank each of you for your contributions to the church – financial or any other contribution. A complete line-by-line expense report is available upon request. We will close June finances after July 1st.

**PW Fellowship group** will meet Wednesday July 1 at 10:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. This group is open to all women and welcomes newcomers. Our purpose is to provide devotional and fellowship time as well as support to the mission and service projects of the church.



**From Mission Pillar**, 28 volunteers from our church went to the Heart to Heart headquarters in Lenexa on June 27<sup>th</sup> to assemble eight hundred boxes of hygiene kits the organization will distribute to disaster victims. The volunteers presented them with the \$1180 donation they raised.

**Traveling Day Camp was June 15-19** - Camp was a joyful and spirit-filled success, and we are grateful to all who made it possible. Throughout the week, children experienced laughter, learning, music, and faith in action as the camp moved through our community.



We extend sincere thanks to our fearless coordinators Robin Tropansky, Marsha Cooper and Kim and Karen Liu who, through careful planning, leadership, and dedication, brought everything together so smoothly with the help of the Heartland Camps and Retreat Center. We are also grateful for the many volunteers who gave their time, energy, and patience—Melody Lopez, Macey Bruss, Blake McSwane, Chris Cooper, Grace Davies, Marcus Huffman, Aiden Schramm,

Patrick McSwane, Henry Cooper, Cozette Semrau, Corynn Semrau, Ashlyn Blankenship, Evelyn Toman, Ethan Bruss and Abby Gamblin. Storytime volunteers included Melissa Runge, Carl Frahme, Louie Muntzel, Margaret Draveta and Bob Burgene who brought bunnies! Your presence made a lasting impact on every child who took part.

A special thank-you goes out to all who contributed through generous donations of food, hospitality, supplies, and behind-the-scenes support. Whether you prepared meals, hosted gatherings, provided materials, or helped in ways seen and unseen, your kindness helped create a welcoming and joyful environment for all.

This camp truly reflected the strength of our community, working together in faith and service. We are thankful for every hand and heart that helped make the week such a meaningful experience.



**Johnson County Fair Parade** - We are preparing for the Johnson County Fair parade on Saturday August 1, 2026. We will need volunteers to help build the float and then help distribute candy on parade day. If you wish to donate candy, please feel free to bring it in. There will be baskets in the Narthex available.

If you would like to help with the float or have questions, please see Oliver Schwab or Dean Faulk.

### **July Ushers**

Bob & Sandy McVey  
Lynn Moldrup  
Kelly Johnson

### **July 3 Communion Servers for 10:00 a.m. Service**

Paula Waters  
Larry Schick  
Lynn Moldrup  
Bob McVey

### **July Worship Assistants**

**July 3 10:00 a.m.** Dean Faulk  
**July 12** 1<sup>st</sup> Lynn Moldrup/2<sup>nd</sup> Oliver Schwabb  
**July 19** 1<sup>st</sup> Kim Allen/2<sup>nd</sup> Eric Gourley  
**July 26 10:00 a.m.** YABS Presentation

### **A Thank You from Kimby Young –**

*Dear friends,*

*Thank you for almost 11 years of wonderful ministry together. Thank you also for a fantastic retirement celebration. Thank you for the music, flowers, decorations, and food. Thank you for the beautiful cake. Thank you for the memory quilt and the gorgeous stained-glass cross. Thank you most of all for the years of encouragement and support. I have been blessed to serve in Gardner. May you be blessed as you share God's love in the world.*

*Grace and Peace,  
Kimby*

**A Thank You from Ron & Connie Crabbs –**

*Dear First Presbyterian Church,*

*Thanks for the \$100.00 Gift Card for me and the card for Ron. I enjoyed working at the church for 20 years. Time went by very fast. Ron enjoyed being the Clerk of Session.*

*God loves you and so do we.*

*With love,  
Connie & Ron*

**A Thank You from the Gardner Multi Service Center**

*Dear Frist Presbyterian Church,*

*Thank you so much for your donation to our food pantry. Your donation is greatly appreciated by us and our community.*

*Gardner Multi Service Center,  
Kara, Heather, and Sarah*

**6<sup>th</sup> Annual Backpack Giveaway** – Hope Market is holding their 6th annual backpack giveaway to support the kids in our community in need on July 25. Divine Mercy Parish will hold the event in their fellowship at 555 W Main St, Gardner, KS.

They are requesting ADULTS ONLY to volunteer during the EVENT to protect the privacy of the children receiving backpacks. However, they would love kids ages 10 and up to help them set up for the event!

Set up Friday July 24 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Event Saturday July 25 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Click here to sign up [The Hope Market: 6th Annual Backpack Giveaway](#)

# COMMUNITY JOB FAIR

**AUGUST 6, 2026**

**10am to 1pm**  
 Grace Baptist Church  
 650 E Madison St • Gardner, KS



**Get face to face interviews with hiring managers! Register today!**

**Featured Employers:**

**Resource Partners:**



**Hosted by:**



**Scan to register**



**Register at**  
[gracebaptistgardner.com](http://gracebaptistgardner.com)



**Store Hours**  
**MONDAY 10 – 7**  
**TUESDAY 10 – 7**  
**WEDNESDAY 10 – 4**  
**THURSDAY 10 – 7**  
**SATURDAY 10 - 2**



Celebrating our  
precious Freedom!



Occasionally, we pause in our busyness at JOY Closet and remember our beginnings. An idea: providing clothing and other items to those in need. A reality: we needed income in order to have a building to house the operation. The concept was born of a thrift store that supported the clothing closet.

We started in a building that needed adaptation to be usable for this purpose. There was limited a.c. and not much heat in the winter, but it was a beginning that allowed us to grow.



Now in our thirteenth year and in our own building, we are pleased at the way we have all been blessed by this ministry. We still serve those who need a helping hand. We realize God has given us much, and we recognize that it is not us doing good in the world. It is God's ministry at work through us.

- Fourth of July merchandise  
50% off!

- Volunteers: Toy Packing Party  
July 2<sup>nd</sup> 5 pm- 8 pm.



# We ♥ Our Volunteers

Have YOU given thought to joining our volunteers? July is a great month to train at JOY Closet! Come and talk to a manager and get a training time set. You can be part of the magic that turns random donations into on-the-racks, organized, available merchandise! It's a kind of magic that is greatly received by shoppers.

**Speak with a manager on how to get started!**

Ginger, Cindy, Cathy, Margaret, or Amanda



Volunteer Natalie Morrison, who teaches at Edgerton, was able to visit Costa Rica as part of leadership training. She was able to take art supplies for the students there and JOY Closet helped by paying shipping costs on the supplies.

Thanks, Natalie, for a great outreach of caring.

## Are you in the midst of decluttering...or thinking about it?

Some great ideas:

- Start at the front door and declutter the **visible areas** first. **Your goal is better, not perfect.** You will need a trash bag and donate bag or box. A cart would be an option to save steps.
- Keep in mind how much of an item you need: you probably don't need seven elastic ankle wraps. Keep two, donate the rest.
- As you handle items that are in the wrong place, put them where they belong. If preferred, you could also group things on a cart to push around the house to the places where items belong.
- Do not overwhelm yourself with huge piles of items where you are working. If you get interrupted you will only need to put away the donate bag, trash bag, and possibly your cart. That area will already look much better.
- Place the box or bag in your car at the end of your session. It's ready to donate and out of your house! **Not perfect...but better!!**

### **Donations especially needed:**

**New Coats**

**Fall décor, clothing**

**Halloween décor, clothing, costumes**


**It's prime time for donating SCHOOL SUPPLIES!**

### **Gardner Edgerton Youth Theatre Academy**

**JOY Closet** received a note of thanks from Judy Sass with GEYTA thanking us for all of our help. She stated that almost all of the 50 kids in the most recent production were costumed by the ministry of JOY Closet. She also said that there was an amazing segment (a commercial, they were calling it) during intermission that was totally dedicated to JOY Closet. We appreciate the acknowledgement, but, more importantly, we are grateful to a generous community that works together to make things happen.

Imagine that, donations ending up in a stage production!

**JOY Closet loves to help youth...and their families!**



As we have therefore opportunity, let us  
do good unto all men, especially unto them  
who are of the household of faith.

**Galatians 6:10**

**For I was hungry and you gave  
me something to eat, I was  
thirsty and you gave me  
something to drink, I was a  
stranger and you invited me  
in, I needed clothes and you  
clothed me.**

**Matthew 25:35-36 NIV**

***JOY Closet Is a ministry of  
First Presbyterian Church of  
Gardner, KS***

***Serving our community since  
2013***