

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

JUNE 2018

NEWSLETTER



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In my life, I have had many exciting, fulfilling roles entrusted to me. I have been blessed to have had some wonderful, exciting experiences as well. I tried to be the best I could be in any given role and sometimes succeeded, sometimes not. None of these roles, none of these opportunities, none of those experiences came close to the myriad of feelings I experienced when I first became a father. When I first held Sadie, all of the pain, all of the struggles life had set before me had now come full circle. I remember holding her by the hospital window getting misty-eyed, thanking God for getting me to this point. There was a time in my life I didn't think I'd get there, but I will share that at a later time. Suffice it to say, I now felt complete. Two years later, to the day, I had the exact same reaction to the birth of Gretta. At that time, I made the decision I would devote everything I had to becoming the best possible father I could be. Happily, I hung up my golf clubs, boxed up my poker chips, dismantled my target shooting guns, all so I could devote every weekend and every night after work to my children. And I never looked back. I didn't miss any of that stuff. I enjoyed my work and did it fairly well, but I never let career overshadow my being a dad to my children. Every night, I was home, having tea parties, taking walks, getting my hair done (when I had some), playing games, wrestling on the floor, etc. and I relished every moment of it.

Then, like too often in our country, my marriage ended. Not over any scandalous or embarrassing reasons, it had just run its course. In looking back, I suspect we just got married too soon and didn't know each other well enough. Mostly for the girls' sake, I tried to make it work, but it didn't. Being a family therapist and pastor, I knew what happens to fathers and their children in family court and I didn't wish that to be visited on the girls and me. However, it was out of my control.

Little did I know what was coming around the bend. I had agreed to joint custody allowing her to be custodial parent and she had promised the court she would foster a good relationship and continue sharing parenting time with me and for girls. This lasted about two months.

Long story short: Fueled by a money hungry, unscrupulous lawyer, my ex-wife became exceedingly hostile and started denying every time I asked for time with the girls. When my mom died, we had to have court papers drawn up, because she would have refused my time with the girls to attend Mom's funeral. Needless to say, I was a wreck. The girls and I were very close, they would call me crying because they wanted to spend more time with me and I tried to assure them things would get better. Anyone who has been through similar situations or knows anyone in this situation, knows exactly what is to come. Court battles, one after the other; each one costing upwards \$5000 in lawyer fees. This went on for more than six very painful, agonizing years. All the while promising the girls that someday, we would win. I spent in excess of \$50,000 in lawyer fees and time off work as well as closing out all of my retirement accounts all in an effort to exercise my

God-given right (and I don't use that term lightly) to be a dad to my children. I was a pastor and a social worker at this time, not making much money, in addition to cashing out my retirement accounts, I opened credit card accounts, borrowed from family, sold everything I had of value just to pay lawyer fees. It was one disappointing outcome after another but I wasn't going to give up. As long as I had breath in my lungs, I was not giving up. I loved my kids too much. I loved being a dad too much. Finally, the court ordered a family evaluation. This was done by a psychologist in Springfield, an expert in such matters. It was costly and exceedingly thorough. The psychologist was very frank in her opinion. Not only was I evaluated to be the superior parent, but she stated unequivocally that these kids need to spend more time with their father, at the very least it needed to be a 50/50 split. I thought things had to go my way. Enter the number one enemy of children and fathers, Family Court of Illinois.

It has long been known family court judges are, for the most part, the biggest obstacle between fathers and children of divorce. I never realized how bad it was until I was faced with some of the worst offenders, the judges of the 4th judicial circuit. One of which was the chief judge I thought I was fortunate to get to hear our case

With the psychologist's report in hand, I thought finally things were going to go our way. However, such was not the case. When my lawyer brought up the findings of the psychologist, the judge stated he wasn't interested in the report and if we brought it up one more time, he would take away time I had with the girls. My time with my girls meant so little to this judge he was willing to use it as leverage to get me to drop my petitions. I knew I was completely defeated. Not only did I get less time with my girls, but the judge punished me for taking up the court's time by making me provide all the transportation and to exercise some of my parenting time, I had to leave work early. He did this telling my ex-wife I'd get sick of doing it and give up that time.

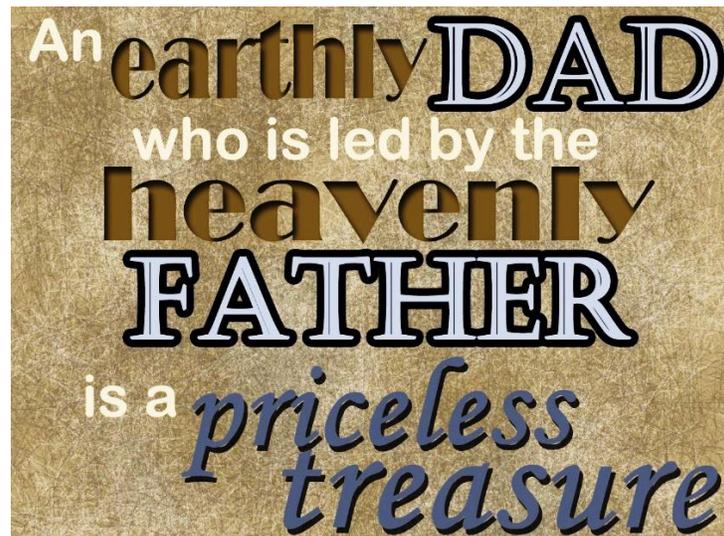
I share this with you for a couple of reasons. I now know what it is like being a victim of injustice. I received harsh, unjust treatment from what is supposed to be the pinnacle of justice, the courts, simply because I am a father, because I am male. Every witness, every professional, every friend testified I was a loving, attentive, nurturing, teaching father and the better parent, yet the family court judges couldn't get past their own prejudice to do their job fairly. This is one of the most powerless feelings a person can have. Living with this feeling day after day knowing there was nothing I could do to fix it starts to chip away at hope and joy. It's an awful feeling. It makes you bitter and angry.

But as a person of faith, I know this is not the end of the story. It has been my faith and my Christian community that has given me the strength to soldier on. I would literally break down in tears on the pulpit talking about it and the Christian community held me up. I have since found and married my best friend who has helped me get back my joy and light. I have two step children with whom I have bonded well, and I have two church families from whom draw strength when I am at my weakest.

Would I do it again? You bet I would. I will be working the rest of my life paying the debts accrued in my fight, but every dime was worth it. Someday, my children will know how hard I fought to be nothing more than a dad of presence to them, that's important to me. I will spend my life trying to expose and change what goes on in family court. It wasn't only me and the girls damaged by the court's cruel indifference and laziness, but also my parents and siblings and the girl's cousins who had limited time together. My faith in God has become more solid as I saw and experienced the hands, feet, and heart of Jesus Christ, his Church, touch me in ways I will never forget.

Father's Day is a significant time for me but not for the traditional reasons. It's important to me because my fight continues. It really is about God's kind of justice and God's kind of love. Thanks for listening.

Love, Kurt



In Memoriam

Florence "Flossie" Pinkston, 84, mother of church member, Kathy Pinkston Bauer, passed away Tuesday, April 24, 2018, in the Prairie Rose Health Care Center in Pana, IL. Her funeral was Monday, April 30 at 11:00 a.m. She will be greatly missed by her family and friends.



Beginning Tuesday, May 29, Chrisy Ennen's office hours will go back to Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon. She will work from home at other times. She will be at church Mondays for Project 24, June 11 – July 16 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Wednesday noon Bible studies will also continue as usual. As always, she may be reached via phone or email – 618-980-9899 or clennen@hotmail.com.



Summer is vacation time!

Just a reminder that even though some church activities slow in the summer and many are away on vacation at various points, church bills don't take a summer break. If possible, please remember to send in your offering even when you are unable to participate in worship. You may mail your gifts to the church office, use your bank's bill pay service, or even give on our website, fpcgreenville.net, securely through PayPal. Thank you for your continued and consistent support



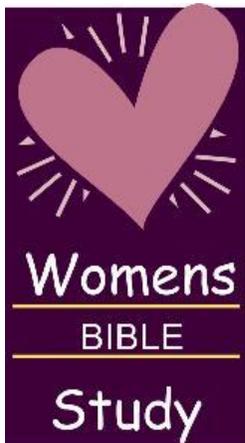
The **Bond County Pregnancy Support Center "Baby Bottle Fundraiser"** runs through **Father's Day, Sunday, June 17**. Bottles are available to pick up in the narthex at the church. Please pick one up and put your loose change in it for this fundraiser. Funds are used to help families in our community who are expecting a baby or have a little one between birth and two years of age get some of the basic necessities to have safe and happy children. Thank you in advance for your generosity!



SUMMER PROGRAM

Project 24: Health and Wellness

Again this summer, we are partnering with the Simple Room to host Project 24: Health and Wellness. We will meet on Mondays, June 11, 18, 25, and July 2, 9 and 16. Chrisy is in need of volunteers to help in a number of areas. Please let Chrisy know if you are able to volunteer for this program.



The **Women's Bible Study** group of the Greenville First Presbyterian Church will take its annual summer break. There will be no meetings in June, July or August. **Meetings will resume Tuesday, September 11, 2018.**



Eden's Glory will host its First Annual Golf Fundraiser, at the Indian Springs Golf Club, on Saturday, June 30 with registration at 8:30 a.m., shotgun start at 9:30 a.m., lunch and prizes at 2:00 p.m. If you have questions or need more information, please contact Rachel Wayman via email at rachelwayman6@yahoo.com. A registration form is available in the church office. Volunteers & donations are needed and greatly appreciated!



GriefShare is a nationally recognized tool for helping people who are facing grief issues. You may check out their website at www.griefshare.org. The licensed clinicians from Jubilee House Outreach are excited to offer the support group free of charge to the surrounding community. The only cost is the one-time \$15 purchase of a study guide. The 13-week session will meet in the youth wing at the Greenville Free Methodist Church, at 1367 E. State Rt. 140, on Thursday evenings, now through July 26. Meeting time is from 6:30 until 8:30 p.m. If you have questions, need more information or wish to register, please call 618-664-2360. Attendance at all sessions is not required.