



The Messenger

Southminster Presbyterian * August 2025

Berries Are Proof that God Exists

Over the weekend, we bought our sixth “half flat” of fresh berries at the farmers market. You know the kind—overflowing pints of strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, marionberries, boysenberries, and blueberries, each one practically glowing in the morning sun like they’d been hand-polished by angels on berry duty.

As soon as I bit into the first one, I said it out loud without even thinking: **“Berries are proof that God exists.”**

It was a joke. Sort of.

But it also wasn’t.

Because in that moment, the juice burst across my tongue with more sweetness than I expected. I stood there chewing, half in disbelief, thinking, *Had I forgotten they could taste this good?*

Sometimes I forget how good the world can be. How good *God* is.

Between the headlines and the heartbreak, between the budget spreadsheets and the church calendar and the everyday list of things-that-need-doing, it’s easy to lose touch with wonder. It’s easy to feel like the world is mostly broken, and our job is just to hold the pieces together as best we can.

But then berry season arrives.

Not forever, not even for long. Just long enough to remind us that grace still shows up.

That creation is still bearing fruit. That something can be soft, and small, and fleeting—and still be holy.

I don’t think it’s too much to say that berries are sacramental. Not capital-S *Sacrament*, but lowercase-s *sacrament*. A visible sign of invisible grace. A tangible reminder that God is not only Creator, but also Artist. Not only source of justice, but also source of joy.

There’s a passage in the psalms that *says*, “*Taste and see that the Lord is good*” (Psalm 34:8). I often quote that text in the context of the Lord’s Table.

Some days, I taste that goodness in bread and cup.

Some days, I taste it in the sweetness of a summer berry, eaten while standing in the parking lot of a farmers market, sticky-fingered and smiling.

Either way, it’s grace.

God’s Peace

TJ



(he/him)

Announcement Board

A New Date for Sabbath Weekend in September!

Mark your calendars now! For September only, our monthly Sabbath worship service will take place on the first Saturday of the month (September 6 at 5:00pm) to avoid conflicting with the Boise Pride Parade on Sunday morning. Here's the worship schedule for September:

- Sept 6 at 5:00pm — Sabbath Worship (special date)
- Sept 14 at 9:30am — Worship (not sabbath weekend)
- Sept 21 at 9:30am — Worship
- Sept 28 at 9:30am — Worship

Thanks for helping us stay flexible and faithful... and for showing up with joy whenever we gather!

Last chance to Register for the All Church Retreat!

Time is running out to sign up for our annual All Church Retreat, happening the weekend of August 8-10 at Camp Sawtooth. For just \$30/person (\$70 maximum per family) you'll enjoy five meals, two nights of lodging, and plenty of meaningful connection with your church family. Registration closes August 3, so don't wait. Sign up using the paper form in the narthex, or by visiting link.spcboise.org/sawtooth. Checks can be submitted to the church office with "All Church Retreat" in the memo line.

Called to Serve on a Committee?

As Presbyterians, ministry comes to life through committee work. Want to get involved? There are opportunities to serve on several of our committees:

- Building & Grounds — helps care for our church property, manages facility needs, and oversees maintenance projects.
- Connections — plans fellowship events, supports coffee hour, and builds intergenerational relationships within the church.
- Peace, Justice, & Outreach — guides our ministry beyond the walls, supporting mission partners and advocating for justice.
- Personnel — supports staff well-being, coordinates evaluations, and ensures faithful employment practices.
- Spiritual Formation — provides for creative and faithful worship and education across the lifespan.
- Stewardship & Finance — oversees the church budget, supports generosity initiatives, and manages financial stewardship.

Your participation can breathe life into our congregation, and into your own faith journey. Want to learn more? Reach out to Pastor TJ.

Boise Presbytery News

On August 23, Boise Presbytery will hold a joint meeting with Kendall Presbytery in Twin Falls to receive and vote on a proposed Plan of Merger, the next step in the process of uniting the two presbyteries as a new "Snake River Presbytery." Elders Genny Crume, Peter Fridel, and Jill Gertje will join Pastor TJ as Southminster's commissioners for this important gathering. Please keep them, and the discernment of both presbyteries, in your prayers.

How Not to Be Afraid: Summer Discussion Series

Even if you missed the first session in June, there's still time to join our gentle, reflective book discussion based on *How Not to Be Afraid* by Gareth Higgins. Pastor TJ is leading this two-part series as bookends to a summer of independent "soulwork."

Our final session is coming up soon: Wednesday, August 13 at 1:00pm in the Jean Moore Lounge on the upper level. Join us in person or on Zoom at link.spcboise.org/study

Between gatherings, participants are invited to engage with a companion handout of weekly reflections inspired by the book's themes. A few extra copies of the handout are available in the narthex. This conversation is grounded in compassion, curiosity, and courage for uncertain times. Reach out to Pastor TJ if you'd like help getting a copy of the book or want to learn more.

Grace Jordan Food Pantry Donations

Grace Jordan Elementary School will open for a new school year in mid-August and in preparation for this we are once again collecting food along with monetary donations! You're invited to grab one of the "greatest needs" shopping lists (located in the Narthex near the shopping cart) and pick up a few things for our neighbors during your next grocery shopping trip. As an added spiritual practice, consider saying a silent prayer of gratitude for the ready availability of items on the shelves, and for the families who will receive them.

Worshipping God with Gladness

Do you enjoy joining your voice with a vocal choir? Have you wondered what it would be like to ring handbells? Does the thought of spreading joy with a puppet bring a smile to your face? New members are welcome to join the Chancel Choir, Handbell Choir, or Puppet Team at any time of the year, but there may be no better time than the start of a new program year!

Chancel Choir

- Provides worship leadership through choir anthems for Sunday worship services
- Practices Wednesdays at 7:00pm in the Sanctuary
- Contact Claudia Sutherland, Choir Director, for more info

Handbell Choir

- Plays monthly in a Sunday worship service; typically the 3rd weekend of the month
- Practices Wednesdays at 6:00pm in the Genesis Room
- Contact Kiran Spees, Handbell Choir Director, for more info

Puppet Team

- Provides a puppet proclamation about once per month.
- Practices Sundays at 11:00am in the Genesis Room
- Contact Drew Harenberg, Puppet Team Coordinator, for more info

Are you an **Instrumentalist**? If you have experience playing a musical instrument and would like to share your gifts by accompanying the choir or playing a solo during worship, please contact Claudia Sutherland, Susan Pohl, or Pastor TJ for more information.

Save the Date!

Southminster at Boise Pride

Mark your calendars! Southminster will again proudly join Boise Pride this year at its new dates and location:

September 6-7

Ann Morrison Park

Stay tuned for details on how you can volunteer, donate items, or order your special "Jesus Loves You, We Think You're Fabulous!" Southminster t-shirt to show your spirit and support. Want to help plan our presence at Pride? Email or talk to Abby or Rebekah—we'd love your ideas and enthusiasm!

Let's show Boise that God's love is for EVERYONE!

Alternative Options for Financial Giving

If you're hoping to wean yourself off of writing paper checks, there are several other options for making financial contributions to Southminster. Our church website has an online giving platform for single or recurring gifts. You can also explore your financial institution's bill pay or bank transfer capabilities. Finally, those who are over the age of 70½ may be able to contribute directly from their retirement accounts through a Qualified Charitable Distribution. For more information about any of these options, contact Larry Andrews (treasurer) or Alix in the church office.



**SAVE
THE
DATE!**

**The Women of
First Presbyterian Church
2100 Burton Avenue
Burley, Idaho 83318**

*Invite you to our Annual Summer Ecumenical
Brunch*

When: Saturday, August 2, 2025

Time: 10:00 am

**We Will Have A Special Program!
Fun, Food, Fellowship!**

Please R.S.V.P. 208.678. 5131

Baby Shower for Steph and Tom Leftwich!

You're invited to celebrate Steph and Tom's upcoming baby August 23 at 2 PM down at the church! Presents are not necessary but if you'd like to bring something the parents to be are asking for diapers or your favorite children's book!

Grief Support Group Begins Sept 8

Grief can feel isolating, but you are not alone. This fall, members Roger Hiles and Cheryle Andrews will lead a small group for those navigating loss. The group begins Monday, September 8 at 11:30am and will meet in Room #5 (upstairs).

Participants will use a guided book and journal—\$26 total, with scholarships available if needed. The group is limited to 12 participants; contact the church office to sign up.

This is a gentle and supportive space for processing grief with others who understand.



*Elders and deacons were ordained and installed on July 6th and 12th.
Thank you to everyone who serves in leadership.*

Participating in Worship this month

August 3

Preaching: TJ Remaley
 Liturgist: Genny Crume
 Ushers: Andy and Helen Winkle
 Carla Middleton, Juno Van Ocker
 Nursery: Ann Agnew

August 9 – Sabbath

Preaching: Sean Rogers
 Liturgist: Stacy Piontek
 Ushers: Noreen Pusey, Carol Town,
 Sara Nevill
 Nursery: Genny Crume

August 17

Preaching: TJ Remaley
 Liturgist: Dena Duke
 Ushers: Bruce Mohr, Carla Middleton
 Sue Olszewski, Juno Van Ocker
 Nursery: Carol Town

August 24

Preaching: TJ Remaley
 Liturgist: Janice Burkholder
 Ushers: Judy Varvel, Juno Van Ocker,
 Noreen Pusey
 Nursery: Sue Olszewski

August 31

Preaching: TJ Remaley
 Liturgist: Cheryl Marshall
 Ushers: Priscilla Oja, Sue Olszewski,
 Bruce Mohr
 Nursery: Rebekah Harvey

August Birthdays

Carla Middleton	1
Mike Zeller	1
Evelyn Cates	2
Kate Brusse	2
Aaron Estrera	5
Bruce Walters	5
Drew Harenberg	7
Ann Dearson	8
Bob Baker	8
Darla Wilson	11
Michelle Green	12
Verna Storey	16
Priscilla Oja	21
Seth Wheeler	23
Claret Brusse	25
Jumelle Brusse	25
Treysen Brusse	25
Finn Anderson	31
Jon Alm	31

If we missed your birthday,
 please let the office know

Ministry Appreciation

1 Peter 4:10 tells us, "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace." With heartfelt thanks and appreciation, we extend our appreciation to Bruce Mohr, Carla Middleton, Evelyn Cates, and Juno Van Ocker, who have faithfully answered God's call to serve on Session these past several years. While their formal time on Session has concluded for now, we are confident and grateful knowing we will continue to be blessed by them and the unique gifts they each bring to Southminster.



August

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 7:30 AA	2 10:00 Women's NA
3 9:30 Worship 11:00 Puppets 5:00 Just One Thing	4 12:00 Al-Anon 7:00 Men's AA 7:00 OA	5 5:30 TVCA rehearsal 7:00 Deacons	6	7 12:00 Al-Anon 1:00 Dominoes 5:30 TVCA rehearsal 7:00 Peace, Justice & Outreach	8 11:00 Tarrant funeral 7:30 AA	9 10:00 Women's NA 5:00 Sabbath
10	11 2:00 Al-Anon 7:00 Men's AA 7:00 OA	12 11:30 Men's Lunch @ Casa Mexico 5:30 Building & Grounds 5:30 TVCA rehearsal	13 1:00 How Not to be Afraid study	14 12:00 Al-Anon 1:00 Dominoes 5:30 TVCA rehearsal	15 7:30 AA	16 10:00 Women's NA 10:00 NOW
All Church Retreat						
17 9:30 Worship 11:00 Puppets	18 12:00 Al-Anon 7:00 Men's AA 7:00 OA	19 5:30 TVCA rehearsal 7:00 Session	20	21 12:00 Al-Anon 1:00 Dominoes 5:30 TVCA rehearsal	22 6:30 TVCA concert 7:30 AA	23 10:00 Women's NA 2:00 Leftwich baby shower
24 9:30 Worship 11:00 Puppets 6:00 Brewed for Thought	25 12:00 Al-Anon 7:00 Men's AA 7:00 OA	26 11:30 Men's Lunch @ Life's Kitchen	27 10:00 PW CT	28 12:00 Al-Anon 1:00 Dominoes	29 7:30 AA	30 10:00 Women's NA
31 9:30 Worship 11:00 Puppets						



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Boise ID 83709-2099

Electronic Service Requested

An open and affirming community seeking a caring and just society

Issue 2025:8 The Messenger

This monthly periodical is published by Southminster for free distribution to congregation and friends.

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If you no longer wish to receive this publication please notify the church office at office@spcboise.org or 208-375-5330.