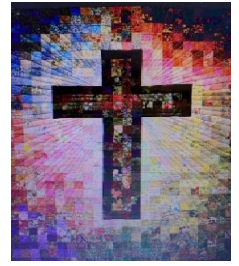




The Center Chronicles

July 2026



This fourth of July, our nation will celebrate the 250th anniversary of our nation. When the founding fathers signed the Declaration of Independence, The youngest signer was 26 years old. The oldest was 70. The signers' life experience stretched across nearly a half-century. Virginia's Thomas Jefferson, the principal author of the Declaration of

Independence, was among the youngest signers, at 33. Benjamin Franklin, 70 at the time, was the oldest signer. His experience as a printer, publisher, scientist and diplomat proved valuable. Franklin urged Congress to unite behind independence, warning famously: "**We must all hang together, or assuredly we will all hang separately.**" It was also Franklin who said, "**A Bible and a newspaper in every house, a good school in every district, all studied and appreciated as they merit, are the principal supports of virtue, morality, and civil liberty.**"

What you may not realize is that God was at work formulating the foundation for this nation long before the signing of the Declaration of Independence. A recent movie called, **A Great Awakening**, explores the unlikely friendship between preacher George Whitefield and Benjamin Franklin during the first Great Awakening.

The first Great Awakening was the first of several Christian revival movement that began in the 1730's to 1740. As the European immigrants were establishing the 13 colonies in this "New World", they brought their religions with them. There were the Catholic immigrants who settled in Boston. There were the English Puritans, Presbyterians, Lutherans, the Anabaptist and other Christian groups who came to establish and enjoy a Christ centered nation. The challenge was that sin, sinful desires, and selfish ambitions also came to this new land. **George Whitfield** was an Anglican Preacher came to Gerogia and became close friends with the Wesleys's and became part of the Methodist movement preached a need for people to turn back and trust in God. In one year, Whitefield covered 5,000 miles in America and preached more than 350 times. Whitefield's sermons stirred a generation and made Franklin realize liberty must be awakened in the hearts of the people. Then there was **Jonathan Edwards** who was a congregationalist theologian who proclaimed God's Word throughout the colonies. His most famous message took place at a 1741 revival in Enfield, Connecticut where Edwards delivered the sermon "**Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God**". Schools like Princeton and Dartmouth, were established to train future Christian leaders for ministry to both the European immigrants and Native Americans of the land.

Some of those who signed the Declaration of Independence were actively influenced by the Great Awakening movement. Most notable among them was **John Witherspoon**, a Presbyterian who was fulfilling a ministerial role as a preacher and president of Princeton

Seminary. **Robert Treat Paine** was a military chaplain, and **Lyman Hall** had been a minister prior to the War for Independence. However, many other signers should be noted for their ministry work.

Francis Hopkinson, for instance, was a church music director and choir leader, and also compiled the first famous American hymnbook. **Roger Sherman** wrote the doctrinal creed for his denomination in Connecticut. **Benjamin Rush** started Sunday School in America and helped to found the country's first Bible Society. **James Wilson** trained as a clergyman in Scotland but became an attorney, teaching students the Biblical basis of civil law. And there are many others.

In fact, at least 29 of the signers had been trained in schools whose primary purpose was the preparation of ministers which means they more than likely took bible courses during their educational experience.

John Adams, Samuel Adams, Carter Braxton, Charles Carroll, William Ellery, Elbridge Gerry, Lyman Hall, John Hancock, Benjamin Harrison, Joseph Hewes, William Hooper, Francis Hopkinson, Thomas Jefferson, Francis Lewis, Philip Livingston, Thomas Lynch, Arthur Middleton, Lewis Morris, Thomas Nelson Jr., William Paca, Robert Treat Paine, Benjamin Rush, James Smith, Richard Stockton, William Williams, James Wilson, John Witherspoon, Oliver Wolcott, George Wythe

I share this with you because 250 years later, God is still at work equipping and preparing God's people to be Christ witnesses in what has become a great nation with all that it has accomplished, yet it still struggles with the same kind of sin filled struggles that was happening 250 years earlier. As you and I celebrate our nation's 250th birthday, I think we are primed for another Great Awakening Moment. What is different is that though there are some great Apologist, Theologians, and Preachers of the Christian faith, the real key for revival is you and fellow believers like you who prayerfully and willfully re-present Christ Jesus to a world filled with people living their lives apart from Christ thinking they know what is best for this nation and world. In Christ, you have been given the opportunity to be living testaments who can testify to the power of what God can do through faith in Christ Jesus. Let me encourage you to continue to do three things: 1-Join with other believers for worship and Bible Study. 2- Discipline yourself to read the stories and learn the lessons revealed in God's Word. 3- Finally, as taught in Philippians 4: 4-7, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

Happy Fourth of July,
Jon



Children's Bell Camp July 6- 9 @ 5:30-0 6:30pm

Becky Stone and the volunteers hopes to see all the kids in the children's bell choir to come out for a bell camp. The Children's Bell choir is scheduled to play on July 12 during worship.

Dr. Rev. Don McKim to Preach July 12

During the Mission trip to Wilmington, we were blessed to have Rev. LindaJo McKim to come and fill the pulpit. On July 12, while the pastor is away, we welcome Dr. Rev. Don McKim to fill the pulpit. As you can see, Don and LindaJo are married and both have been in ministry for over 50 years.

In LindaJo's own words, "In 1974, I left the Miami Opera because I was engaged to marry an engineer in Denver. Once back in Pennsylvania, I decided marriage was not for me. He designed bombers and I have issues with war.... God had the last laugh." She went to seminary, met Don and got married and shared together in ministry. She loves music and had served on the committee that created the Presbyterian Blue Hymnal.

Don, on the other hand, was born in Western Pennsylvania. During his high school years, a new pastor, the Rev. John Karnes, got him so interested in theology that he spent his high school graduation gift (\$20) to purchase all 17 volumes of William Barkley's Daily Study Bible. In his own words, "During my senior year of college, my philosophy professor, Dr. Thomas Gregory, asked if I would like to take over his position of supply preaching for three small churches near Slippery Rock, PA. I did that and was ordained as a Stated Supply for this Friendship Parish by Shenango Presbytery in 1975. I stayed with them for eleven years while I finished my degree at Pittsburgh Seminary and my Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh in the seminary's joint program with the University.

He served the church as a seminary professor of theology writing numerous articles and was the chief Editor for Theology and Reference for the Westminster John Knox Press. He also co-authored with Jack Rogers the book, *The authority and Interpretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach* (Harper and Row, 1979)

They are now retired and live in Knoxville, TN.

No Bible Study for the summer

We have completed our study on Philippians and will now take a summer break. We look forward to the fall when we will take on a new study.



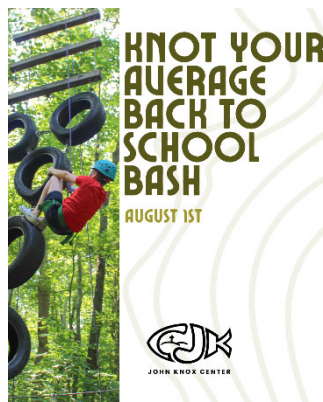
Vacation Bible School, July 20 - 24

This year, we will be taking kids on a insect adventure to see how BIG God is in the smallest of things. Psalm 34: 3 is our foundation scripture lesson and with it we will rediscover the beauty of God's creation. Dinner will start at 6pm and VBS will go from 6:30- 8:30pm.



Fun Day at John Knox Center, July 25

After a fun time at Vacation Bible School, we want to take all the kids to have a fun day at John Knox Center. We will be doing all kinds of activities. We will meet at Center church parking lot at 8am and leave by 8:30am. We will have lunch at JKC and will be back home by 5pm. We will need volunteers to transport kids to JKC. Travel time is around one hour and 15 minutes.



Knot Your Average Back to School Bash | August 1, 2026

Ready to challenge yourself, build confidence, and experience adventure in the great outdoors?

Join us at John Knox Center on August 1 for Knot Your Average Back to School Bash, an exciting opportunity to do our high ropes course and enjoy a day of fun!

Whether you're a first-time climber or a seasoned adventurer, the Back to School Bash offers participants the chance to test their limits in a safe and supportive environment. Trained staff will be on-site to provide instruction, supervision, and encouragement as you navigate elements designed to build confidence, teamwork, and resilience.

Come ready for adventure, bring a friend, and discover what you're capable of accomplishing. We look forward to seeing you at Knot Your Average Back to School Bash!

Cost: \$10 for spectator and \$15 for participant
(Lunch included)

Prayer for our Nation

By Peter Marshall

Our Father, we pray for this land. We need Thy help in this time of testing and uncertainty, when men who could fight together on the field of battle seem strangely unable to work together around conference tables for peace.

May we begin to see that all true Americanism begins in being Christian; that we can have no other foundation, as it has no other roots.

To Thy glory was this republic established. For the advancement of the Christian faith did the Founding Fathers give their life's heritage, passed down to us.....

Make us, the citizens of this land, want to do the right things. Make us long to have right attitudes. Help us to be Christian in our attitudes. Let all that we do and say spring out of understanding hearts.

Make us willing to seek moral objectives together, that in united action this nation may be resolute for righteousness and peace as she has been for war.

Bless those who bear responsibility. May they be led by Thee to do that which is right than that which is expedient or politically wise. Save us from politicians who seek only their own selfish interest. Illumine the minds of management as well as labor, that there may be an end to selfishness and greed, to the stupidity of men who are unable to find in reasonable Agreement solutions to the problems that plague us.

Bless this land that we love so much, our Father, and help her to deposit her trust, not in armies and navies, in wealth and material resources, or in achievements of the human mind, but in that righteousness which alone exalted any nation, and by which alone peace can finally come to us.

**This we ask in that name that is above every name, Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Redeemer,
Amen.**