

July 2025

The Lighthouse

A Summer for Spiritual Growth: Rev. Dean Rydbeck

After graduating from seminary in Jackson, MS our family moved to the small community of Greensboro in West-Central, Alabama. Greensboro was the central city of Hale County – known for raising catfish, corn, soybeans, and cattle. Since many of our church families labored in their fruitful vegetable gardens, I decided to plant our own garden in the big backyard of the manse. I turned over the soil by shovel, hoed our small plot and prepared for planting. After venturing out to our friendly Greensboro Farmer's Co-op, I returned with Big Boy tomato plants and seeds for silver queen corn, pole beans and seeds for zucchini. I diligently planted the seeds, packed the soil, watered the prepared soil and seeds, and then watched and waited.

After the plants began to sprout, I hoed, weeded, fought the bugs, and watered. Imagine my amazement and joy when the seeds bloomed and began to bear some fruit. But just about the time that our little garden became fruitful, our family headed off for a short vacation. I told our Greensboro Presbyterian Church family that they were free to pick and enjoy the meager fruits of my labors. Later on, I learned to gladly receive the gifts of fresh produce that came from the fruitful gardens of our generous congregation.

In this initial devotional for our First Presbyterian Church newsletter, I would like to share a verse and a few thoughts about the Lord's Gospel call for spiritual growth in every believer. Listen to II Peter 3:18 – *"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."* Here God's Word gives us three truths about spiritual growth. First of all, the Lord our God graciously **commands** us to grow. *Grow!* We could translate this, *"Y'all keep on growing!"* As faithful

followers of Christ we should not wither or let the weeds choke our growth (See Luke 8:4-15). When we hear and heed God's Word, we should bear *"fruit with patience."* Jesus calls His followers to keep on growing and bearing His fruit until He comes again or calls us home (Psalm 1).

Next, II Peter 3:18 details the **contents** of our growth. We are to grow *"in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."* We should ever be growing in the *"immeasurable riches of his grace"* (Eph. 1:7). Our growth in the grace of Christ leads us to gather for holy worship and humble adoration of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Savior of sinners. As we grow in grace, we will gladly go and share the good news of the Gospel with lost sinners. Spiritual growth also brings the fruit of faithful prayer for God's Kingdom work. We should also grow in our *"knowledge of our Lord"* as we read, study and meditate upon His Word, the Bible. When we know the Lord, we will humbly remember and then rejoice in His redeeming love for us in Christ (Luke 19:10).

Finally, II Peter 3:18 gives us one last Scriptural characteristic of our spiritual growth. Our spiritual growth ends with a glorious **culmination**, *"To him (Christ) be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."* Peter concludes this epistle with a Gospel doxology centering on Christ. Our spiritual growth displays itself in our growing holiness, a growing heart of love for Christ, and a growing hope in Christ's soon return (Rev. 22:20).

Thomas Boston wrote, *"The growth of grace is the best evidence of the truth of it, things that have no life will not grow."* May each one of us show fruit of our spiritual growth. May all of our church family at FPCB gladly heed God's command to grow in the grace of Christ and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.



We're starting a new feature in our newsletters called Meet the Missionaries. Its purpose is to give more insight into the missionaries we support and in particular their relationship to our church and how we got to know them...

Meet the Missionaries:

Jon and Karen Schmidt

Jon and Karen have been part of our mission outreach since the 1990's. When we first knew them, they were aviation missionaries in Peru with SAMAIR (the aviation ministry of South American Mission). We met them when Jon bought an airplane from Parker Rhett, Charlotte's husband (that was Parker's vocation – Parker Rhett Aircraft Sales). Jon stayed for a bit while Parker's shop installed a STOL (Short Take Off and Landing) kit on the airplane and we got to know him. Jon flew that airplane from Diamondhead, MS all the way to Peru.

Jon and Karen spent more than 22 years as aviation missionaries in Peru. Jon is a pilot, A&P (Airframe and Powerplant) mechanic, a certified flight instructor, and a check pilot (certifies others).

Jon and Karen have many fascinating stories of aviation ministry in the jungles of Peru. Jon often used runways that were too short, but on a hillside. He would land uphill using gravity to stop, and takeoff downhill to get enough speed to fly. They would move people, animals, even bags of cement, doing whatever was necessary to help spread the Gospel of Jesus throughout the jungle.

Jon and Karen and their kids lived on a mission airport on a lake because one of the airplanes they used was a float plane. Their kids used to swim in the lake with piranhas (yes, really!). He said the fish had a bad rap. I don't want to find out!



After their kids were grown, they were called to help train the next generation of aviation missionaries. Jon is now a senior flight instructor and mentor at Moody Aviation in Spokane, Washington. He loves training the next generation of aviation missionaries. Among other things, he teaches mountain flying and leads the students on long arduous cross-country flights.

Through the years Jon and Karen have been to our church several times for missions conferences. If you go to visit Charlotte Rhett, you can see a tapestry made from Peruvian Alpaca wool hanging on her wall. It was a gift from Jon and Karen for one of the times they stayed with her during a missions conference.

Please pray for their continued health and safety, and for their encouragement of the next generation of mission aviators.

And now...



The Northwest Flyer

Training the Next Generation of Missionary Aviators in Spokane, WA.
Serving at Moody Aviation through Proclaim Aviation Ministries.

June 2025 ~ 6020 N Rose Eva Ct, Spokane, WA. 99217 ~ 509-724-1384 ~ jkschmidt@proclaimaviation.org



Moody Aviation Class of 2025



Jon's students pictured here are part of the Class of 2025 that just graduated on June 21. All three of his students finished well and now have their Commercial license and have officially completed all of the coursework to graduate from Moody Aviation. The class pictured above is the largest graduating class in 20 years! What a joy to walk this journey with a class that has been focused on serving the Lord through aviation. Aviation is just the means for them. We are excited to see how

God will use them in the years to come. It's always a bittersweet experience to see them graduate, as we have worked so closely with them over the span of 5+ years.

The annual event to honor the wives of the graduates was such a special time this year. Karen is privileged to work with a team of staff and student wives to lead the ministry team that serves the women of Moody Aviation. The desire of this ministry is to **Refresh, Ignite, Strengthen** and **Equip** our women for service. Hence, the name of our ladies ministry is "RISE". This ministry has been growing in momentum and effectiveness over the past few years and it is exciting to see and a joy to be a involved in.



After a short break over the first two weeks of July, we will begin our Fall semester. Jon will start out with a non-Moody student for two weeks, preparing him to go to JAARS for his technical evaluation. Following that, Jon will be teaching two of our recent graduates to be flight instructors! In fact, eight of the graduates hope to go through the Certified Flight Instructor course this fall with five of the men staying on to instruct at Moody for a few years! So, that's pretty exciting! It means we don't have to say goodbye right away and they go from being our students to becoming our co-workers!

Our family continues to experience God's goodness amidst the busyness and difficulties that life brings. In all, we are so grateful that our kids are seeking the Lord and desiring to teach their kids to do the same. We now have four grandkids that are taller than Karen!

We thank the Lord for each of you, for your faithfulness in giving and for your prayers. They are a vital part of what we are able to accomplish here at Moody. May God's blessings be abundant in your lives.

Serving together with you,

Jon and Karen



GIVE ONLINE: [Proclaimaviation.org/donate](https://proclaimaviation.org/donate)

MAILING DONATIONS:

Proclaim Aviation Ministries

PO Box 356, Worthington, MN 56187



BIRTHDAYS for JULY

Sarah Horn 5th

Steve VanderKooy 9th

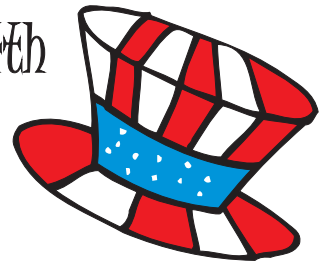
David Allen 12th

Kathy Davenport 14th

Kerri Willson 21st

Gideon Smith 25th

Andy Bagby 31st



Dates to Remember for July

July 2 Ladies Circle Meeting at 9:30 a.m. in the church parlor

July 4 Celebration at the church

July 4 Church office will be closed for the holiday

July 5 Men's Breakfast at 8:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall

July 6 Communion

July 7 Men's Bible Study at 6:30 p.m. at the church

July 13 Monthly Luncheon, after the worship service, please bring a dish to share.

July 14 Session Meeting at 6:30 p.m. at the church

July 21 Deacons meeting at 5:45 p.m. at the church

July 21 Men's Bible Study at 6:30 p.m. in the parlor



Join us for a picnic on the 4th of July, at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Hamburgers & Hotdogs will be provided. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share. Tea, lemonade & water will be provided also. Bring your own lawn chair to watch the Fireworks at 9pm on the front lawn of the church.



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**First Presbyterian Church of Biloxi is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America.
To learn more about the PCA, log on to pcanet.org**

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Church Secretary

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Church Facilities Manager

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