Dear Friends,

I don’t know about you, but, as the pandemic months drag on, I feel a growing sense of malaise and unease. I have no idea how we got to the beginning of June. Across the nation and our state, public places of commerce are reopening, even as national numbers of infection continue to climb. The scientific and medical communities continue to advise extreme caution as we enter this period of “re-opening,” fearing a second wave that might be worse than the first one.

In this uniquely dangerous and uncertain time, facing a viral aggressor that is all but invisible, the leadership of First Presbyterian is continuing to urge social distancing, the wearing of masks, and very limited contact outside of our primary places of residence. To that end, the FPC Session decided at its meeting on May 27, that the building will remain closed through June, with that status to be evaluated at the next Session Meeting on June 24. But, do be assured that though the building is closed, the ministry and mission and worship of First Pres are very much open and alive! Our website and Facebook pages are full of opportunities to be together at a distance, and our staff is ever thinking about new things to offer.

On a somber note, our nation has been torn asunder yet again by white police violence on a fellow citizen of color. The brutal murder of George Floyd has plunged our communities into turmoil, and we are left wondering how such a ubiquitous display of official racism and brutality can continue unchecked in this land we thought of as a place of freedom and good will for all. As painful and upsetting as it is to confront these harsh questions, we who seek to follow the Way of Jesus and live lives of faith and purpose cannot turn from them. Those of us who live relatively secure lives in our predominantly white enclaves must be the ones to stand up and stand against the wave of white supremacist ideology and power that threaten the democracy and peace of the homeland we love.

In these next pages, I have assembled various comments, stories, and web links that provide thought-provoking material for us to ponder. When the Covid crisis is behind us, these thoughts may lead to profound discussions as we gather together and wonder how to be truly faithful, truly the Body of Christ, in the times to come.

Blessings and Peace,
David
In 1961, a group of civil rights activists known as the Freedom Riders began a desegregation campaign. The interracial group rode together on interstate buses headed south from Washington, D.C., and patronized the bus stations along the way, to test the enforcement of Supreme Court decisions that prohibited discrimination in interstate passenger travel. Their efforts were unpopular with white Southerners who supported segregation. The group encountered early violence in South Carolina but continued their trip toward the planned destination of New Orleans.

On Mother's Day, May 14, 1961, a Greyhound bus carrying Freedom Riders arrived at the Anniston, Alabama, bus station shortly after 1:00 p.m. to find the building locked shut. Led by Ku Klux Klan leader William Chapel, a mob of fifty men armed with pipes, chains, and bats, smashed windows, slashed tires, and dented the sides of the Riders' bus. Though warned hours earlier that a mob had gathered at the station, local police did not arrive until after the assault had begun.

Once the attack subsided, police pretended to escort the crippled bus to safety, but instead abandoned it at the Anniston city limits. Soon after the police departed, another armed white mob surrounded the bus and began breaking windows. The Freedom Riders refused to exit the vehicle but received no aid from two watching highway patrolmen. When a member of the mob tossed a firebomb through a broken bus window, others in the mob attempted to trap the passengers inside the burning vehicle by barricading the door. They fled when the fuel tank began to explode. The Riders were able to escape the ensuing flames and smoke through the bus windows and main door, only to be attacked and beaten by the mob outside.

After police finally dispersed their attackers, the Freedom Riders received limited medical care. They were soon evacuated from Anniston in a convoy organized by Birmingham Civil Rights leader, Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth.

This attack took place on Mother’s Day, May 14, 1961, nearly 60 years ago, in the Alabama town where I served the First Presbyterian Church for 14 years before coming to Wooster. I wonder . . . how much has changed? — David
Sent by Rev. Jim Collier, former pastor of First Presbyterian, Wooster

I have two sons:
One literally and legally mine and the other I am blessed to borrow sometimes from my brother and neighbor Travis Edwards
One is biologically mine – He looks like me – He has the same eyes – Same smile
Same wise-ass personality
The other has been our neighbor since both sons were 3 years old
He does not look like me
He is a more serious boy
He has a shy smile that still lights a room
He has a strong sense of right and wrong
Both boys have massive hearts and couldn't imagine the melanin distribution between them being something even worth considering.
I'd tear a man's head clean off for harming either of them
I've kissed both goodnight more times than I can count, wiped away tears, and even scolded both when necessary...that's what you do when raising little men.
I worry about both sons.
I worry they will get their hearts broken by girls (they will)
I worry they will fail (they will)
I worry they will make poor decisions (they will)
But lately I worry about Sammy a little extra.
I worry that he won't be judged by the content of his character, but by the color of his skin. (If that last bit wasn't familiar, please study history more...we need you)
I worry that some chicken-hearted coward with or without a badge will harm him out of irrational fear or insecurity
I am angry
I am frustrated that I don't know what to do to make their adult world better
I'm angrier that I can't make my adult world better
But, I'll keeping on loving on these two and any others God puts in my path in hope that my love creates a ripple in the ocean of their lives.
And I hope that ripple turns into a tsunami of love and good fortune for them so that long after I am gone, both sons will look back and know that they were deeply loved by a flawed, and very human man who did his best to fight injustice and stand up to wrong when he saw it. I hope they will too.
From Matt Skolnik, Executive Presbyter of Muskingum Valley Presbytery

George Floyd Video Resource

Pastors,

As we have watched videos of violence and anger on the news this week, some of our colleagues across the nation are really struggling to hold their communities together. Listening to some of their pain and their desires to have God heal hearts, lives, and communities, I pulled together this video for them to use in their cities.

Please use this video as part of your work as you participate in God’s healing redemption and love. If you are going to share it in worship or post it on your sites, please frame it with grace so our people can hear this as a Gospel issue, not a Left/Right issue. We need more Gospel in the world.

Much love,

Matt

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/adea8n32goi7mwa/AACyUsH_gvaNUyzRQtBfjQ_3a?dl=0
Greetings from the Resource Development Committee!

The RDM thanks you all for recognizing that the expenses for our church are ongoing during this difficult time by continuing to support with your promised stewardship and generous contributions. I think that it is safe to say that we are all looking forward to worshiping and being together in our sanctuary again.

Through April, congregational giving continues to be ahead of 2019 at this point. Our ministry teams are also working hard to keep expenses within their budgets resulting in an overall surplus for our church finances. Year-to-date the investments in our endowment fund are down a little over 5%, and for the year ending April 30, 2020, we have a modest positive return.

Other financial highlights in April include a $40,000 bequest from the Edna Oswald estate. Edna and Marvin were longtime members of First Presbyterian. The Oswalds’ generous gift serves as a reminder of the importance of legacy giving to continue the church missions and programming for future generations. Please contact any member of the RDM if you have any questions or need information about including FPC when planning your estate.

Sincerely,

Tom Rumbaugh

The Resource Development Ministry:
Sarah Baker, Dana Brooks, Stuart Miller, Laura Neill, David Rice, and Tom Rumbaugh

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**2020 PHOC MAPLE SYRUP** - The Pleasant Hill Outdoor Camp maple syrup program to support the youth programs was very successful again this year with good weather and great volunteers! Quality was excellent and we have plenty of pints, quarts, half-gallons, and gallons for sale. Unfortunately, we cannot sell it in the welcome center between and after services on Sundays in June. So you will have to call The Shorts (Ted's cell: 330-466-2763; Karen's cell: 330-466-3404) for special orders and pick-ups at their home at 935 Fenwick Circle after May 6. It will be valuable to have a check made out to PHOC for the exact amount to minimize cash exchanges. Pints will again be $9, quarts $16, half-gallons $28, and gallons $50. Please call Ted or Karen if you have questions or special needs.
Session Highlights

The Session

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<th>2020</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tammy Brooks</td>
<td>Carol Gates</td>
<td>David Earley</td>
<td>Rev. David Rice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul Edmiston</td>
<td>Mark Gooch</td>
<td>Bobbi Jentes-Mason</td>
<td>Nancy Young, Clerk</td>
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<td>Jon Neill</td>
<td>Pat Miles</td>
<td>Mimi Lewellen</td>
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<td>Mary Stockton</td>
<td>Jim Webster</td>
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<td>Jim Tew</td>
<td>James West</td>
<td>Tom Rumbaugh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emma LoGiudice (Y 2020)</td>
<td>Zach Miller (Y 2020)</td>
<td>Kenzie Hancock (Y 2020)</td>
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Please keep in your prayers: your church, its needs, and those whom you have elected to serve in leadership roles.

May 2020

Clerk’s Report: Nancy Young
Session met at 7:00pm via Zoom on May 27, 2020. Included in this meeting with voice but not vote were new elders Charles Baker, Wes Davis, April Gamble (who was excused from the meeting), and Laura Neill. Paul Edmiston is a returning elder serving a second term.

Church Re-opening

With input from the Re-opening Task Force and after much thoughtful discussion, the following motion was made: MOTION (Miles): While the Re-opening Task Force continues to work on a safe, comprehensive plan for resuming corporate worship, the building will remain closed through June. Worship services, team and committee meetings, small group gatherings, Bible studies, and children’s activities will continue on-line. This decision will be re-visited at session’s June meeting. During this planning time, the Task Force and FPC staff will be considering ways in which we can begin, this summer, to safely phase in opportunities for an outdoor worship service and small group gatherings; 2nd (Miller?); PASSED (u).

Wee Care Re-opening

Due to the state directive that day care centers could re-open, the emergency situation surrounding Covid-19, unemployment and the necessity of people returning to jobs, and the fact that Wee Care already had 34 children signed up to attend upon re-opening, and with recommendations from the Re-opening Task Force, session made the following MOTION (Miller): That Wee Care re-open June 1, 2020, following the protocols that have been set in place. This decision will be monitored in light of state and local directives, the FPC staff, and any subsequent recommendations from the Re-opening Task Force; 2nd (Lewellen); PASSED (10 Yes, 2 No, 3 Abstentions).

During discussion, session was clear that this re-opening is provisional /probationary and that members of the FPC staff will be monitoring Wee Care’s Covid-19 practices and protocols for the protection and safety of the children, staff and the safety of the Wee Care space. David will communicate this to the Wee Care Board.
Session Highlights

Resource Development Ministry: Tom Rumbaugh
Tom reported that our finances remain healthy and that giving has been strong despite the disruption of a pandemic.

First Presbyterian received a $40,000 bequest from the estate of Edna Oswald for which we are extremely grateful.

Tom also reported that the RDM applied for a Payroll Protection Plan loan being offered by the federal government to aid organizations in meeting their payroll demands during the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of the various restrictions tied to this loan, the funds will be kept in a separate church checking account and Dana Brooks will oversee the funds and monitor the distributions.

Esther Wakeman, Mission Partner in Thailand, to preach for First Presbyterian

On Sunday, June 7, our Mission Partner in Thailand, Esther Wakeman, will be offering the sermon during morning worship. Esther was to have been with us the weekend of May 24, but had to cancel because of the pandemic. A letter from her is attached below, which also provides a link with a video that introduces her and her work at Payap University. We are grateful for her “virtual presence” and the message she brings.

Dear churches and friends that I was hoping to visit during my Interpretation Assignment from April through June --

One of my churches invited me to preach by recorded video and gave me the text from John 14:1-14. The result was a sermon called "Working from Home." I kept it "generic"-- there are no references to the congregation, so that other churches could use it as well. It includes a bit about how Thailand has handled the pandemic and a bit about how Payap is doing and what's happening in my life. I also recorded a benediction that goes along with the sermon.

In an earlier email I sent a link to a short video that introduces me and my work which is on the PC (USA) website and is downloadable. It is helpful for folks to get to know me a bit. [https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/the-rev-dr-esther-wakeman/](https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/the-rev-dr-esther-wakeman/)
The video is on the top right corner of this page.

I'm going to be sending a letter soon with more detail about what my "working from home" looks like, but I wanted to get this to you as soon as possible, in case you can integrate it into your preaching schedule--especially those of you who had invited me to preach.

Joy and Peace,

Esther
SLATE OF OFFICERS AND TEAM MEMBERS FOR FPC FROM 2020 NOMINATING SESSION CLASS OF 2023
Charlie Baker
Wes Davis
Paul Edmiston 2nd term
April Gamble
Laura Neill

DEACONS CLASS OF 2023
Elaine Arnold
Tim Fair
Cheryl Gooch
Carol McKiernan
Karen McQuate
Gwen Short

PERSONNEL, 2022
Tammy Brooks

NOMINATING, 2022
Jon Neill
Lorraine Hancock
Elaine Peterson 2nd term

FAITH AND NURTURE
Paula Abrecht
Laura Bigley 2nd term
Kim Ogle

FAITH AND PRACTICE
Sarah Dunlap
Bill & Carla Hall all 2nd terms
one more TBD

FAITH AND STRUCTURE
Scott Buehler
Roy Hancock II all 2nd terms
Roy Haynes

FAITH AND WORSHIP
Monica Burrill
Erin Guzman
one more TBD
MCC Webinar Series on Immigration and Border Realities

**Immigration**: We are invited to participate in a Mennonite webinar series on Immigration and Border Realities. This series seeks to engage community members with the reality of immigration from the perspective of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)'s staff and partners' perspectives from their fields. Please join if you want to learn more about current immigration topics and how our Christian partners are addressing these situations. The topics for this webinar series are:

- **June 2**: Church efforts to address immigration
- **June 16**: MCC's migration work in Mexico, Honduras, and Guatemala/El Salvador
- **June 30**: Church-based immigration legal services

The webinars are every other Tuesday at 2 p.m. Please use this link to register for any individual topic in which you are interested: [https://mcc.org/immigration-webinar-series](https://mcc.org/immigration-webinar-series)

**Pentecost Offering**

The Pentecost offering helps our youth begin life with a strong start - a solid foundation of faith formed in the years from childhood through young adulthood.

We encourage you to contribute to the Pentecost offering and send it with your normal pledge to the church. Since 40% of our giving stays with our church, we are able to offer scholarships to summer camps for our youth. It also provides funds for resources within our youth programs.

The Pentecost offering allocates 25% to support Young Adult volunteers (YAV) ages 19 to 30 who serve for one year in communities around the world.

Your gift is saying “Thank you for a job well done” to our youth staff leaders as they work with our youth. Thank you for contributing to this valued program.

Don Beane for Faith and Practice

**ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING OFFERING**

Please join others in giving to One Great Hour of Sharing! For over 70 years, One Great Hour of Sharing has been a way in which Presbyterians have served the needs of others through three programs - The Presbyterian Hunger Program, The Self-development of People Program, and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. It is the single, largest way that Presbyterians join together to help people around the world who are facing natural disasters, famine, injustice, and a lack of clean water, in addition to other enormous challenges. Our faith calls us to serve others by sharing with those in need. Please join with Presbyterians around the world. You can be a part of providing relief to those in need. "You shall be called"
The biennial meeting of our church’s national body was scheduled to convene on Saturday, June 20, in Baltimore. It was to last for a week. The usual. Then came COVID-19 and everything changed!

In 2020, for the first time ever, the General Assembly will meet virtually, during parts of three days, with all commissioners from across the country participating from their homes.

How does a deliberative body, consisting of elected ministers and ruling elders who have never met each other, do the business of the church? With careful planning by the leadership, with a greatly slimmed-down agenda, and with lots of patience on the part of everyone.

The Assembly will convene on-line on Friday, June 19, to elect a new moderator and to approve a very slim agenda. Following a break of several days, it will meet again for long sessions on June 26 and 27. The Assembly will close with a service of worship designed to include the whole church.

More than ever before, we will all depend on printed media to let us know what’s going on. *Presbyterians Today* and *Presbyterian Outlook* will each devote a whole issue to the Assembly, and *The Christian Century* – an ecumenical journal – will give major space to this national gathering. Anyone checking by computer with “Presbyterian Church USA” will be able to find out everything important about what’s going on. From beginning to end, this will be an electronic General Assembly!

One other addition will be greatly welcomed by Presbyterians across the country: The entire Assembly will be live-streamed! Members of our congregation will be able to follow the Assembly on the G.A. website ([https://ga-pcusa.org/](https://ga-pcusa.org/)) and on its Facebook site. In addition, we will be able to access PC-Biz to keep track of voting results, etc. throughout the Assembly.
Our enforced break in the normal church schedule has not reduced the interest in issues of social justice among our team members and many others in our congregation. Meanwhile, we are returning to our regular monthly meeting schedule, now meeting by Zoom at 4 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month. Our June meeting will be on Tuesday, June 9th, and we will be happy to welcome anyone who is interested in joining in the conversation. Just get in touch with Carla Hall (1-614-761-3906) or Charles Cureton (330-345-5995) and you will be added to the Zoom meeting list.

We plan to add a regular monthly column to TOWER TIDINGS so we can keep in touch with everyone on a regular basis during this unusual time. We’ll be keeping up with our friends who are ministering in the bitterly divided nation of South Sudan, and we’ll keep up with what our denomination is doing on the national stage to translate our Lord’s concern for all people into purposeful and helpful action.

A quick reminder that our Social Justice & Peacemaking Ministry Team purpose statement can be found on the church website under “Mission and Service.” Check it out, and watch for our monthly column in future issues of TOWER TIDINGS!
Faith and Structure
May 2020

The Faith and Structure Coordinating Committee continues to address the structural aspects of the church that impact our spiritual life. We continue to use Zoom for virtual meetings which has worked well. Recent activities to call to the congregation’s attention follow.

We have received the acoustician’s report on sound quality and quantity—OR intelligibility—in our sanctuary. He made multiple observations and sound measurements leading to recommendations to utilize a mix of steerable and passive line array speakers to cover our space and to improve spoken intelligibility. This would replace the single Electro-Voice asymmetrical loudspeaker now suspended from the nave ceiling. He also found that there were areas of uneven or lacking sound reverberation and that sound distortion was created when the HVAC or fan coil units were operating, both issues will need to be considered. Finally, he emphasized the need to expand our video/visual capacity, a need which has been underscored in the past few months with the arrival of COVID-19. Working with other appropriate coordinating committees, we are now determining how to best move forward.

The landscaping around the College Avenue/Bowman Street sign is scheduled for the last week in May. Again, we thank Jim and Cindy Webster for the new signage and the Women’s Fellowship for providing funding for the landscaping.

The sealing and striping of the church parking lot has now been completed and the catch basins repaired. This project looks quite nice (please see photos attached).

In a final note, Scott Buehler has agreed to chair Faith and Structure for the coming year.

Committee: Joel Beckler, Scott Buehler, Paul Edmiston, Roy Hancock, Roy Haynes, Steven Slack (chair), Ken Starling, Jim Tew and Jim Webster. David Rice and Tim Hall, ex officio.

Submitted by: Steven Slack
Special Thanks to Roy Haynes and his group of Congregational Gardeners who work hard for the grounds of FPC to look lovely and smell fragrant. The columbines are in their prime. Irises are coming!

**Gardener needed:** The "South Garden", the one connected to the long strip filled with stone, needs a caretaker. It's in fine shape now, so that an hour every other week is all that's needed. If interested, please contact Roy Haynes at haynes@wooster.edu.
Dear Church Family,

Life certainly has changed since Matt and I departed Wooster last October. Not only have we become firmly welcomed into an additional church family, but I have equally become part of a new presbytery, Kiskiminetas.

Initially I was preaching in various Presbyterian churches within a 40 minute drive of Clarion. That was temporarily suspended in March with the realization Covid-19 was changing all of our lives and how “we do church”. Since then, however, I have been hired as a Student Pastor serving the Presbyterian Church in Punxsutawney, PA starting this month. The position is part time but I will bring continuity to a congregation looking for God’s presence particularly during this strange time in history. Also, I will be able to hone my skills as I complete my ordination requirements. In the meantime, Matt has resumed his interest in writing prose and poetry.

During this time of the Covid-19 virus, Matt and I are blessed to be able to continue worshiping with you through the wonder of electronics. We are grateful to this church family for providing and supporting this need not only to the Wooster church but also the greater church body. In his first letter to the Thessalonians Paul wrote “As for us, brothers and sisters, when, for a short time we were made orphans by being separated from you -- in person, not in heart -- we longed in eagerness to see you face to face.” (1 Thessalonians 2:17) While we certainly don’t feel orphaned, we do long to see each of you.

Grace and peace,

Robin Sharp
Composting

Have you thought of composting? Please read on and don’t just dismiss it as something you can't do. Thought about it but think you don't have the room? Concerned about smell? Do you have yard waste (lawn clippings, fall leaves) that you don't know what to do with? There are answers!

Many of us are eating at home more. That creates more "garbage". You know one person's trash is another's treasure? That treasure can be yours in producing beautiful healthy garden soil! Anyone - absolutely anyone - can compost. Whether you live in an apartment, condo, a home on a tiny downtown lot, or in the country, you can do it!

Composting helps our earth in many ways. First, it keeps food scraps out of landfills, where it creates methane gas - a substantial source of air pollution and greenhouse gases. Second, by returning these vegetable products to the earth, we help sequester carbon and create healthy soils. And third, if you're a gardener, it is a free source of wonderful garden soil.

If you are interested, please contact me, Carla Hall, bchall2005@gmail.com; Call/text 614-761-3906 (sorry no local #). I will be happy if just one person contacts me and wants to make this happen!

I recently wrote about "plogging", which means picking up trash while you are walking or jogging. I was thrilled to hear from Leroy Haynes, who carries a bag and picks up trash in his neighborhood (the neighborhood where our church is) as he walks. Thanks, Leroy! Don Beane said: I try to walk a mile in my neighborhood each day and will start carrying a sack to put trash in that I see. I will quickly get the title of the local trash man!
Wee Care will re-open on Monday, June 1. Upon re-opening, we will be serving children ages 2.5-3rd grade. Children who have previously attended Wee Care and are in grades 4-6 may be invited to join our Child Assistant Program.

Needs Upon Re-Opening...

* Art Supplies
* First Aid Supplies – band-aids (all sizes), gauze, and thermometers
* Hand Sanitizer
* Wet Wipes
* Outdoor Toys
* Extra Clothes sizes 2T-Youth Medium (new or gently used)...shoes, tops, pants/shorts/socks, underwear, swim suits

What we've been up to...

Miss Jill’s daughter
Isabella Airleen

Brooklynn playing in the pond
Andy enjoying time outside
Remi playing Candy Land
JUNE BIRTHDAYS

June 1  Mark Gordon
June 2  Mary Shaffer
June 3  Jim Kirchhofer
June 4  Polly Johnson, Brett Sidle, Jamie Ogle
June 7  Joan Watt, Roger Bostancic
June 8  Carol Miller
June 9  Iva Byer
June 10 Paul Edmiston
June 11 Andrew James
June 12 Kris Burris
June 17 Laura Bigley
June 18 Kenzie Hancock
June 19 Scott Perkins
June 20 Mark Gooch
June 22 Wesley Davis
June 23 Walt Grosjean, Marlene Zimmerman, Walter Johnson, Sue Madick, Carol Gates, Elizabeth Perkins
June 25 Karen McQuate
June 26 Carol Thompson, Barbara Bostancic, Matthew Sharp
June 27 Betty Wilkin, Sally Call
June 28 Monica Burrill
June 29 Kailana James
First Presbyterian Church
621 College Avenue
Wooster, OH 44691
Phone: 330-264-9420
Fax: 330-262-7305

Address Service Requested

Firstpresbyterianchurch-wooster.ohio
www.firstpreswooster.org

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Deadlines

**FPC News Flash**
- Wednesday by noon
- End of Week

**Tower Tidings**
- 15th of each month
- End of Month

**Bulletin**
- Wednesday
- Weekly

**Session**
- 2nd Monday of the month
- 4th Wed. of each month

**Session Packets**
- 2nd Monday of the month
- 3rd Sunday of the month