

# the CONNECTION

First Baptist Church of Stilwell Newsletter



## UNITY IN CHRIST...

As we approach Election Day, it's crucial to remember that our unity in Christ must rise above the divisiveness of politics. Throughout this series, I have talked about where Christians find our hope and the lack of civility I have seen among some of our brothers and sisters. In this final article, I want to challenge us to view things through a new lens—one of love, unity, and purpose that transcends political divides.

Our country is deeply polarized, and sadly, this division has seeped into the church. The most dangerous form of this division is affective polarization. Affective polarization happens when people feel more positive toward those who share their political views and are increasingly hostile toward those who don't. This division creates barriers, not just between people but within the church itself, leading to hostility, unwillingness to compromise, and a refusal to work in unity with those who see things differently. When Christians are divided, Satan rejoices.

Affective polarization has eroded our unity and weakened our collective witness, making it difficult to reflect Christ's love to the world. We no longer see each other as part of the same family in Christ; instead, we view each other as opponents, caught in an ideological battle. We are all striving toward the same goals. At heart, we all want safe neighborhoods, strong schools, and freedom to worship. Our shared values, Christian values anchored in the gospel, should bind us together.

As the body of Christ, we must strive for unity, refusing to let affective polarization poison our fellowship. We must not allow secular issues to divide a divine institution. The church is God's church, a holy institution, and we must not permit political divides to harm it. We need to see

each other through new eyes—the eyes of God. That person in the pew who holds a different political opinion is not your enemy. They are not someone you must fight to defeat; they are a fellow worker, someone you are called to partner with to build the kingdom of God.

I have lived through eight presidencies, and since becoming eligible to vote in 1992, I have voted in every presidential election. My late wife, Makiba, and I voted differently in all but one election during our 23 years together. Yet, these differences never affected our unity. Similarly, we should not allow our political preferences to affect the unity of Christ's church. Makiba and I would joke that the morning after the election, we'd have a new president—one of us would like the outcome, and one of us wouldn't—but we'd still be married. This is the perspective we must take as members of Christ's body. The morning after the election, we will have a new president. Some of us will approve, and some will not. But we will still be the church of Jesus Christ. We will still be Christians, and the God we serve will still be our Creator and Savior.

I would never claim that politics is unimportant; it has its place. However, the unity of the body of Christ is of far greater significance. As Christians, let's prioritize the kingdom over politics, remembering that our allegiance to Jesus unites us far more than any party ever could. Together, let's strive to be one body, united by a Savior and King named Jesus.

-Pastor Franklin Ruff

“Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.”

~1 Corinthians 12:12

## WORSHIP

Links to worship with us LIVE:

- [fbcstilwell.online.church](https://fbcstilwell.online.church)
- [fbcstilwell.org/worship](https://fbcstilwell.org/worship)

Worshipping with us later?

- [@FirstBaptistChurchStilwellKansas](https://facebook.com)
- [fbcstilwell.org/worship](https://fbcstilwell.org/worship)  
(click on the worship banner)



# OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

- 11/1 Jennifer Schneider
- 11/2 Brad Rolfs
- 11/12 Susan Boydston
- 11/14 Candice Schleicher
- 11/19 John Schneider
- 11/23 Pam Robertson
- 11/26 Regina Smith
- 11/29 Ann Butler



If you were missed on the birthday list, we are so sorry! Would you let the church office know so that we can get you added to the list!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

If you have a passion for one of the events listed below, please see Pastor Jessica about ways in which you can participate or serve in that ministry!

### OTHER EVENTS

- NOV 9 - Fall Craft Fair - 9am-2pm
- NOV 10 - Sharp's Hayride - 5pm
- NOV 24 - Thanksgiving Fellowship  
Potluck after worship service
- DEC 1 - 4pm - Christmas Concert
- DEC 18 - 6pm Blue Christmas @  
Stilwell UMC

### WEEKLY

- Sun @ 9:15am - Sunday School
- Sun @ 10:30am - Worship
- Sun @ 6:30pm - Young Adults
- 2nd & 4th Tues @ 2-4pm - Caring  
Ministry Distribution
- Tues @ 6pm - Cub Scouts
- Wed @ 6pm - Community Prayer
- Wed @ 6:30pm - REFUGE Youth Group
- Thurs @ 6-7pm - Caring Ministry Distr

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
913.897.2261  
[www.fbcstilwell.org](http://www.fbcstilwell.org)  
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[www.fbcstilwell.org/worship](http://www.fbcstilwell.org/worship)

## CONTACT US

Pastor Franklin Ruff  
[revruff@fbcstilwell.org](mailto:revruff@fbcstilwell.org)

Pastor Jessica Henks  
913.444.3368  
[revjessica@fbcstilwell.org](mailto:revjessica@fbcstilwell.org)