

# First Presbyterian News

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M-F 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.  
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Dear First Family,

Your Session met April 20 via Zoom with Betsy Soto as Moderator. In compliance with the Governor's orders the Session agreed to continue suspension of worship services through June 10. The next Session meeting will be May 18 when it can be reassessed.

The Pastor Nominating Committee continues to work diligently toward the search for our pastor. The Transition Team continues to actively pursue an Interim Pastor. Please pray for guidance for these groups as they serve our church.

Our life today is 'surreal', the best word I have for these unprecedented times. We are having to adapt to many lifestyle changes. Many of you are challenged emotionally, physically, and financially with the changes we are experiencing.

Something that has not changed is the variety of ways we can still communicate. Physical presence, hugs, touches, and seeing smiles cannot be replaced; however, we are fortunate that phone calls, texts, emails, and postal service all continue to offer ways to stay in touch. We Elders are trying to stay in touch with all of you but please don't wait for our phone calls, notes, or emails if there is anything we can do for you, even if just to chat. Please be in touch with any of us. You all remain in our prayers and we are available for you.



The most important thing that has not changed for any of us during this time is God's presence, His forgiveness of our sins, and His unconditional love, grace, and protection of each of us. With this knowledge we may take a moment to evaluate our values and thoughts today and feel the strength of God's Holy Spirit working in and through us, that others may come to know Him as well.

Take a moment this week to read Philippians, known by many as Paul's New Testament 'letter of joy'. It may help you keep a Christian perspective during our unique and challenging time.

I pray for you to find blessings, joy, and peace. I hope you take time to appreciate the beauty of flowers and trees blooming, unaware of our earthly concerns, and that you bloom as they are blooming.

Linda Lumsden, Elder of Worship



## WHY DO I NEED TO HEAR A SERMON?

If you ask this question another article is required with many reasons. Jesus preached and people walked away, missing out on his words of parables and messages from God. Search your radios, TV, and online sites for sermons. Listed are resources online for sermons (mostly aired Sunday mornings, many have them posted to view later) suggested by a few Elders for food for your faith diet:

[www.1stpres.cc](http://www.1stpres.cc) (our church website) Go to Resource tab then Audio sermons

<https://www.youtube.com/user/SaxeGothaPres>. (Home church of Patrick Cherry)

[www.peachtreechurch.com](http://www.peachtreechurch.com)

[www.firstprescos.org](http://www.firstprescos.org) Colorado Springs, CO

[www.midtownfellowship.org](http://www.midtownfellowship.org) Nashville, TN

Facebook – Northwoods Presbyterian Northwoods, TX



## Paul & Reinhild Sydnor

(A First Presbyterian Ministry)

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### ***How are you doing?***

When Covid 19 broke out last month, France required mandatory isolation for everyone. It's now been a month. We can only leave the house for one of the approved reasons and we have to stay within a kilometer when we go out for exercise. Each time we leave it is required to sign and carry a form

with you.

We were celebrating Reinhild's mom's birthday in Germany when everything closed down. Luke was traveling to America and has not tried to return to France. Reinhild has stayed in Germany to help her mom through this time, I've been working from home.

I work well independently and so the time of isolation has not been difficult. A lot of my work already happens through conference calls, so this has continued. I'm in touch with family or colleagues nearly every day. In many ways the isolation and the ease of meeting others on a video call has actually increased the contact and communication with others.

### ***How are the refugees doing?***

Many refugees and asylum seekers feel uncertain in this time. The government offices are closed, and people don't know what will happen to their case. This triggers anxiety about the future.

The isolation has also made us find innovative ways to meet and serve the groups of refugees that we know. One group meets each Thursday for Bible and prayer time. Another group meets to do some online activities to process their stories and journeys. There are small groups and we pray they will grow and one day continue in face to face meetings.

My teammate Michael and I are assisting two groups of refugees who have special needs. (One of the categories to leave the house is to assist vulnerable people.) We are mostly delivering food, but the contact also gives us a chance to help with other needs and to simply be available to talk. Most of these are young men or families.



"Be still and know that I am God." Psalm 46 is a favorite scripture for me. It has taken on a new meaning for many, especially verse 10. These weeks of isolation have felt like God touching the world to renew our awareness of life.

I have been watching a new series of the life of Christ called *The Chosen*. I appreciate the authenticity it portrays in the relationship of Jesus and His disciples.

### **Dear Friends,**

Thank you for reading my letter. I hope these stories give you an idea of how God is at work. Please pray for me as I prepare to teach the course online, *Mission and Migration*, May 11-15, on Mission and Migration at the Academy for World Mission near Stuttgart Germany. At the end of December we received many generous gifts and managed to begin this year with a balanced account. I thank God for you and for the many who make our work possible.

on the move.

*Paul*



### **Mother's Day Quotes:**

- \* "Kids don't stay with you if you do it right. It's the one job where, the better you are, the more surely you won't be needed in the long run."—Barbara Kingsolver
- \* "A mother's love for her child is like nothing else in the world. It knows no law, no pity, it dates all things and crushes down remorselessly all that stands in its path." —Agatha Christie
- \* "The influence of a mother in the lives of her children is beyond calculation."—James E. Faust





Life Is a Gift



**Birth Announcement:** Henry Basham, son to Owen and Jessica Nelson Basham on April 15. He was anxious to arrive, and doing well. Henry is the second great grand child for Marge Nelson. He and his older brother, Callum, are with his parents at Stewart and Patty Nelson's home. To send a card: 1722 Bending Branch Road, Charlottesville, VA 22901; or email them via Patty Nelson at [pattynelson59@gmail.com](mailto:pattynelson59@gmail.com).

**Steven Ministry** – Please pray for our Stephen Ministers. We can use more Stephen Ministers. What is a Stephen Minister? A Christian friend who listens, cares, prays supports and encourages those in need. “Christ caring for people through people.” We have openings for more care receivers, as well. If you would like to help others, or know someone who is in need of care, please reach out to the church office, any Stephen leader, or any Elder.



**Vacation Bible School** – VBS is uncertain at this time, due to the current health crisis. However, First Presbyterian would like to be involved and has been asked to help. Once this virus is contained and “normal” resumes, we will let you know more information about VBS.

**Stewardship:** Dear Fellow Members Of First Presbyterian:

As we are all consumed by the ongoing developments of the Coronavirus pandemic that has seen churches suspend worship services, I am sure that we are all praying for a quick resolution of the problem and a return to normalcy. Many of us are finding other ways to worship in anticipation of once again returning to the friendly fellowship of First Presbyterian Church, to inspirational messages and music and to the comfort of worship with fellow Christians.



In looking forward to the time of re-opening all services the question arises as to whether things with the church might ever be the same as before. We are going through a transitional period without a pastor, and this challenge has now been compounded by a shutdown due to the Coronavirus. We, as Christians, know that there are things beyond our control and that only God is in charge. We must remember Jim Luedtke's favorite acronym, FROG, and FULLY RELY ON GOD to get us through these unique and challenging times. In relying on God, however, we need to open our hearts to His Holy Spirit for guidance as to how we can help First Presbyterian persevere through this period and come out on the other side as prepared, or better, to do God's will, as we were when services were suspended.

Stewardship means many things such as prayers, presence and service, as well as gifts. In times such as these, when we cannot contribute by being present at worship, we can still pray and seek opportunities to serve; and of course, we can still honor God with our gifts.

As we conduct our search for a new pastor it is critically important that as a church we present with involved, committed members if we are to attract the kind of pastor for which we are all looking. One indicator of this, among others, is the financial commitment of the members to maintain and grow an active and vibrant church.

Even though we have suspended services the church still has the same ongoing expenses as it did prior to the suspension. We have utility bills, maintenance costs, and employee payroll to cover each month. The annual budget for the church this year is \$218,785.00. In order to meet the budget we need monthly donations averaging \$18,232.08. For the first quarter (January, February, & March) we needed to have income totaling \$54,696.24 to achieve this average, but collected only \$49,286.59 from offerings, a deficit of \$5,409.65. As everyone can see, the numbers speak for themselves.

St. Paul, in his second letter to the Corinthians, tells us: “Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all you need, you will abound in every good work.”



Brothers and Sisters in Christ, God calls on us at this time to search our hearts and consider our pledges; or if we have not pledged to consider what we can give to His greater glory. Together in Christ we can maintain our mission and operations at First Presbyterian, and be better for having, with God's help, met and overcome our adversities.

Thank you all for your kind and thoughtful consideration.  
Yours in Christ,

Michael M. Rand, Finance Elder



## Stay Safe

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I recently heard a story of some workers who were painting a 125-foot-high bridge in Canada. They had been working for almost a year. Nearing the completion of the project there was an accident where the scaffolding they were using collapsed. Four were killed and seven others were rescued after clinging for more than an hour to the underside of the bridge. Officials asked why they weren't using safety equipment. The answer: they had the equipment, but they chose not to use it. I can relate to this story for several reasons. We all can and do experience scary times, though not nearly as dramatic. We are currently experiencing scary times. And we may feel like we are barely hanging on, but there is security equipment available for us, IF we simply choose to use it. One prophet asked "Will ye reject these words? Will ye reject the words of the prophets, and reject all the words that have been spoken concerning Christ?"

The Lord sent us here to Earth to have a myriad of experiences. Some are great, others are stressful. It is during the stressful times that we learn and grow the most. The Lord provided safety equipment for us, prayer, the scriptures, and the Holy Ghost to be a "safety net" to catch us and an "iron rod" or Word of God, to hold on to through this journey we call life. The scriptures are full of examples of people who had fallen in sin, but then turned back to the Lord and He provided them with comfort and peace of mind. I think of Saul who was persecuting Christians, repented and became Paul one of the great prophets of old. The Gospel of Jesus Christ can bring a mighty change in the hearts of those who seek Him. He wants to help us through our journey, and when we turn to our scriptures daily, especially in times of stress, He will be found, and a peace can be felt even though we are still in the midst of hard times. I know this to be true. I have had several experiences in life where I have chosen to leave aside the "safety equipment" and found myself clinging for hope. But when I returned to church and the scriptures, I truly found a "change of heart" and found peace and comfort. I know the Lord loves me, and you, and wants us to return to Him. We can find Him in the scriptures and find safety there. My prayer is that through this trial we are currently facing the world will turn back to the Lord for safety. ~ *Sherolyn*

**Memorial Day** - Monday, May 25 we recognize the federal holiday of Memorial Day. We know men and women who served in the Armed Forces and lived – we honor them in November on Veteran's Day.

Memorial Day is the time to remember the service men and women who died serving in the United States Armed Forces. Those who died were fighting for the freedom of our United States, for the freedom we have today to be a part of God's church and worship Him.

Jesus died on the cross for forgiveness of our sins so that we can live in the freedom of heaven one day. Until then, while we live, men and women die for our freedom on earth to know God. As we remember those people, above all, we will freely worship Almighty God.

In 1971 Congress declared Memorial Day a federal holiday. That same law also called for a time to pray.

Prayer: Though difficult to comprehend, we remember Your sacrifice of Your only son, Jesus, and His sacrifice of his own life, obedient to You, to forgive us our sins. We are all sinners, God, and we humbly accept Your grace of that ultimate sacrifice of love.

Though difficult to imagine, we think of the pain and suffering of many men and women who sacrificed their lives for our freedom in our Country. We think of the family and friends of those who died. We pray You provide comfort to them and bestow Your unique blessings upon each of them that they know You and grow in You.

Open our hearts and minds to the sacrifices made for us, though we are not deserving. Guide us in our service to You, God, that we may live by the example of Jesus and of many who have followed You to the ends of their lives.

We ask for your knowledge and blessing, Your comfort and forgiveness, and strength of Your Holy Spirit to live according to Your will.

Psalm 27:3-6 "Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then will I be confident. One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek Him in His temple and set me high upon a rock. Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at His temple will I sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the Lord."

~ from previous Memorial Day Sunday church service @ First Presbyterian South Boston



# May 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26	27	28	29	30	May 1	May 2
No First Pres. Activities due to COVID-19 criteria.						
3	4	5	6		8	9
No First Pres. Activities due to COVID-19 criteria.						
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	No First Pres. Activities due to COVID-19 criteria.					
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
No First Pres. Activities due to COVID-19 criteria.						
	Elders meet via Zoom with Betsy Soto					
24		26	27	28	29	30
31	 No First Pres. Activities due to COVID-19 criteria.					

## MAY Birthdays

\* In Memory

- 1 Jeremy Cherry
- 1 Brian Farley
- 1 Megan Henderson
- 3 Rick Harrell
- 3 Les Powell IV
- 4 Kelly Gravitt-O'Kelly
- 4 Anne-Carlisle Cranford-Edwards
- 6 Darlene Bain\*
- 7 Joseph Roberts
- 9 Terri Hazelwood
- 10 Jennifer Edmunds
- 12 Mike Long
- 12 Byrd Young\*

- 13 Raleigh Powell
- 13 Patty Nelson
- 15 Nick Lumsden
- 15 Ginny Miller
- 22 Jim Burton\*
- 24 Brittany Hazelwood
- 28 Winston Harrell
- 29 Sterling Roberts



If we don't have your birthday listed, please call the office and let us know.





Session Notes: **Since our last Newsletter, our Session discussed:**

- 1 - Voted to suspend church through June 10.
- 2 - Discussed staying in contact with the Missionaries, they are going through the same thing we are, and need prayers and contact.
- 3 - Playground and Picnic Shelter are to closed until quarantine is lifted.
- 3 - Reminding members that sermons are available on our website.
- 4 - Posted pictures of the "Flowering of the Cross" on Facebook.
- 5 - Don Cherry updated the Session on the PNC's ongoing work.
- 6 - Session approved the first quarter financials and March monthly balance sheet.



**May 18**

**Elders at 6:00 pm via Zoom**

### **Weekly Happenings**

**There are NO weekly meetings happening at this time due to the COVID19 virus. Please stay safe and away from groups of people as much as possible. Remember to be extra diligent with universal hygiene habits. Wash hands frequently.**

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**Here is your May 2020 Newsletter**