

First Presbyterian News

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First Pres. Family,

There is a scene in the old Disney movie "Alice in Wonderland" in which Alice encounters a caterpillar who asks "Who are you?" Alice, who is now three inches tall and quite confused, said: "I do not know who I am." The scene concludes with the caterpillar transforming into a butterfly and giving Alice information about a mushroom that will help her to change her size at will, just by eating one side or the other.

Alice was having an identity crisis. Finding herself physically changed in a strange environment left her unable to define her identity. In ministry we often encounter people who are experiencing the same problems illustrated by Alice. A health crisis, death of a loved one, even a planned change like retirement, changing jobs, or moving to a new home, can leave us physically or psychologically changed in a strange environment. When presented with rapid change we find it difficult to redefine our identity. We may react to the situation by taking extreme measures and redefining our identity in a radical way (biting one side of the mushroom or the other) however, that is not often a satisfying solution.

In ministry we remind people that there is no magic mushroom to return your life to what was comfortable. We remind people that those who give their lives to God in Christ receive an identity that cannot be altered by external circumstances. Once we stand in God's grace through Christ, nothing, no one, no circumstance, can separate us from the Love of God. Our identity is tied to Christ, we are beloved of God, dedicated to God's will and purpose for our lives. God's love is transforming, it changed Abram (*meaning exalted father*) to Abraham (*father of many*), Jacob (*the supplanter*) to Israel (*one with whom God contends*), and also Simon (*one who has heard*) to Peter (*the rock*).

In times of transition churches can also undergo identity crises. First Presbyterian of South Boston is no exception. For many years First Presbyterian Church of South Boston was known and identified in relation to the installed pastor. With Russel's retirement, after a long and vital ministry, the question arises in the church: "What will be our identity in the future?" One of the blessings of this transitional period is that the church can take some time to consider the issue of identity and intentionally make decisions that will define their identity in the future. Much of that work has already been done in the mission study. However, the COVID19 crisis has already brought unforeseen changes to the life and identity of the church. As your transitional pastor I encourage you to consider the mission statement "Growing God's Presence." Meditate upon it, as well as the foundational principles and values (printed in the weekly bulletin), in relation to the identity of First Presbyterian Church as it is today. I would love to hear your thoughts and comments, so please share these with me at:

pastor@1stpres.cc

~ Glenn Coleman



August 2 - Ninth Sunday after Pentecost
Sermon Title: "Extravagance"
Scriptures: Psalm 17:2-7, 15; Matthew 14:13-21

August 9 - Tenth Sunday after Pentecost
Sermon Title: "How you Will Know"
Scriptures: Psalm 85:8-13; Matthew 14:22-33

August 16 - Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost
Sermon Title: "The Messiah"
Scriptures: Isaiah 56:1, 6-8; Romans 11:1-2, 29-32

August 23 - Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost
Sermon Title: "Speak Up"
Scriptures: Psalm 124; Matthew 16:13-20

August 30 - Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Sermon Title: "Getting to Know Jesus"
Scriptures: Psalm 26:1-8; Matthew 16:21-28

September 6 - Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Sermon Title: "Good Judgment"
Scriptures: Psalm 119:33-40; Matthew 18:15-20

Matthew and Teresa Lee, Wycliffe Bible Translators

(A First Presbyterian Ministry)

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What does missionary life look like in isolation (Iso-mission) ?



We have been back in Cameroon for 7 months! In March, we were starting to get into a rhythm, but these past 4 months have not been what we imagined they would be when we arrived in January. However, God has been with us each day. We are constantly reminded of His presence, comfort, love, and grace. We continued to trust in our Lord that He has a plan. "May the Lord our God be with us, as He was with our fathers; may He not leave us or forsake us." 1 Kings 8:57

Missionaries expect to be isolated from friends and family back home, but this is new. Just like all around the world, COVID-19 changed the way we do our ministry. As the pandemic hit and the borders and airports were closed, our lives changed. We have been following and exceeding the guidelines imposed by Cameroon's government. Offices and schools were closed, and we have restricted outside contact to social distancing and limited direct contact to our nearest neighbors. In our case, we are isolating with the missionary families that live within our residential compound's walls. This "big family" puts a greater responsibility on all of us to be careful when we do have to leave the centers for groceries or urgent needs. Choosing isolation by residential centers, rather than by households, has mercifully allowed us to continue some "normal" face-to-face social activities with this smaller community such as worshiping together, playing games, and playing sports. (pictured: Teresa by fire, Matthew catching a Frisbee)



What has Teresa been doing?

When schools closed in March, Teresa's schedule changed quite a bit.

Her two students left shortly after to return to the United States with their families. She was given permission to go to the school and work in the library with a few other people.

At the beginning of June, Teresa's school, The Greenhouse, was able to celebrate the end of the school year with a school-wide Zoom meeting. The teachers and staff also created a video to celebrate each child by awarding them a character award. It was a good end to a very different school year. Even though Teresa does not know what next school year will look like, she is starting to think about and prepare for what it may look like. There is the possibility for her to have between 7 and 10 kindergarten students in the 2020–2021 school year.

Each Friday, our branch hosts a Zoom meeting called "Fridays Together" for everybody to connect. With it being online, we have people join who are living and working in other parts of Cameroon as well as around the world (Germany, the USA, Australia, Canada, England). It is a time to hear about what is going on in all the regions of Cameroon in Bible Translation as well as a time to pray together and praise God. We look forward to this encouraging time each week!

What has Matthew been up to?

Matthew was scheduled to travel in mid-March to Ireland to participate in a summit with representatives from a dozen Bible translations organizations to discuss common certification and growth plans for Translations Consultants. Borders in Europe as well as Cameroon began to close a week before the conference. If he had gotten out to Ireland, there is a possibility that he would still be away from Teresa months later (like a few other families that are still separated), so we thank God that I did not travel. In the end, a portion of the meetings were held online (on Zoom).



Most rewardingly, Matthew recently converted an entire New Testament for a language in the Central African Republic into Paratext format so that it can be used as a first draft for a translation team. It had been translated into a language without a New Testament by an enthusiastic individual working alone over the last few years in Microsoft Word! In a night's work with the bulk text-processing tools that language technologists use, I was able to convert, import, and verify the structure of all 27 books, a process that would have delayed the work for weeks or months if done manually.

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." – Joshua 1:9

We love and miss you all,

Matthew + Teresa



Presbytery 5 cents a meal – I thought you all might like a reminder, or perhaps new information. I looked up where the funds go when we give to the Presbytery program. 45% goes to grants in the local (Presbytery) area, 45% goes to the regional/international Presbytery areas, and 10% for administrative costs. Each year our local Good Samaritan applies for a grant, and does receive funds of \$1000 from the Presbytery. So, the funds we send in, do help out our local area as well as others. We are collecting on the third Sunday each month, but donations are accepted at other times as well. Please mark donations accordingly.

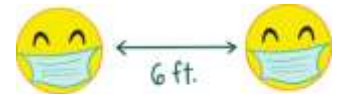
Prayer Requests - We want to make a new section in the newsletter where we share those names of people who need special and/or extra prayers. We will post these as we can in the bulletin and in the newsletter monthly. These names will automatically drop off after one month. If you know of someone who could use some extra prayers, please contact the church office.



Finances - We want to keep all informed of our current standing financially. Monthly we will post this information and updates.

The budget for 2020 is \$218,785. From January through June we should have collected: \$109,392.48 to stay on track for the budgeted expenses through June. The offerings received through June totaled: \$98,426.81, making a deficit of \$10,965.67. As we continue to search for the new pastor and enjoy the blessings of our Interim Pastor, Glenn, we want to be able to meet our financial obligations. Thanks to all who diligently send in their pledges and offerings.

Mask policy - On May 29, 2020 Virginia Governor Northam issued an executive order requiring face masks to be worn. The guidelines that pertain to us as a congregation are:



All patrons in Virginia age ten and older have to wear a face covering while entering, exiting, traveling through and spending time inside the following areas, according to a release from the governor:

*Any indoor space shared by groups of people who may congregate within six feet of one another or who are in close proximity to each other for more than ten minutes.



The guidelines also warn that children under the age of 2 and those who have health conditions that prevent wearing masks are excluded from the mask requirement.

Both myself and your Session are aware that there are those who do not feel comfortable wearing a mask for the duration of a worship service. We have no intention to force anyone to endure discomfort during a church service. Wearing a mask is recommended. However, if you cannot tolerate the mask, your brothers and sisters in Christ will understand if you remove it for a time. The commonly agreed wisdom is that masks may not prevent the wearer from inhaling the covid19 virus, but if the wearer is unknowingly infected, the mask may prevent the wearer from spreading the virus to others.

This information has helped me form a personal opinion about mask wearing. My wearing a mask is a minor discomfort for me, however, I would gladly undergo a minor discomfort in order to save another person from the ravages of this virus. For me it is a matter of loving my neighbor as myself. I believe that Christ would have me promote your well-being even at the cost of some personal discomfort.

Along with the Session of First Presbyterian Church of South Boston, I recommend the wearing of masks during our worship services for all those who can tolerate the masks. Those who cannot wear the mask for an hour, will not be judged or persecuted. Love of God and love of neighbor will prevail. With God's protection and grace, we will be able to continue to worship through the months ahead until an effective vaccine is found. ~ Rev. Glenn Coleman



Dismissal Policy – Please remain seated after service and allow the usher to come and dismiss you by rows. This will allow those closest to the door to leave first and increase the social distancing, so as to not pass by others in a row waiting to exit.

Remain Seated



Hear the Music

Recently I was reading about a story that came from the *Washington Post*, of a man dressed in jeans and a T-shirt who walked into a Washington D.C. subway station, then pulled out a violin from its case, and began to play. He put his soul into the performance, tones varying from strong pounding to soft sorrowful tones.

As he played, thousands of commuters passed by on their way to work, their minds occupied on their everyday trials and objectives. Some may have been wrestling with great problems, health issues, loss of loved ones, the list goes on and on. These people were like us in many ways.

But what these commuters didn't know was this musician was no ordinary street corner performer. He was one of the most accomplished violists, Joshua Bell. He was playing some of the most challenging and beautiful pieces ever composed and he was playing on a Stradivari violin, which he purchased for more than \$3 million. But, did the commuters notice him or his music?

The experience was an experiment set up by a *Washington Post* journalist, who was curious what would happen if a world class musician gave an anonymous, virtuoso performance in walkways of ordinary people. Only seven people stopped what they were doing to listen for a couple minutes. One man who walked past within four feet of Joshua, didn't even remember seeing or hearing him play. Many failed to see or hear the beauty right in front of them.

How similar are we? We can get caught up in our daily chores, worries, everyday grind of life. Can we, or do we take time to stop and listen to the voice of the Holy Ghost trying to send us the most beautiful messages from a loving Father in Heaven. His messages are available every hour of every day or night, but we need to take time to stop and listen "to the music" of the Spirit.

How do we recognize the voice of God? Do we confuse it with our own thoughts and feelings? I've mentioned in previous articles that I often would hear, but dismiss the thought thinking it was just me and my thoughts. But, the Lord will never leave us alone, and will always guide us if we will take time to listen and obey.

We can learn a lot about how to listen to the music by following the guidance given in scriptures:

"Trust in the Spirit which leadeth to do good"; or "He that receiveth light and continueth in God receiveth more light; and that light growth brighter and brighter until the perfect day". Many other examples can be found.

I pray I and we will be more in tune to the music to hear the Spirit's virtuoso performances in our lives.



~ *Sherolyn* (story from Gene Weingarten, "Pearls Before Breakfast: Can One of the Nation's Great Musicians Cut Through the Fog of a D.C. Rush Hour? Let's Find out," *Washington Post*, 8 April 2007)

PNC Update



On July 5th, the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) had an update meeting with our account executive, Jay Mitchell, from the Vanderbloemen search group. Jay shared the progress that has been made so far in the search process. To date they have registered a total of 593 website visits for our job posting. The search team has identified 8 candidates that may potentially be of interest. Additionally, they have reached out to another 59 candidates through their networking contacts. This list of potential candidates is being screened and vetted with the goal of presenting the PNC with a list of 3 to 5 "good fit" candidates for us to review at our next meeting in August. At that point we will begin to schedule initial video interviews with those that have been identified.

Please keep the PNC in your prayers as we continue the work that you have entrusted to us. Pray that Gods reveals to us the next Pastor that he has selected to lead us into the future.

Grace and peace,

Don Cherry, PNC Chairman



August 2020



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26 Worship - 10:30 am NO Sunday School or Nursery 6:00 pm NA	27 6:00 pm NA	28 12:00 PM NA	29 12:00 PM AA 6:00 pm NA	30 7:00 pm - Men of the Church	31 9:00 am Bulletins 12:00 PM AA 6:00 pm NA	August 1
2 Worship - 10:30 am NO Sunday School or Nursery 6:00 pm NA	3 6:00 pm NA	4 12:00 PM NA	5 12:00 PM AA 6:00 pm NA	6 7:00 pm - Men of the Church	7 9:00 am Bulletins 12:00 PM AA 6:00 pm NA	8
9 Worship - 10:30 am NO Sunday School or Nursery 6:00 pm NA	10 6:00 pm NA	11 12:00 PM NA	12 12:00 PM AA 6:00 pm NA	13 7:00 pm - Men of the Church	14 9:00 am Bulletins 12:00 PM AA 6:00 pm NA	15
16 Worship - 10:30 am NO Sunday School or Nursery 6:00 pm NA	17 6:00 pm NA	18 12:00 PM NA Deacons and Elders time- TBD	19 12:00 PM AA 6:00 pm NA	20 7:00 pm - Men of the Church	21 9:00 am Bulletins 12:00 PM AA 6:00 pm NA	22
23 Worship - 10:30 am NO Sunday School or Nursery 6:00 pm NA	24 6:00 pm NA	25 12:00 PM NA	Newsletter DEADLINE 12:00 PM AA 6:00 pm NA	27 7:00 pm - Men of the Church	28 9:00 am Bulletins and Newsletters 12:00 PM AA 6:00 pm NA	29
30 Worship - 10:30 am NO Sunday School or Nursery 6:00 pm NA	31 6:00 pm NA	September 1 12:00 PM NA	September 2 12:00 PM AA 6:00 pm NA	September 3 7:00 pm - Men of the Church	September 4 12:00 PM AA 6:00 pm NA	September 5

AUGUST Birthdays

- 2 Meredith Howell
- 4 Donnell Corelle
- 6 Joan Owens
- 7 Ann Crabtree
- 10 Jim Luedtke
- 11 Drew Morgan
- 14 Barbara Johnston
- 15 Lisa Howell
- 16 Zachary Raney
- 17 Wilma Henley*
- 19 Syla Hendley

- 20 Ronnie Crabtree
- 23 Wayne Roller
- 25 Dan Koutsos
- 29 Sally Slaff
- 29 Marge Nelson
- 30 Debbie Burton*
- 31 Polly Ratcliff*

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



* In Memory



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

1. - Reminding all to contact the church office to supply the flowers for worship.
2. - Two letters of membership transfers are being submitted for approval - Robin Hall and Cynthia B. Coleman
3. - There will now be a link on Facebook from our website with a link to sermons.
4. - Received an update from the PNC regarding new pastoral candidates.
5. - The Good Samaritan can use food donations.
6. - June Financials were approved.
7. - A report of offerings will be included in the newsletter each month.
8. - Session will move meeting dates to third Tuesday of each month.



August 18

Deacons - TBD

Elders time TBD-

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Here is your August 2020 Newsletter