

First Presbyterian's

Faith History



Faith History Project of First Presbyterian Church of South Boston, Virginia. One of the tasks of the Transitional Pastor is to encourage the congregation to think about their journey of faith in the context of the Church's history and discuss, celebrate, and express their impressions of their experience. Our Transitional Pastor Glenn Coleman has developed a way for us to approach this important process within the limitations of the pandemic precautions. At their August 23 meeting the Session endorsed the idea and encouraged Rev. Glenn Coleman to implement the following Faith History Project: September and October will be divided into four, two-week intervals. In each interval members of the congregation will be asked to respond to a simple question about their faith life here at FPCSB. Members will be asked to submit their answers by email if possible, but also through the most comfortable means available because we would like to encourage as much participation as possible from all age groups in the church. Handwritten responses can be transcribed, and Pastor Coleman would welcome the opportunity to listen and take notes of verbal responses from shut-in members as he could listen socially distanced on a porch or outside a window. At the conclusion of the project a special newsletter will be published sharing all of the responses for each interval. It is hoped that as the congregation reads those responses more discussion and celebration of the history of the church will take place.



~ Glenn Coleman



Finish the following statement:



My fondest memory related to First Presbyterian Church South Boston is ...

Stephen Ministry is the most powerful program. We have to work diligently to keep it alive. It has such a great capacity to help someone in a great time of need. I feel privileged to have been a part of it. Joy Gift programs done by our children (either the Nativity or a play). It's such a special part of the Holiday season.

Camp Hat Creek – a weekend of spiritual enrichment and fellowship for families of all ages. Devotions, Bible study, church services by the lake, bonfires, singing, games that built team unity, canoeing on the lake, long hikes in the woods, scavenger hunts, sharing meals together, high ropes for teenagers.

Inviting all new members to our home for a dinner with the elders and deacons. It was a great time of fellowship. We had questions at each table to get to know one another better. We did this each year while the church was growing. Most people joined because they felt like they had found a church home. One person that came to the dinner quite honestly didn't know what to expect. He came in, rather uncertain, and said when he left that he felt embraced by the warmth of the Christian fellowship and was delighted to feel connected to new friends in his congregation. He felt he had found his church family.



I feel that Confirmations are very important and for years would have a meal afterwards to celebrate these milestones with our young folks. We need to support them in every step of their spiritual journey.

Hayrides, dinner, bonfires, smores at Robert Guthrie's farm – The families loved this great fall outing.

Church dinners (in fellowship hall or at the picnic shelter). All experiences we shared together enrich our lives and being with fellow Christians encourages our personal spiritual walk. ~ Frances Harrell



My fondest memory is when Rev. Bass was here, and the sanctuary was full. Chairs were brought in to seat everyone.

Working in the nursery, and teaching kindergarten with Alma Pugh.

~ Leon and Betty

There is no way I could recall one fond memory since I have been a member of First Presbyterian since the mid-60s. I do, however, remember the kindness and support, as well as spiritual guidance, of many ladies. I can recall vividly the saddest memory as being the funeral of Carroll, my husband of 53 years.

~ Frances Anne Thackston



Finish the following statement: *My fondest memory related to First Presbyterian Church South Boston is . . .*



My fondest memory of First Presbyterian Church South Boston is Charlie Branch Lovelace with a close second of attending kindergarten with Isabel Edmondson and Madge Boozer Powell and my locker with my teddy bear sticker on the door.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Crabtree

My family has proudly been church members for multiple generations.

My grandmother, May Synder Tuck, made trips with my mother, Kathryn Luise Tuck Brann, from their home in Virgilina to attend Sunday worship. They would travel by horse drawn wagon! During this time, Dr. Columbus Wirt Maxwell served as our church's minister. Dr. Maxwell was pastor for 25 years, from 1908-1933.

My sister, Elizabeth Luise Brann Ramsey, and I became regular church goers before I was five years old. I remember the matching blue capes we wore one April Sunday morning when it was lightly snowing!

When my own children were young, I enjoyed directing Christmas pageants for our annual Joy Gift Programs. A favorite pageant of mine took place in 1961 and was called "The Pullers of the Star." It was based on a 1954 published story, written by fellow Presbyterian Mary Lou Lacy, of four little angels who were known as the Christmas Cherubs. Our young members performed and sang so sweetly. I also fondly recall the pageant in which my husband, Lewis D.



Johnston, along with church members Herbert Pregnall and Fred Wynn, had roles as the three wise men in the Christmas Eve Story.

All of my three grandchildren were baptized in the church, two of them together in 1988. In the early 2000's, my then twelve-year-old grandson played piano sections throughout the morning's service.



These are just a few memories of my wonderful years of growing up in our church.

~ Barbara Johnston



My fondest memories of First Presbyterian are our Christmas Eve services. My family would come in from other states. At the end of service all the church members would gather in a circle around the church, with their candle, singing "Silent Night". That moment and then waking up to Christmas morning made the holiday so special. There was so much joy and love for one another and the Lord. ~ Carole Woodward

It is difficult to come up with just one fond memory of my time as a member of First Presbyterian Church. I have been a member of this church for over thirty years and all of my children grew up here. I can remember people like Julia Baskervill who always had a smile and a kind word, Frank Godbold as Sunday Superintendent always meeting us at the door on Sunday morning and Mac Lacy always charming the ladies with his "chick magnet" tie. I am reminded of Kenneth Cranford and his musical talents enhancing our worship and Chris Jones who "stepped in" to help out many years ago. I am reminded of Alma Pugh and Betty Plaster rocking the babies in the nursery and the wonderful music presented by the choir and musicians. I remember the Cherry's and the Nelson's sitting in the front pews at church because we never knew what our kids would do during the Children's Sermon. Easter flowering of the cross, Summer Sunday School, mission trips, Rally Day, family retreats at Camp Hat Creek, "pig pickin", Fall hayrides, covered dish meals, Joy Gift programs, Christmas candlelight services just to mention a few. I fondly remember Dr. Meyers and Edith Hicks and their team for leading several Lay Renewals over the years. I remember



the children's and youth ministries, Presbykids and GOMPEY. Both of my sons, as well as other boys, chose to have their Eagle Scout awards presented at their home church, a proud moment for their parents. I will always cherish the time when our church participated in the Angel Food ministry. So many folks worked, served and witnessed to the love of Christ through that ministry. I was honored to have my son, Patrick, choose to take his vows of ordination at his home church. Through all of this, I would have to say that Russell Lee was integral to all of these memories and through his ministry

First Presbyterian Church of South Boston was and is a light on a hill in our community.
~ Don Cherry

My fondest memory of First Presbyterian Church South Boston would have to be the Children's (Presbykids) and Youth (GOMPEY) programs. I can remember the Fall Hayrides at the Guthrie farm, the annual Joy Gift pageant, Bible School, Rally Day and the weekly times of fun, crafts and games with the kids. GOMPEY (Group Of Methodist, Presbyterian and Episcopal Youth) was an exciting time of fun, fellowship and learning for our young folks. The lock-ins, pizza meals, concerts, Youth Sunday services and Bible studies helped to mold the minds of our young people.



~ Dargan Cherry



My fondest memories of 1st Presbyterian was in 2005 when Carol Foster spearheaded the first Beth Moore ladies community Bible studies. We had just retired and were living in the Clarksville area on the lake. The Bible study was advertised in the local paper and I decided immediately to be a part of it. I attended that study and several more afterwards, making special friends who remain my friends now many years later.

I was brought up in a Presbyterian church and Mike and I eventually decided to make 1st Presbyterian

our home church. ~ Doris Koch



I don't have one favorite memory but I can share a memory of the time when Susie and I moved to South Boston across the street from Russell and Marilyn Lee. It was in July of 2001.

I was in a bad way mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Russell must have sensed this somehow and took the time to listen to me and affirm me. Besides that, he also knew I wanted to get my woodworking business going in the area so he made connections with local people who came to me and gave me work.

I also was building a permanent structure for a workshop and office behind my house. Many times, Russell was there to help, especially with the roof sheathing and shingles. I'm thankful for the help of several members and new friends as well. Russell was

a big part in making those connections.

His support in so many ways was an encouragement I deeply appreciated. I attend First Presbyterian today because Russell pursued me which enabled me to become a part of the church family. I appreciate the friendships that have grown and become so meaningful as a result.

~ Jim Luedtke

My fondest memory related to First Presbyterian Church South Boston is the creation of church quilts a few years ago.

Each family was given an 8-inch square of white material and asked to imprint on it their personal connection to God and our church.

The result was unique, colorful, and meaningful. Squares were covered in various medium: ink, water color, pencil, embroidery, needlepoint, and they depicted our journey in faith together.

Included were family names, interests, occupations, Christian symbols, and verses from Scripture, lovingly inscribed.

The squares were sewn together with a backing to form 3 quilts, each holding 45 squares; then covered with plexiglass and mounted in wood frames.

They are on the walls in the Fellowship Hall, for all to see and enjoy.

I have enjoyed "visiting" the quilts from time to time and refreshing my happy memory of a shared history and journey in faith.

~ Tee Godbold





My greatest memory of the First Presbyterian Church was gathering with other teens in the fellowship hall. Members of this ecumenical group ranged in age from 13-17 years. Each Sunday evening, eight to fifteen youth representing the United Methodist Church, Trinity Episcopal Church, Centerville Christian Church and First Pres. assembled for dinner, fellowship and to discuss topics of interest to them. Facilitated by various youth leaders, including the late Johnny Atkinson from the Christian Church, we enjoyed debating such topics as:

- * What's the difference between being a good person and a good Christian?
- * Will they both go to heaven? Will good deeds count when entering heaven?
- * How bad is a little white lie? What are the consequences?
- * What is grace? How do you achieve it?
- * What are your three important goals in life? How are you preparing yourself to attain these goals?
- * Have you ever cheated on a test? Can you cheat and be a good Christian?
- * Should Christians (non-Christians) have intercourse before marriage if they really love each other?
- * Why do Baptists require total submersion of the body for baptism?
- * I was baptized at birth by a christening, a simple blessing of holy water on the head and given a Christian name. Am I saved?
- * Is war bad? Should Christians kill others during a war?
- * Will Muslims, Buddhists, Mormons, Hare Krishna's, members of cults and people of other religions and denominations go to heaven? Let's study the tenets.
- * Discuss polygamy and polyandry? Should they be legal? Are the practices Christian?
- * Discuss capital punishment.

I am still friends with several of the individuals who regularly attended this gathering. Amazing after 55 years, I can still remember some of the issues, conversations and arguments under consideration in the mid 1960's.

~ Robin Hall

My most memorable time at First Presbyterian occurred about 18 years ago during a small group meeting at a spiritual renewal event. The discussion was about works and how they affect your salvation. One group member said he had done many good things for the Church and community and thought this should help toward his Salvation. I suppose up until this point I had thought along the same lines. The group leader said that these good works that we do should be done because we love the Lord and want to do things that please him. But, we should not expect these works to get us to Heaven. He said the one and only way to Salvation is through accepting Jesus as our Lord and Savior and repenting of our sins. That meeting and the discussion was a turning point in my spiritual life. To that point I had described myself as a Christian, but I really do not think I understood completely what that meant. I now know that My Salvation is secure because of Jesus death on the cross and resurrection. I know because of that meeting that all I have to do is accept Jesus as my Lord and Savior and my Salvation is secure.

Carter Henderson





My fondest memory related to First Presbyterian Church South Boston is the legacy of fine music I have been able to be a part of.

Music enhances worship in many strong ways. Hymns and anthems teach scripture and God's messages to us. Instrumental music frames meditative prayer and praise. Music helps to connect our heart and soul to God in ways that the spoken or written word cannot. First Presbyterian has always had a commitment to a high-quality music component as an important part of its worship services.

My music experience at First Presbyterian began with Kenneth Cranford as choirmaster, organist, and resident composer. He taught us so much about good singing, and was passionate about the proper music for the occasion (there was that ongoing argument over whether we would sing Christmas carols during Advent!) What a unique opportunity we had many times over to premier a new composition that was written in memory or honor of a fellow church member – sometimes handwritten pages given to us barely in time for a few quick run-throughs before we offered them up. Two exquisite ones were *For the Beauty of the Earth* and *How Far To Bethlehem*.

The next fond memory was being a part of the McKinney Memorial Handbell Choir. The longest term director we had was Jacquelyn McAbee, and she brought the handbell choir up from its fledgling beginnings to become what I think was probably the most accomplished bell choir in town. We attended out of town workshops and weekend retreats, as well as the week long Montreat Music and Worship Conference. From these events and under Jacquelyn's leadership we learned new techniques and honed our skills, and presented some first-class music for worship. One very special time was the 10th anniversary of 9/11 remembrance in downtown South Boston, when we performed *Prayer for Peace*, a new work written especially for the occasion, accompanied by scenes from the day shown on a large screen behind us.



When Chris Jones became choir director, I secretly believe that every other church in the county was jealous of our having snagged the best music person in town. He brought us fresh new music and new composers, amazing piano accompaniments and meditative improvisations, and his position in the arts scene. As Artistic Director of the Prizery he has often used his connections to bring visiting artists to our sanctuary, and to bring our choir members (and others from the community) to the Prizery stage. Y'all, we sang backup for Sandi Patty!!!

The night before this writing, the choir gathered for the first time since the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic. Chris is trying to bring the music back to our worship services because the people in the pews are asking for it. This is evidence to me that not only do we choir people value the musical legacy of First Presbyterian, but the congregation does, too. It is that added dimension that moves worship from enriching and uplifting to soul-fulfilling. And it is my fondest memory of my time as a member here. ~ Kim Albert



My fondest memory related to First Presbyterian is: The Sunday my step-son (Wyatt Barczak) made his "profession of faith". This was a direct result of the influence and impact our Stevens Ministry had on his life and ultimate decision.

His profession was made, approximately, eleven months before his death in 2018. To know he is rejoicing in paradise, as a result, of his profession, brings a peace of mind to both his mother and me that is beyond description! ~ Bob Hughes

Finish the following statement: *First Presbyterian Church South Boston went through a difficult time when. . .*

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So far as 1st Pres. and a difficult time, and being relatively new members, I can't recall a difficult time. The closest to difficult would be Russell's retirement. We have been blessed, however, with the willingness of various members "stepping up" and taking on additional roles and responsibilities. Although we seek a new preacher, Pastor Glenn has - and is - doing a great job!! We are truly blessed to have his leadership! ~ Bob Hughes

First Presbyterian Church South Boston went through a difficult time when considering the purchase of the adjacent property and demolition of the house. Although I did not live here at the time, I was aware of the divisive nature of the project through reports from my family members and the local newspaper coverage. I certainly understand that Virginia is steeped in history. I grew up here in Halifax County, and my undergraduate degree is from the nation's second oldest university, the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg. Yes, I appreciate history, and the house was a beautiful example of colonial architecture. However from a distance, I certainly favored the progressive efforts of church members who supported the alternative usage of the property for the benefit of the young, families and seniors by:



Constructing a playground for children.

Building a ramada for gatherings.

Providing a parking area for those who need the handicapped ramp and who have other mobility issues.

Our beloved First Pres has a distinguishing history as an active downtown church. In order for our church to continue to be a viable entity in the community for years to come, we will need to appeal to a wide range of potential members, especially families with children. Offering incentives and activities for families and children as well as eliminating barriers to attendance are important to the growth of our church. ~ Robin Hall



I have a hard time writing of things that were difficult, however, I am confused and concerned about the decisions made by the Presbyterian Church-USA that indicate we no longer own our own church, our properties, etc. What does this mean? I was angered when I first heard about this --- and I still am.

~ Barbara B. Johnston



We had only been members of First Presbyterian a couple years when [omitted] was nominated to be an elder. His assignment was Property. The church had decided to purchase the infamous "North Property" and that was his first project.

At that time, we had a thriving membership. If you were not at church for the 11:00 am service a little early, you would have problems trying to find a seat. This purchase and the resulting issues surrounding it literally split our church. People left the church and a lot of them have never returned. There were heated arguments and hurt feelings.

Being new in the community, [we] had no emotional ties to this property. [omitted] tried to follow the decisions of the session and perform his appointed duties. Amazing to see the personal attacks and discord in the community, even from people who were not members of our church. I don't think we have ever recovered. It was almost like Satan used that division to get his foot in the door. The church has continued to lose membership and go downhill. That was a very sad unfortunate situation that probably should have never happened. ~ Name withheld

First Presbyterian Church South Boston went through a difficult time when. . . I Remember the time when we were discussing painting the sanctuary. At the time the sanctuary was painted all in white. The decision was made to bring in a consultant to make recommendations on color from the historical context. When the recommendations were shared with the congregation, a great controversy emerged between those who wanted to change the colors and those who wanted no change. I have to smile when I remember a response made by Les Dillard Jr., who at the time was the Clerk of the Session. He said, "Get a grip! It's only paint." The decision to accept the recommendation and paint the sanctuary was approved. I feel that the color scheme really brings out the colors in our beautiful stained-glass windows as well as accentuating the unique architectural features of the place where we worship together. Praise the Lord!



Blessings,
Don Cherry



“ _____ was the most influential person in my spiritual life during my membership at First Presbyterian of South Boston because.....”



The most influential people in my spiritual life during my membership at First Presbyterian Church of South Boston are: Connie Cox, Dr. Glass, and Freddie Collins.

Connie Cox was a wonderful teacher. She taught Sunday School for my children when they were young. They still talk about her classes, and how much they learned from her.

She started a Bible study class in her home, because she was a devoted Christian, and wanted to share her knowledge and study of the Bible. Those who came to her class were sincere in their desire to learn and study. Connie was very sincere in her devotion. She exemplified Christ and His teachings.

Dr. Glass was also an inspiration to me. I remember when he and his family moved here to South Boston to be our Pastor. Immediately, I felt a connection with him. He made others feel safe and I was drawn to him. He evoked such a good feeling and genuine kindness.

And last, but not least, is Freddie Collins. He is an inspiration to many. He has had such struggles through his life, and yet he is always cheerful and friendly. He has such a wonderful disposition and his strength is enduring. He has the best smile and courage as he smiles through pain. ~ Barbara Johnston

My mother, Joan A. Owens has been the most influential person in my spiritual life during my membership at First Presbyterian Church of South Boston because ... throughout my life she has always been the most Christ-like person I've known. She gently encouraged me to attend Sunday School, worship and Vacation Bible School. During this time, I learned basic Christian lessons, parables of the Bible and lyrics to the hymns. She made it possible for me to attend Catechism classes, and I took my first communion at age 12. As a teenager she respected my need to learn more about other religions and encouraged me to attend other church services. While I was in college, she was always pleased to hear I was studying at the local Presbyterian Church and worshipping at Bruton Parish Episcopal Church in Williamsburg. Her message during my adult life has been consistent:



“I don't always approve of what you've done, but God will forgive you and I love you no matter what. God has a purpose for your life. Feel His presence and follow Him.”

Throughout her life, Mom has modeled many Christ-like attributes and behaviors: serving others, helping the needy, adhering to a strict moral and ethical code, studying the Bible and living in moderation and within the means that God provides. She is kind, respectful, joyful, hopeful, faithful, merciful, prayerful, patient, righteous, honest, gracious, compassionate, charitable, obedient, giving, wise, humble, diligent and forgiving. But most of all she extends unconditional love to me, our family and those within she comes in contact. She is indeed a Child of God. Grateful for my mother, Robin Hall



The adult Sunday School class teachers were and are the most influential persons in my spiritual life during my membership at First Presbyterian Church of South Boston because each (and there were many) were well prepared, dedicated and knowledgeable of the subject matter. It was obvious that these teachers had spent many, many hours in preparation. Some were initially hesitant to teach and others were experienced but, God's spirit filled each to provide His word from the lips of one of us with special meaning and content. Their love of Christ and strong belief were evident. ~ Mike Koch



Once again it is difficult to name just one person who has influenced my spiritual life during my years as a member of First Presbyterian Church of South Boston. Quite a sizable list of people come to mind. I remember Frank Godbold, Sunday School Superintendent for over 30 years, greeting everyone at the door as they arrived each Sunday morning. He got a hand shake or “high five” from everyone at the door. I can still see Alma Pugh and Betty Plaster taking care of the babies in the nursery. The rocking chairs dedicated in their honor still are in use. I can picture

Kenneth Cranford dressed in his black robe and white cassock sharing his gift of music and worship with our congregation. I still tear up when his compositions are sung by the choir. I recall many of the children’s sermons that Ms. Linda Lumsden and others have shared over the years. For years we had to sit near the front of the church because we never knew what our kids would do or say. I can also remember the children’s sermons that Addison Marable shared with the kids. I fondly remember Red and Pat Guthrie welcoming the kids to their farm for Fall hayrides and bonfires. While the children and parents had a great time with the snacks and “smores”, no one enjoyed it more than the Guthrie’s.

We have a host of servants who over the years have given of themselves in so many capacities to teach, lead, worship and praise. Loretta Brown, Kim Albert, Jacquelyn McAbee, Marilyn Lee and many more gave tirelessly to our children, music, worship and outreach. We cannot forget the inspiring matriarchs who quietly provide advice, encouragement and prayer support to each of us in our daily walk. Grace Seat, Ginny Troy, Tee Godbold and Julia Baskervill, just to name a few, constantly reach out with a note, call or comment that shows the love of Christ at just the right time.

Some notable couples from the past come to mind, Buck and Jenny Wilkins, Les and Betty Dillard, Walter and Connie Cox, and Irvin and Peggy Fuller. These longtime members set the example for all of us younger families on how to live, love and serve. We also have those who can always bring a smile. Mac Lacy charming the ladies, Jack Brown and his jokes, Karen Henderson with her infectious enthusiasm and Shirley Blackmon with her child-like honesty.

Of course, Russell Lee holds a dear place in all of our hearts. In over 29 years as our pastor he led us in new directions, challenged us to dig deep into the Word and pushed us to reach outside our comfort zones.

And Jim Luedtke has shared his knowledge of scripture (and Martin Luther) with us for years as he lead, along with others, the adult Sunday School class. His memory of Bible verses and scripture references (as well as his woodworking skills) is truly astounding.

I know that this has been a long dissertation before getting to the question but my most influential person is not one individual but a group, the Men of the Church. Born out of a Promise Keepers Conference in 2006, the Men of the Church Bible study has been meeting on Thursday nights for many years. In that time, we have studied scripture, relevant topics,

discussed movies, tackled building projects and shared (in confidence) personal challenges. We have been there for each other providing support and encouragement in difficult times and celebrated our successes together. We have enjoyed pulling pranks on each other and bid a fond farewell to several of our brothers in Christ as they left us to be with the Lord. Through the laughter and the sad tears, we have walked together, lifted each other in prayer and grown in our faith.

...choose you this day whom you will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Joshua 24: 15 (KJV)

Blessings, ~ Don Cherry



Laurie Morris, Marilyn Lee, and Loretta Brown were the most influential people in my spiritual life during my membership at First Presbyterian of South Boston. We were not lifelong friends (though we are now), we didn't know each other all that well except for church activities, we didn't "run together in the same social circles." But we prayed together. Almost every week for nearly 20 years.



It started in response to a church-wide event or book study or something that I didn't even attend. But one of the suggestions was to find a prayer buddy. Laurie took a big step of faith (I think) and asked me if I would be her prayer buddy. I'm sure it was God who told me to agree to her request, because I was busy working and raising kids and I sure didn't need one more thing in my life. I gave the church Sunday mornings and choir practice, but the rest of the week was off limits. As soon as Marilyn and Loretta heard of what we planned to do they both asked if they could join us. And we became the Prayer Group.

We met together for about an hour one day each week, and we would share concerns and joys. We shared about our family members, church members, co-workers, strangers, our country, world events (we began meeting together just a few weeks before 9/11). Then we prayed, out loud, taking turns as we felt led, for each thing we had discussed.

Through our Prayer Group these ladies taught me humility, that it was OK to have things in my life that I was ashamed of, that no one is perfect, that we all fall short. I learned how to lean on God through their prayers for me. I learned how to empathize - you don't have to fix everything, you just have to listen, and care, and pray. They helped to open my eyes to the fact that God loves me no matter how much I feel unworthy. I learned about keeping a prayer journal, and we all saw the miracles as we looked back and realized how our prayers had been answered. We prayed each other through deaths, births, serious illnesses, weddings, wars, job troubles, and children. We prayed the church through the purchase of property, the definition of marriage, and new hymnals (the paint crisis predated our Prayer Group!)

Through the faith and the prayers of these women my own faith and prayers have matured into a deeply personal relationship with God. Witnessing them gain strength by turning over their worries to the rest of us for prayer helped me form a dependence on the One who will never forsake us.

Kim Albert



Russell Lee has probably been the most influential person in my spiritual life since joining First Pres., 12 years ago. Was previously Baptist. He married Joanna and I 16 yrs. ago. He was always patient and interested in our son Wyatt (deceased) and one of the key reasons he (Wyatt) made a profession of faith in time. ~ Bob Hughes

Jim Luedtke has been the most influential person in my spiritual life and growth during our time at First Pres. Jim knows and believes the scriptures and lives them. His adult Sunday School classes are the best I have ever had the privilege of being a part of.



~ Doris Koch

Finish the following statement: I remember a time when the members of First Presbyterian Church were very happy because ...



I remember when the people of First Presbyterian were happy because the sanctuary was full, the Sunday school classes were full, everyone was working in the same direction...and the sanctuary walls were neutral. □. Young Les Dillard calmed the stir of the blue and pink with "it's just paint". Life moved on.

~ Ann Crabtree.

By now I expect that you are tiring of my multiple responses but once again it is really difficult to list just one time when our church was happy. Over the years we have experienced many happy events. We have welcomed new lives into our fellowship through births (our family included), new members and new ministries. We have participated in many baptisms, confirmations and marriages. We have experienced the grace of the Lord as we have bid a fond farewell to our sisters and brothers in Christ who have gone to be with Him in victory. We have worshipped together, prayed together, wept together and shared in the many celebrations in the lives of the church. I personally have been honored to stand before the congregation to baptize my younger son, to walk my daughter down the aisle for her wedding, been there when both of my sons were presented their Eagle Scout awards and was able to lay hands on my older son when he chose to make his vows of ordination as a minister of the sacrament and word in his home church. God has truly blessed us in this church as we continue to reach out in Christian love to make disciples as Jesus has commanded.

But those who do right should be glad and should rejoice before God; they should be happy and glad. Psalm 68: 3 (NCV)

Grace and peace,
Don Cherry

I remember a time when the members of First Presbyterian Church were very happy because we had a lot of activities occurring for both adults and children.

~ Sandi Hughes



I remember a time when the members of First Presbyterian Church were very happy because we had a lot of children and an active youth group and a youth bell choir.

~ Sterling Roberts

I remember a time when the members of First Presbyterian Church were very happy because we had multiple Sunday school classes and our church was nearly full for the 11AM worship service. Wednesday night we had covered dish dinners attended by 75-100 persons followed by bible study, youth activities and choir. The Men's Group had ten or more participants and the ladies bible studies brought ladies from many, many other churches. We conducted the Angel Food ministry program, supported large numbers of boy and girl scouts and fielded very large work forces to provide mission work in LA, KY, TN and WV.

~ Mike Koch



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I hope that you have enjoyed the process of recalling your faith history at First Presbyterian. One of my tasks as a transitional minister is to help the church come to terms with their history, celebrate what was good and learn any lessons to be gleaned from the experience. During this time of transition, as the church prepares to begin a new era with a new installed pastor it is important to review and refresh our memories of the past. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve a church with such a rich history of faith and service to Jesus Christ.

So, what have we learned? And how shall we apply that knowledge to bless the future? Reading the descriptions of all the positive memories has impressed me with the beauty and quality of your experiences in the church. I will share some of my insights:

- I read between the lines that in the recent past there were a lot of people who gave unselfishly of their time, money, and talents to enrich worship, fellowship, and service activities. There is a lot of love shown for this church and its membership.
- Russell Lee is revered as a pastor whose ministry contributed mightily toward making First Presbyterian Church of South Boston “a light on a hill in our community.”
- There are notable times of conflict in the history of the church such as the painting of the sanctuary, the purchase and demolition of the north property, and others. However, people have expressed a desire to forgive and move past any hurt feelings in order to work together for the good of the church. That process continues.
- Twenty two church members have participated in this history project. That number is approximately twelve and a half percent of our membership. The percentage suggests a lack of engagement and participation by many church members. Whether that low level of participation is the fault of the Covid19 shutdown, or the result of other issues will require further investigation.

The next step in our transitional journey together will ask us to take what we know of the history of this church and begin to form a vision of overall character and identity. The “light on a hill” is one identity factor that has emerged in this document. Another is the love and self-giving of people for the blessing of the church. With that sentiment is the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation that is at work here. These three strong characteristics, coupled with a vision for the future, could coalesce into a renewed sense of purpose and mission. That, in turn, could increase the engagement and participation of members, as well as people outside of the church.

Your servant In the Love of Christ,

Glenn Coleman

