

First Presbyterian News

Glenn Mark Coleman - Interim Pastor
Sherolyn Barnett, Office Manager
secretary@1stpres.cc
Chris Jones, Choir Director
Ernest "Avon" Traynham—Sexton
Sue Wilkins - Treasurer



Facebook:
www.facebook.com/firstpressobo
Website: 1stpres.cc

Office Hours
M-F 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
434-572-3581



First Pres. Family,

I want to take the attitude of the Apostle Paul as we enter into the new year of 2021. Paul was an encourager of churches. I want to encourage everyone who is associated with The First Presbyterian Church of South Boston. I came to this church five months ago. The Session had just reinstated in-person worship. Though the numbers of Covid19 cases in Halifax were relatively low back then, there was some trepidation about the safety of that decision. But God has been faithful, we have followed all of the recommendations for safety and have been able to continue and even add Sunday School and choir. The church continues full ministries in the community and supports our missionaries overseas. We were so blessed on December 20 with the participation of our youth in a wonderful Christmas program. Our experience has shown that combating a virus is beyond our capability alone, and we need each other to follow safety protocols and depend upon our God who is faithful and vigilant in our care. This is an encouragement from our Lord and Savior this season.

We have been blessed as a church and as individuals. I consider myself blessed to have been called to South Boston. I have felt welcomed and appreciated. You have supported me and encouraged me with your friendship and good will. Most recently your gifts and cards have been a blessing to both Cynthia and me this holiday season. Thank you! My prayers are lifted daily for your health and prosperity both physically and spiritually. I hope you will pray with me for our church members, particularly those who are vulnerable by age or illness. Pray for the ministry of our church and the Church of Christ worldwide. Pray for your church leaders and for the work of the Pastor Nominating Committee. Let us make 2021 a year of prayer and powerful answers from God, who continues to encourage us daily.



We can't know what kinds of challenges might arise during this new year, but we know that if we stand together as the Body of Christ, God will be faithful and will bless us beyond measure. Encourage one another, lend a hand to any who falter, keep the faith, grow in grace, and watch for the hand of God to pour out blessing after blessing in the new year.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

~ Glenn Coleman, Interim Pastor



January 3 - Second Sunday after Christmas
Sermon Title: "Full of Grace and Truth"
Scriptures: Jeremiah 31:7-14; John 1:1-18

January 10 - Baptism of the Lord
Sermon Title: "Let There Be..."
Scriptures: Genesis 1:1-5; Mark 1:4-11

January 17 - Second Sunday after Epiphany
Sermon Title: "God's Call"
Scriptures: 1 Samuel 3:1-20; John 1:43-51

January 24 - Third Sunday after Epiphany
Sermon Title: "People Don't Change — Do They?"
Scriptures: Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Mark 1:14-20

January 31 - Fourth Sunday after Epiphany
Sermon Title: "What Do You Want with us, Jesus?"
Scriptures: Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Mark 1:21-28

February 7- Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
Sermon Title: "The Healing Touch"
Scriptures: Isaiah 40:21-31; Mark 1:29-39



Paul and Reinhild Sydnor

(A First Presbyterian Ministry)

Fire at Night - A recent article in the regional newspaper reported that there are over 50,000 requests for subsidized apartments in Lille. The shortage of housing affects the asylum seekers as well. Many of those we work with sleep on a friend's floor or live outside in their own shelters.

One morning, last week an asylum seeker phoned to say that there was a fire that night in the makeshift camp of about forty asylum seekers

where I have been bringing assistance.

I immediately went to see the situation and survey the need. Four huts had caught fire and were destroyed –most likely due to fires for heating. Eight people had lost everything including their phones, clothes and documents. One man showed me his scorched hair and the wound on his head. He had been woken by the fire and escaped just in time. (See the two photos to right.)



I returned that night with eight heavy blankets. The camp is in the unlighted area behind me in the photo. Several groups of asylum seekers huddled around their small campfires. I did my best to find those affected and left several of the blankets with their neighbors.

As I spoke with different people, one man walked up to me and said, **"No one can separate me from the one who created me."** He repeated it in broken English as if to make sure I understood. I assured him I did.

That fire at night was surely another story in his long journey of displacement. It reminded me again that a person who is displaced by force has lost everything except for their story. The man's statement reminds me that these stories and events are like a refining fire for the image of God in their life.

The stories and events that forcibly displaced people go through are often traumatic. They are ground zero for finding or strengthening the connection back to God.



Trauma Healing Group - This past month, I joined with another mission worker in the area to lead a small group of asylum seekers in a trauma healing group. Two of those in our group were in the camp that night when the fire broke out.

Traumatic events like these often get pushed down or minimized in the face of what appear to be greater needs such as finding shelter, documents and jobs. The photo shows our group meeting for the last time [during] week [of

Dec. 18].

I thank God for these initial steps and I pray that ones in our group might invite their friends and help to lead another group.

Future Ministry- The photo on the right shows a team of volunteers and residents working with us to deliver food in the camp two weeks ago.

Tomorrow we are helping a small church to deliver gifts in the camp.

As the new year begins, please pray with us to find housing solutions for asylum seekers and for the ongoing ministry efforts.

We thank God for keeping us and this work safe in the past year.

We thank you for your prayers and support that have covered us and met all our needs.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!!

~ Paul & Reinhild





Ladies Circle meets again on Tuesday, January 5 at 10:30 am in the Philathea Room. Bob Hughes will be our guest speaker. We appreciate his gracious willingness to come join our meeting and be our speaker. Come join us in fellowship.

Flower Calendar - A new flower calendar is up for the coming 2021 year. Call or visit the church office door to request your favorite dates for providing flowers in the Sanctuary. Very few days have been reserved.



Sanctuary Flowers



Finances - The Year to Date Offerings Versus Budget report was presented showing that offerings through November 2020, totaled \$175,751.59. When compared to the amount needed to keep pace with the budget, \$200,552.88 the church is currently \$24,801.29 behind schedule. The monthly offering for November was \$22,974. Thanks for all that help support the church.

Upper Rooms - New Upper Rooms for the January/February 2021 issue are now available. If you would like one mailed, please call the office, otherwise they are available at entrances.



Congratulations to our new officers – for the class of 2023: Elders: Kim Albert, Rick Harrell, Ted VanBenschoten. Deacons: Pat Hay, Kit Hooper, and Paul Edmunds. A new Deacon to fill an empty spot for class 2021 – Joann Newland. A warm “Thank You” goes out to our Deacons and Elders who have been serving us over the past years. Those coming off Session this year: Elders: Don Cherry, Sandi Hughes, and Linda Lumsden. Deacons: Kelly Chappell, Diane Greene, Sue Wilkins, and Terri Smith. Our new Trustee of 2023 is: Mac Lacy, WW Glass Trustee: Teresa McCollum.

Officer Installation and Training - There will be officer training Saturday, January 16 at church from 9 am to 12 noon. Officer Installation will follow the next Sunday, January 17 after worship service. May God bless them, all the other officers, you, and all of us in the new year as we seek to remain faithful to him, and to serve him with power and joy.



New Worship Time - The Session has approved the return to 11 O'clock worship time beginning January 3. Sunday School for all will begin at 10:00 am.

Church Website - Please visit our website which is maintained by Don Cherry. The site is being updated consistently and is very informative. Pictures are changed frequently, sermons are posted. Find out the latest by visiting the site often. Go to 1stpres.cc.

Newsletters - Come see the church website at www.1stpres.cc/newsletters/ to see the monthly newsletters. Share this information with friends and family so they can enjoy and read the First Presbyterian happenings.



TOGETHER IN Spirit STAYING CONNECTED



Prayer List - Kim Albert– having cataract surgery; Rowena and Don Smith– had COVID, recovering; Carter Henderson - had a heart attack, recovering and now home; Susan Campbell, Dargan Cherry's sister, health issues; Julia Baskervill passed December 4, prayers for her family. We continue to pray for continued health and healing for: Freddie Collins, Donnell Corelle, Joe Ferguson.



Perspective

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I was listening to a story a woman was telling about her little boy. He had grabbed the can of Hershey's cocoa out of the cupboard and was excitedly opening it. With a huge smile on his face, he put a spoonful of the powder in his mouth. A look of confusion was the next expression. He turned the container around to check to see if it was chocolate then attempted to swallow the mouthful of powder. He was disappointed. He had anticipated a wonderful mouthful of a yummy morsel. He didn't realize that the taste he was expecting begins with a bitter powder, only after sugar is added does the confection become the delicious taste, he was hoping to enjoy.

This story makes me think about how life is full of misperceptions. Especially as the new year approaches, I can get excited to make new resolutions. To aim to improve myself with new and better habits. But often I find I have made too many new goals. I read of a person who said it this way, "I get so excited about the New Year and New Year's resolutions that I pile goals on as I would pile food onto my plate in an all-you-can-eat buffet. Just as that approach to dinner leads to pressure on my stomach, this approach to goal setting leads to pressure on my spirit. If I pile my aspirations too high, eventually they will topple."

Yes, we are commanded to "be perfect" throughout the scriptures. But we cannot do it in one day, one month or year. Becoming perfect is a lifelong process. I know I can get overanxious to change, to be closer to Christ, to be a better person. We can "let [our] heart ... be perfect with the Lord" (1 Kings 8:61) as we strive each day to be better, gradually.

Luckily, the Lord does not expect us to be perfect today. What He cares about is our daily progress and where we are at the end of our lives compared to where we were at the beginning. We may all stumble and fall, perhaps our lives are a bit like a roller-coaster, I know mine has been. But if we end on a high note, we will be ok. My goal is to remember to "continue in patience until ye are perfected". If we will "Love God with all [our] might, mind and strength, then ... *by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ.*" May we not be disappointed with life as it frequently appears to be like the chocolate powder, but with Christ's help to add the sugar we can find the sweetness in life even through all the bitterness around. With His help we can see with the proper perspective.



~ Sherolyn



PNC Update - The Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) continues to work with the Vanderbloemen Group in the search for our next pastor. In our most recent communication with our Account Executive, we were told that they will have several candidates to present to the PNC for consideration. To date between our committee and Vanderbloemen we have reviewed well over 300 Personal Information Forms (PIF's) and resumes of pastors actively seeking a new call. We continue to be assured the God has already selected the person who will serve as our next pastor and pray that He will reveal His choice to us soon.

In this season as we celebrate the birth of the Christ child, so long ago in the small town of Bethlehem, we thank God for this precious gift of a savior who will reconcile us through his death on the cross and pay for all our sins. Through His grace we are offered the gift of eternal life.

While this has been a difficult year, one that we hope to not experience again, we should focus on our blessings and celebrate the greatest gift ever given. We wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

The PNC asks for your continued prayers as we perform the work that you have entrusted to us.

Grace and peace,

Don Cherry, PNC Chairman



January 2021



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27 9:30 adult Sun Sch 10:00 youth Sun School 10:30 am Worship 6:00 pm NA	28 6:00 pm NA	29 12:00 PM NA	30 12:00 PM AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	31 Happy New Year!	January 1 Office Closed	January 2
3 - NEW WORSHIP TIME 10:00 - Sunday School 11:00 am—Worship	4 6:00 pm NA	5 10:30 am Ladies Circle 12:00 PM NA	6 12:00 PM AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	7 7:00 pm - Men of the Church	8 9:00 am Bulletins 12:00 PM AA 7:00 pm NA	9
10 10:00 - Sunday School 11:00 am—Worship	11 6:00 pm NA	12 12:00 PM NA	13 12:00 PM AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	14 7:00 pm - Men of the Church	15 9:00 am Bulletins 12:00 PM AA 7:00 pm NA	16 9 - 12 noon New Officer Training
17 10:00 - Sunday School 11:00 am—Worship 12 noon - Installation of Officers	18 6:00 pm NA	19 12:00 PM NA 5:30 Deacons 6:00 pm Elders	20 12:00 PM AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	21 7:00 pm - Men of the Church	22 9:00 am Bulletins 12:00 PM AA 7:00 pm NA NewsLetter DEADLINE	23
24 10:00 - Sunday School 11:00 am—Worship	25 6:00 pm NA	26 12:00 PM NA	27 12:00 PM AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	28 7:00 pm - Men of the Church	29 9:00 am Bulletins 12:00 PM AA 7:00 pm NA	30
31 10:00 - Sunday School 11:00 am—Worship	February 1 6:00 pm NA	February 2 12:00 noon NA	February 3 12 noon AA	February 4 7:00 pm - Men of the Church	February 5 9:00 am Bulletins 12:00 PM AA 7:00 pm NA	February 6

- 1 Richard "Rick" Harrell IV
- 1 Dabney Gilliam
- 1 Clarice Crews
- 3 Ruth Jean Slayton
- 4 John Cranford
- 7 Cynthia Coleman
- 7 Kay Lewis
- 7 Donna Mistal
- 8 Allen Morris
- 10 Leon Plaster
- 10 Joshua Roberts
- 14 Paige Powell
- 14 Colby Cranford
- 14 Emily Seat
- 15 Karen Henderson



- 17 Patricia "Tricia" Burton
- 19 Eric Nelson
- 19 Art Carter
- 21 Peggy Fuller
- 25 Linda Lumsden
- 31 Jenny Wilkins*

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



* In Memory



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

1. A Joint Session with both Deacons and Elders was held on Tuesday, December 15.
2. Discussions were held regarding reverting back to the original time for both Sunday School and Worship Services and when to lock the front doors. The Session approved as stated with Sunday School beginning at 10:00 am and Worship Service at 11:00 am beginning January 3rd.
3. Shepherding groups will be reassigned to accommodate the Elders/Deacons rotating on to fulfill slots of those rotating off.
4. A Special Musical Christmas will be held Sunday, December 20th during the 10:30 Worship Service. Christmas Eve Service will be held on December 24th at 5:30 PM.
5. Due to COVID, window replacements will not occur before January. There has been a water faucet installed outside of the building of the columbarium. Good's Gutters has been contracted to clean the Church, picnic shelter and manse gutters. The Hot Water Pump in the boiler room that provides hot water to the Fellowship Hall and Sanctuary has a leak and will be repaired at the end of the heating season.
6. David and Rachel Carter will be residing in Greensboro for several months until their next assignment. They will be headquartered out of Spain in order to have access to a better school system for their children.
7. The Nursery Worker position has been eliminated due to the fact that we do not have small children attending at this time. We are asking volunteers to fulfill this position if the need should arise.



Upcoming :

Ladies Circle - Tuesday, January 5 at 10:30 am

Choir - Each Wednesday at 6 pm.

Deacons - Tuesday, January 19 at 5:30 pm.

Session - Tuesday, January 19 at 6:00 pm

First Presbyterian Church
800 North Main Street
South Boston, VA 24592

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