

First Presbyterian News

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First Pres. family,

(The following is adapted from a sermon given by Jon Heeringa, senior pastor at First Presbyterian Church, Harrisonburg, VA. This was originally shared with me as an encouragement for my health issues, but it seems to also be quite fitting for the temporary setbacks our church is experiencing due to the lengthy search for a new pastor and a slow recovery from the changes brought about by the Covid pandemic – Kim Albert.)

Pure Joy

James 1:2-4; 12

² Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.



¹² Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

The thing we must remember about suffering, trials, temptations, is that they don't come from God. God allows suffering because He can do good with it. If there is a scalpel in the hands of a child then there can be trouble. If it's in the hands of a surgeon great good can be accomplished. Suffering in our hands can capture us and can lead us to death. But that same suffering in God's hands can lead us to perseverance, and to maturity, so that we lack nothing, so that we are fit to receive a crown of life.

Metal becomes tempered resilient steel through a hard process of stress and rest. If you temper a piece of metal it becomes stronger. To become a tempered Christian God is going to allow you to go through a process of stress, of trial, of temptation and then He's going to let you have periods of rest. The end result is Christians who are tempered – they can flex but they are not soft, they hold on to their faith. You become somebody who can persevere. You gain the ability to hold on when things are hard.

God might use one trial to make us more patient, he might use a different one to make us more compassionate, he might use yet a different one to make us more self-controlled. But it's this process that makes us steadily more complete until we're ready to receive a crown of life and spend eternity with God. And that's why we should count suffering as pure joy. Not because of the suffering itself, but because of what God's doing with it.



Think of accounting – there are essentially two categories – you have a credit and a debit, an asset and a liability, a pro and a con, an addition and a subtraction. Consider your suffering and very intentionally move it from the liability line and put it in the asset line. Decide to move it over into a new category and way of thinking about things. It's an investment with God and it's paying dividends. Then you start to see that what God is doing in the midst of your trouble is He is working in it to develop your perseverance and to make you more mature and Christ-like.

Everything we go through, knowing God is with us, should be considered pure joy! *Kim Albert*

Women's Bible Study - We are studying the book of Hebrews. We meet each Wednesday at 10:30 am in the Philathea Room. Come join us.





February 5 - 5th Sunday after Epiphany 2

Sermon Title: "Salt and Light in 2023"

Scriptures: Isaiah 58:1-12; Matthew 5:13-20

February 12 - 6th Sunday after Epiphany

Sermon Title: "Thou Shalt ..."

Scriptures: Psalm 119: 1-8; Matthew 5:21-37

February 19 - Transfiguration of the Lord

Sermon Title: "A Glimpse of Things to Come"

Scriptures: Psalm 2; Matthew 17: 1-9

February 26 - 1st Sunday of Lent

Sermon Title: "A Lenten Contradiction"

Scriptures: Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7;

Romans 15:12-19

March 5 - 2nd Sunday of Lent

Sermon Title: "He Came In Darkness"

Scriptures: Psalm 121; John 3:1-17

Prayer List - Joan Owens passed away January 25. Prayers for her family. Lisa Howell; Judy Stotlar's husband, Richard, fell and broke his hip, he is doing better and receiving therapy. Rick Armstrong, Sterling Roberts' uncle, passed; Eddie Powell; Mark Foster was referred to Wake Forest for speech consult. Mike Rand doing well after heart surgery. Frances Ann Thackston in and out of hospital, moved back to South Boston; Robert Bates doing well after kidney transplant. Pat Hay's great grandchild born healthy. Cynthia Coleman's sister, had COVID and has thyroid issues. Susan Wilkinson - health concerns, but received good report from doctor. Those affected by severe winter weather.



Renovations to Manse - In the past several weeks, you may have noticed construction activity taking place at our manse after more than a year since an electrical related fire and resulting smoke damage. The entire house received substantial damage even though the fire was confined to a relatively small area. In order to put the house back into the original condition, much of the inside needs to be destroyed and rebuilt. Now that our insurance company has finally offered sufficient funds to accomplish this task, your Session has agreed to

hire Christian Roberts, Rob Land Development & Construction, to complete the demolition and construction.

While Mr. Roberts does not have an exact completion date, he commenced activity almost immediately after we came to an agreement, and he expects to finish within a few months. We all can look forward to having the manse back into usable condition.

Lenten Luncheons - We, at First Pres are again hosting Lenten Luncheons each Wednesday from Ash Wednesday through Easter. Mark your calendar and plan to attend these devotionals. Bring your bagged lunch, drinks and dessert will be provided. Devotionals will be given by a variety of local pastors, here is the schedule:
Wednesday, February 22 - Rev. Susan Grimm from Trinity Episcopal - also providing ashes to any who wish to receive.

Wednesday, March 1 - Rev. Bill Wilkins from Mt. Vernon Baptist Church

Wednesday, March 8 - Youth Pastor - Hunter Boyle from Hope Church

Wednesday, March 15 - Rev. Susan Davis from First Baptist Church

Wednesday, March 22 - Rev. Thad Decker from Main Street Methodist Church

Wednesday, March 29 - Pastor Dave Webb from Church of God of South Boston

Wednesday, April 5 - Chaplain Laurie Fox, Sentara Hospice





Spotlight on Missions/Outreach – 5 Cents-a-Meal

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This program invites every member of our congregation to prayerfully contribute a few cents at each meal to help alleviate hunger and poverty. Ideally, contributions come from “living more simply so that others may simply live.” Participation is also a commitment to share with others in response to Jesus’ command, “You give them something to eat.”

In 2022, our First Pres Folks contributed \$900.40 to this program. 45% of the offering is awarded to local organizations and agencies, and 45% supports regional, national, and international programs. The remaining 10% goes to administrative costs.

Most PC(USA) presbyteries participate in 2 Cents-a-Meal. Some years back our church challenged its members to go above and beyond, so we now call our program 5 Cents-a-Meal. If you are a typical person who eats 3 meals/day, this would add up to 15¢/day, \$1.05/week, or \$4.20/month. How easy it could be to place \$5 in that little bucket once a month on each 3rd Sunday when the offering is received, or \$10 for a couple, or \$20 for a family of 4! If you miss “bucket” day, you can always put your offering in a pew envelope on any Sunday and designate it for 5 Cents-a-Meal.

Add the 5 Cents-a-Meal to your New Year’s Resolutions and help us do our part to alleviate hunger! ~ Kim Albert

Souper Bowl of Caring - In 1990, a simple prayer, "Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat," was delivered to a small youth group at Spring Valley Presbyterian Church in Columbia, SC.

This gave birth to an idea that has grown into the nationwide program Souper Bowl of Caring.

The basic premise is, "What if every person watching the football game donated \$1 or 1 can of food to help stop hunger?" It is estimated that the 2022 Super Bowl was watched by over 208 million people!!

In 2022 there were 4,355 participating organizations and 2,655 charities were helped by donations of more than \$3,500,000. And this is just those who registered and reported through the web site. All donations are intended to stay local. No money is sent to the national organization; we simply report our total dollars raised, cans collected, and the agency we donated to.



First Presbyterian will once again participate in the Souper Bowl of Caring. We will be promoting donations on two Sundays, Feb. 5 and 12. Bring your dollars for the soup pots and/or your cans for the soup tower by Super Bowl Sunday (the 12th). A record of your giving will be kept if you use a pew envelope and mark it Souper Bowl. You can also make donations through the church office either in person or by mail. Our donations will go to the Good Samaritan.

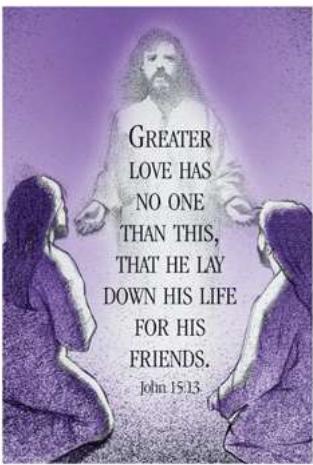
(Other items besides soup which are always needed are diapers, canned or dried beans, canned meats (besides tuna), powdered milk, and small boxes of cereal.)



Mardi Gras Celebration - Sunday, February 12 at 12 noon, there will be a covered dish to celebrate Mardi Gras. Mardi Gras refers to a carnival celebration, beginning on or after the Christian feasts of the Epiphany and culminating the day before Ash Wednesday, which is known as Shrove Tuesday. Come celebrate and prepare for Lent with us.

Greeting Card Ministry - We are having such a great time creating new and beautiful cards to send out to our fellow church family and friends. If you have not had a chance to come out, please do. Our next meeting will be February 7, 2023. We will not meet on the first Tuesday, due to its proximity to the holidays. Come join us! No talent is required.





No Greater Love

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I heard an interesting analogy from a religious teacher. He would ask his students how much money it would take for them to give up their ability to walk, talk, and think. These abilities would eventually return through the slow progress of relearning. He said most wouldn't accept any amount of money; the few that would accept would want significant amounts, millions or more. Then he had his class think about what Christ did for each of us. He, being God, Creator of the world, was willing to give it all up to come down from heaven as a baby, who would then need to "relearn" how to walk, talk, learn, and grow.

Two scriptures that describe this are: 1) Luke 2:52 "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." And 2) 2 Corinthians 8:9 "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor so that you by his poverty might become rich." We see that he had to relearn and gain wisdom. He who knew all, created all, was willing to give it up for us, to be our exemplar, and most importantly to suffer all things for us, so that we might be able to return home to Him.

How great His example of love for us! He was willing to give up everything in order to come down and begin life with nothing, as each of us, relying on parents to teach and raise us. Because of this great love and sacrifice, He has compassion and understanding for all we go through, because He too, went through it. There is nothing that can happen to us that He has not experienced.

How many of us have been humiliated, embarrassed, or felt that we could not go on? Yet, the Lord, Jesus Christ was humiliated more than any of us can even imagine. He had his clothes torn off of him, He was spit upon, He was beaten and mocked. Friends turned away. "And he suffereth it" that we might not have to suffer, but have eternal life. What great love! ~ *Sherolyn*

PNC Update - I have been involved in Scouting for most of my life, including over thirty years as a volunteer adult leader. The other night at Cub Scouts we talked about the Outdoor Code and Leave no Trace. This is where we endeavor to be good stewards of our natural resources and do our best to leave the outdoors undisturbed. We pack out everything that we bring with us (including trash) and take extra care to ensure that we leave as little impact as possible and let others enjoy the unspoiled outdoors. But you all know that no matter how hard we try, we do leave a trace - a footprint, some matted down grass, a broken twig.



When hiking and camping, we concentrate on the 'physical' traces we leave behind. But, every day, we are leaving a trace of our passing. Everywhere you go, everyone you meet, and everything you do leaves a trace that you were here.

You may only interact with a stranger for a couple seconds or with your friends for a couple hours, but no matter how long it is, you leave a trace of your passing all the time. It's up to you to leave a trace that makes the world a better or worse place.

You may not think a cheerful 'Hello' to a passer-by, or a courteous 'Thank You' to someone that serves you, or a helpful holding the door open for a stranger, or a friendly smile to a small child in the mall really makes any difference - but it does!

So, no matter what you do, you WILL Leave a Trace. Do your best to make it a Good Trace.

This month your PNC continues to work to work with Vanderbloemen to identify and vet potential candidates for our pastor. We know that God has already chosen our next pastor and that He will reveal them to us in His time.

Please continue to lift us up in prayer as we continue the search for our next pastor.

Grace and peace,

Don Cherry, PNC Chairman



February

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29 10:00 - Sunday School 11:00 am—Worship	30	31	February 1 12:00 Noon AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	February 2 7:00 pm - Al-Anon 8:00 pm - AA	February 3 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	February 4
5 10:00 - Sunday School 11:00 am—Worship Officer Instillation	6	7 10:30 am Greeting Card Ministry	8 10:30 am Women's Bible study 12:00 Noon AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	9 7:00 pm—Al-Anon 8:00 pm - AA	10 -Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	11
12- 10:00 - Sunday School 11:00 am Worship	13	14 	15 10:30 am Women's Bible study 12:00 Noon AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	16 7:00 pm—Al-Anon 8:00 pm - AA	17 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	18 AA 1-3
19 - 5 Cents a Meal collection 10:00 - Sunday School 11:00 am Worship 12:30 pm - Combined Session/Deacons	20	21 Newsletter DEADLINE	22 - Ash Wednesday 12:00 Lenten Luncheons begin 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	23 7:00 pm—Al-Anon 8:00 pm - AA	24 - Office Closed	25
26 10:00 - Sunday School 11:00 am—Worship	27	28	March 1 12:00 Lenten Luncheons 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	March 2 7:00 pm - Al-Anon 8:00 pm - AA	March 3 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	March 4

1 Ann Ferguson
 6 Anne Butler
 6 Bob Seat
 9 John Hall Greenbacker
 10 Abbey Bales
 13 Connie Crews Holder
 14 Kitty Lawson*
 15 Diane Newberry
 16 Kylie Berry
 18 Amanda Albert Bennett
 18 Deborah Sizemore
 19 Ashley Slaff
 21 Sue Wilkins
 22 Robert Carter
 23 Charles Ware*

* In Memory



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

23 Teresa McCollum
 24 Skyler Smith
 24 Melissa Fraser
 25 Ann Egloff
 28 Dargan Cherry
 28 Madeline Fraser Freshour
 29 Bob Egloff

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



Celebrating You
On Your
Special Day

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

The Session met on Sunday, January 15, 2023

1. Rev. Coleman opened the meeting with prayer.
2. Joint Officer Training for Elders and Deacons was conducted
3. Joint group discussed development of a Church Annual Calendar
4. The Session and Diaconate divided to continue their separate meetings
5. News of the congregation was shared.
6. Minutes from the November 20th meeting were approved
7. The 2022 Church Statistical Report was reviewed and approved
8. Membership Roll – William Thomas Daniel, son of TJ (former member) and Danielle Daniel was baptized on Sunday, December 18, 2022.
9. PNC Report – Continues to work with the Vanderbloemen Search Group to identify potential candidates for our next pastor
10. Local Missions – Souper Bowl is February 12th.
11. The Greeting Card Ministry continues to meet, good participation
12. Property –
 - a. Rick Harrell presented an update on the progress of the insurance claim for the fire in the Manse. Rob Land Development and Construction has agreed to restore the Manse. Work has begun.
 - b. The Session approved reimbursing the Coleman family for their loss due to the fire in the manse.
13. Budget & Finance – Financial reports for 2022 were reviewed.
14. Worship – Next communion dates are Sunday, February 5th
 - a. Lent begins Wednesday, February 22nd.
 - b. Lenten Luncheons – Speakers are being lined up.
15. Rev. Coleman closed the meeting with prayer.



Women's Bible study - Wednesdays at 10:30

Choir - Each Wednesday at 6 pm.

Greeting Card Ministry - February 7 at 10:30

5 Cents-a-Meal collection - Sunday, February 19

Deacons and Session - Sunday, February 19.

Elders at 12:30, Deacons at 3:00 pm.

First Presbyterian Church
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