

First Presbyterian News

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First Pres. Family,

At one of the recent Lenten Luncheons the devotion was shared by the Rev. Bill Boelte from First Baptist Church. If you haven't attended a Lenten luncheon you are missing a wonderful opportunity to fellowship with Christians from our community, and hear messages from religious leaders of many denominations.

On this particular day, Rev. Boelte talked about how Jesus's ministry can be divided into two parts, the division occurring at the time of Judas's betrayal. Up until that event, ever since the time of His baptism (Matthew 3:13-17), Jesus called His disciples and was actively obeying God by preaching, teaching, and healing. Matthew 4:23 tells us, "Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people."

Then came the betrayal. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42). At that moment His ministry became one of passive submission to His father's will. As told in Matthew 26:52-54, after he was betrayed by Judas with a kiss, one of Jesus's companions cut off the ear of one of the mob who had come to arrest Him. But Jesus rebuked him. "Put your sword back in its place,' Jesus said to him. 'Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?'" (Matthew 26:52-54). After that He quietly endured false accusations, was mocked, spit upon, slapped, beaten, and crucified. And through His acceptance of His situation, He fulfilled the greatest plan that was ever conceived, God's plan for our salvation.

We sometimes have seasons in our lives when we can not be actively carrying out God's plan, due to illness, grief, life circumstances, aging. We worry that we are no longer useful, we are unable to help others. But we can still have a vital ministry – that of demonstrating to everyone with whom we come in contact the beauty of being passively submissive to our Father's plan.

In this Lenten season, we mourn the end of our Savior's life and ministry on Earth, but we rejoice in His obedience that paved the way for our everlasting life! ~ Kim Albert, Elder



April 2 - Palm Sunday**Sermon Title: "Actions and Reactions"****Scriptures: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Matthew 21:1-21****April 9 - Easter Sunday****Sermon Title: "Easter Upheaval"****Scriptures: Jeremiah 31:1-6; Matthew 22:31-32, 28:1-10****April 16 - Second Sunday of Easter****Sermon Title: "You Call This a Church?"****Scriptures: Psalm 16; John 20:19-31****April 23 - Third Sunday of Easter****Sermon Title: "Emmaus, Over and Over"****Scriptures: Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19; Luke 24:13-35****April 30 - Fourth Sunday of Easter****Sermon Title: "Shepherds, Strangers, and Thieves"****Scriptures: Psalm 23; John 10:1-10****May 7 - Fifth Sunday of Easter****Sermon Title: "I Am"****Scriptures: Exodus 3:13-15; John 14:1-14**

Prayer List - Family and friends of those who passed: Gilmer Meeler, BJ Compton, Carol-Ann Lawson, James Hughes (Bob Hughes' cousin), Rufus Owens, Carl Boyd (Co-worker of Kim Wickemeyer); John Cranford, and Anne-Carlisle after the loss of their grandmother, Margaret Cranford. Bob Duncan having complications after surgery. Bob Riley - in poor health, went to Mozambique then with daughter-in-law to Nairobi for birth of grandchild (arrived safely). Kim Albert's sister, Sherry-stage 4 abdominal cancer. Jenae Butterworth, husband, Andy, 5 year-old daughter, Aspen as they deal with news of Jenae's recent diagnosis of stage 4 cervical cancer. Kathy Choate, and Karri Hughes. Diana Shields - health issues. Russell and Marilyn Lee as they travel to Africa. James Edmunds as he leaves office and starts a new journey. Glenn Coleman had a biopsy, surgery went well and waiting results. Bill Lacy- cancer. Chris Jones as he continues healing. Jim Sizemore -heart surgery. Barney Newberry, Jim Luedtke's friend. Ronnie Guthrie - fell, broke leg. Patricia Burton-heart issues.



Lenten Luncheons - Our Lenten Luncheons are nearing an end. If you have not had a chance to come out yet, our last one will be held on Wednesday, April 5th. Come out at noon with your bagged lunch if you can. Drinks and desserts are provided. If you can't come for the entire time, come just for the devotional at 12:30. Chaplain Laurie Fox, from Sentara Hospice will be our guest speaker.

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 April 4, 2023. We meet in the nursery. Come join us! No talent is required.



Women's Bible Study - Concluded their study of Hebrews. They will take a break for April. Starting back May 3 at 10:30 with a book study of *The Shack* by William Paul Young. They will meet only the first Wednesday of each month for the summer. Come out and join them for this new study.



PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

PNC Update - Lent is traditionally a time for Christians to examine our lives and practice self-denial (by the way, how are you chocolate lovers getting along?). We're also to engage in acts of charity and recommit ourselves to living as Christ would have us live.

All of this, of course, is to prepare ourselves to celebrate the most important day in the Christian calendar: Easter. Or, as Chuck Colson preferred to call it, Resurrection Sunday.

Holy week is the culmination of our 40-day journey of preparation. It begins with Jesus' triumphant entry into the city of Jerusalem and continues with Maundy Thursday, where the Son of Man shared a final meal with the apostles and later was taken into custody in the Garden of Gethsemane. What follows on "Good Friday" is almost inconceivable, humiliation, torture, agony, and death on the cross. "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29). Not much is told in scripture about Saturday. Two images stick in my mind. The disciples in hiding, feeling lost, hopeless, and dejected. While Jesus "...descended into hell."

And of course, the reason Easter is the most important day on the Christian calendar is because the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, from the dead is the most important event in the history of the world and of the entire universe. To paraphrase C.S. Lewis, "it's what the whole story has been about..."

And that's why all the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, reach their climax with the empty tomb. "He is not here, for he has risen, as he said" (Mt 28:6, as well as Mk 16:6). "Why do you seek the living among the dead? Remember how he told you . . . that the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise" (Luke 24:6). "Go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God" (John 20:17).

After our disappointment last month, your PNC is back at work seeking God's choice for our next pastor. Your encouragement and prayers are greatly appreciated.

In His saving grace,

Don Cherry

PNC Chairman

Palm Sunday – First Pres. will participate in the annual Palm Sunday Processional with Main St. Methodist, First Baptist, and St. Paschal Catholic churches, Sunday, April 2. We will gather at 10:00 am at the medical building on Main St. The procession will begin at 10:10, concluding at 2nd St. where a short program will be held. The Deacons will provide refreshments afterward.



Holy Week - share worship with our "Churches of Main Street!" Thursday, April 6, at 7:00 pm, First Baptist Church will host Maundy Thursday service. Coming together to remember the power of that last evening Jesus spent with his disciples. Friday, April 7, at 7:00 pm, Main Street UMC will host a Good Friday Tenebrae Service (a service of darkness) remembering the passion story and the solemnity of that Holy day. Easter morning, before even the sun rises, gather at First Baptist Church for a prayer vigil, beginning at 5:30 am. A time to pray "for joy comes in the morning". Immediately following, at 6:45 am, gather together for a community Sunrise Service in the Prayer Garden at Main Street UMC. Main Street UMC will provide coffee and donuts afterwards.

Flowering of the Cross – Our annual flowering of the cross will take place on Easter Sunday. Start looking around your yard for flowers and bring flowers that day to put on the cross.





Whom Seekest Thou?

As we approach Easter, I am reminded of Mary at the tomb and finding it empty saw a “Gardener” who asked her “... whom seekest thou?” (John 20:15) As I think about this story and the life of Christ. He came among His chosen people, they had read and believed the prophecies of a Messiah coming to rescue them. However, they were looking at their immediate need. They were enslaved and persecuted by the Romans. They were looking for a savior to come and rescue them from their high taxes and physical struggles. When Jesus came among them, He was promising them rewards later, and not an immediate release from their current situation. As a result, they were Christ/Messiah seekers, but anti-Jesus, not recognizing they were one in the same. They saw Jesus grow up,

learn how to be a skilled craftsman, then hearing Him preach and teach with such authority made them confused. They were expecting a Messiah to come directly from Heaven not via Bethlehem. These people were not anti-Christ, they were anti-Jesus. He upset their “normal” and pointed out their errors.

Today we have a world of people that are opposite. Many will gladly accept Jesus... at least as a great teacher, but they do not accept the prospect of a Savior. They prefer to be like the three little monkeys with hands over their eyes and ears, refusing to see or hear truth. Many prefer to “eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die” (Luke 12:19). Another popular saying or thought is “You be you, and I’ll be me”, in other words, they want to do what they want to do, and think whatever they want. Believing in Christ comes with responsibilities and struggles. They want life to be carefree, pain-free, and without struggles. But that is not why we are here! We are here to prove our willingness to follow God’s laws and commandments. Christ told His disciples that they too would suffer and be persecuted for His name’s sake. In Philippians 1:29 we read, “For to you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.” The important part of life is to get to know Christ, and trust Him and follow His ways. “And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.” (Matthew 10:38)

Who do we seek? Do we seek for ease and comfort or for the glory of God and His kingdom? Though the road can seem long, we will find joy and we will be richly rewarded for enduring well, and bringing others to Him. ~ *Sherolyn*



National Day of Prayer - All are invited to the National Day of Prayer on Thursday, May 4 at 6:30PM in the HCHS Auditorium. Cookies are needed: 1-2 dozen in gallon baggies labeled NDP; brought to our fellowship hall before noon on May 4. Call or text Robin Hall 360.623.0400 if you can donate cookies. Join us, invite your friends and families, and thank you for supporting ‘Prayer’. ~ Robin Hall





Guest speaker: Charles Billingsley.

It’s no secret Charles Billingsley is one of Christian music’s most captivating Inspirational voices, but for this singer, worship leader, husband, father and teacher—to name but a few of his leading roles—it’s what’s behind the music that has truly made the man. Launching his career more than two decades ago fronting GRAMMY®- nominated genre giants NewSong, Charles has since headlined more than 3,000 concerts and released 24 recordings as a solo artist. He is currently serving as teaching pastor and worship leader at Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg Virginia and is adjunct professor at Liberty University.



Let’s pack the auditorium ... Come and bring friends!



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26 10:00 - Sunday School 11:00 am—Worship	27	28	29 10:30 am Women's Bible Study 12:00 Lenten Luncheons 6:00 pm NA	30 7:00 pm - Al-Anon 8:00 pm - AA	31 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	April 1
2 - Palm Sunday 10:00 - Sunday School 11:00 am—Worship	3	4 10:30 am Greeting Card Ministry	5 10:30 am Women's Bible Study 12:00 Lenten Luncheons 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	6 7:00 pm—Al-Anon 8:00 pm - AA	7 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	8
H O L Y W E E K						
 HAPPY EASTER	10 Easter Monday Office Closed	11	12 12:00—AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	13 7:00 pm—Al-Anon 8:00 pm - AA	14 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	15 AA 1-3
16 - 5 Cents a Meal collection 10:00 - Sunday School 11:00 am Worship 12:30 pm Session 3:00 pm Deacons	17	18	19- 12:00—AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	20 7:00 pm—Al-Anon 8:00 pm - AA	21 - Office Closed	22
23 10:00 - Sunday School 11:00 am—Worship	24	25 	26 12:00—AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	27 7:00 pm - Al-Anon 8:00 pm - AA	28 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	29
30 10:00 - Sunday School 11:00 am—Worship	May 1	May 2 10:30 am Greeting Card Ministry	May 3 12:00—AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	May 4 7:00 pm—Al-Anon 8:00 pm - AA	May 5 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	May 6

- 2 Del Pool
- 5 Sunny Watkins
- 6 Kim Albert
- 7 Joseph Roberts
- 8 Patricia Seat
- 11 Carter Henderson
- 13 Mark Foster
- 16 Frances Harrell
- 16 Buck Wilkins*
- 23 Jessica Lumsden Thompson
- 24 Mike Rand
- 24 Jane Willis*
- 24 Matthew Fraser Freshour
- 25 Kaitlin (Marvin) Buchanan
- 25 Brian Raney
- 29 Daniel Roller
- 30 Debbie Roller
- 30 Mark Thackston



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

We want to recognize everyone. If we don't have your birthday listed, please call the office and let us know.

* In Memory



From the Elders

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

The Session met on Sunday, March 19, 2023

1. Rev. Coleman opened the meeting with prayer.
2. News of the congregation was shared.
3. Minutes from the February 19th Stated Session meeting was approved.
4. Habitat for Humanity offices in Halifax are being renovated. We have allowed Bob Hughes to set up temporary offices in the church until the work is completed.
5. Membership Roll – Carol Ann Lawson went to be with the Lord on March 2, 2023.
6. PNC Report – We determined that the candidate that we brought to visit was not a good match for our church. We continue to work with Vanderbloemen.
7. Next communion dates are Sunday, April 9th (Easter Sunday).
8. Lenten Luncheons continue – Attendance has been good.
9. Palm Sunday, April 2nd.
10. The Greeting Card Ministry continues to meet, good participation.
11. Budget & Finance – Financial report for February 2023 was reviewed.
12. Property –
 - a) Rick Harrell presented an update on the progress of the repair/renovation of the manse.
 - b) Don Cherry will get quotes to deliver mulch to the church.
13. Operations & Policy Manual – work continues to update the draft document.
14. Rev. Coleman closed the meeting with prayer.



Women's Bible study - Wednesdays at 10:30
Choir - Each Wednesday at 6 pm.
Greeting Card Ministry - April 4 at 10:30
5 Cents-a-Meal collection - Sunday, April 16
Deacons and Session - Sunday, April 16.
Elders at 12:30, Deacons at 3:00 pm.

First Presbyterian Church
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