

First Presbyterian News

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



Face book:
www.facebook.com/firstpressobo
Website: 1stpres.cc

Office Hours
M-Th 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 pm
Closed on Friday
434-572-3581

First Pres. Family,

"From dust you have come and to dust you shall return." Genesis 3:19

"Repent and believe the Gospel." Mark 1:15

With those words ashes were available and imposed on foreheads on Ash Wednesday, February 22 at the first Lenten luncheon of 2023. It is the solemn ceremony during the Season of Lent: the forty-day period (not counting Sundays) symbolizing the 40 days that Jesus spent fasting in the wilderness. It is 40 days of preparation for the celebration of the central events of Christian faith, the death and resurrection of Jesus. Those words are also a reminder that our lives are fragile, temporary, and intended to be spent living the abundant life that Jesus gives His followers.

Time really does fly. And this year, if it is like every other, the days of Lent will fly by too. Before we know it, Palm Sunday on April 2 and Easter Sunday on April 9 will be here. Which means that we have this fleeting opportunity to prepare ourselves – not only for eternal life with God beyond our deaths – but also for the life of *disciples* to which we are called *every* day. Our culture cries out for people of faith who will dedicate their lives to putting the teachings of Christ into practice. We will probably not ever do it perfectly, but through the commitment of our lives to love and serve others in the name of Jesus, we can change our world and offer the great gift: the good news of Jesus Christ. I invite you to spend these rapidly moving days of Lent in an examination of your own life and a recommitment to the service of God through serving others, even in very small ways.

Let us focus not so much on yourselves as Christians but rather on the people we meet while on this journey of faith...for we shine the brightest when we reflect the light of God. In your personal preparation, ask God for an openness that will allow you to share the good word... invite someone to join you Sunday worship, send a note of comfort to someone informing them of our Card Ministry or the Women's Bible Study, or buy a beverage for a stranger and share the good news.

For in our final lap on this earth, I believe, it is not how much money we have, not how much education we have, not how much of any earthly thing we have that matters. It is the love we give unconditionally to others by sharing what God offers.

In case you missed it from the pulpit, our Supply Pastor, Rev. Glenn Coleman, shared this...

"Come as you are.

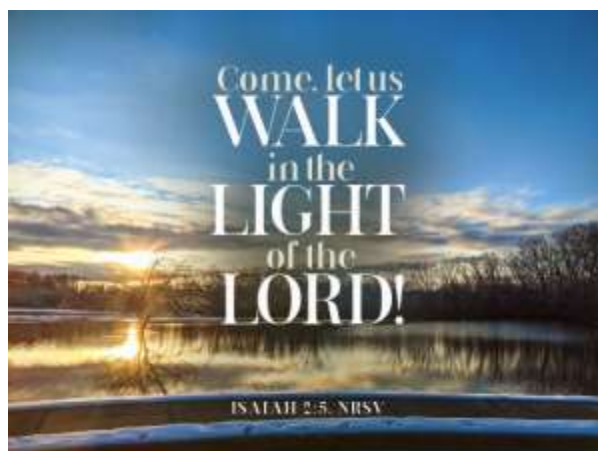
You can change inside."

Let's share this invitation with others.

In Christ,

Robin

Robin O Hall, Deacon





March 5 - 2nd Sunday of Lent

2

Sermon Title: "He Came In Darkness"

Scriptures: Psalm 121; John 3:1-17

March 12 - 3rd Sunday of Lent

Sermon Title: "The Woman at the Well"

Scriptures: Psalm 95; John 4:5-42

March 19 - 4th Sunday of Lent

Sermon Title: "All I Know is ..."

Scriptures: 1 Samuel 16:1-13; John 9:1-41

March 26 - 5th Sunday of Lent

Sermon Title: "Dem Bones Gonna Rise Again"

Scriptures: Ezekiel 37:1-14; Romans 8:6-11

April 2 - Palm Sunday

Sermon Title: "Ordinary Sin"

Scriptures: Psalm 31:9-16; Matthew 26:14-67

Prayer List - Friends and family of those who have passed: Liz Cone, Frances Harrell's mother; Frances Ann Thackston, and Jane Willis, and Bill Baskervill. Friends of the Wickemeyer's, Ray and Jennifer MacElroy's daughter lost her home to fire, and Jennifer's father passed. Bob and Joanna Hughes daughter-in-law, Karri has a good friend, Kathy Choate, who was diagnosed with cancer; both Kathy and Karri are struggling with the news, prayers for both. Sam Golightly- had several falls with injuries. Bill Lacy- cancer. Dargan Cherry's sister, Susan Campbell has leukemia and knee surgery, knee doing better but still needs prayers for dealing with leukemia. Kit Hooper's sister recovering from hip surgery; Leon Plaster having surgery again. Chris Jones had surgery - recovering slowly. Cynthia Coleman's friend, Jill, diagnosed with stage 2 breast cancer. Anonymous request prayers for possible cancer and other health concerns.



Celebrations: Pat Hay has a new great grandson; Carole Woodward has a new (her 1st) great grandchild; Tee Godbold has a new (7th) great grandchild. Jim Luedtke grateful his daughter is doing better.



Lenten Luncheons - Lenten Luncheons began on Wednesday, February 22. We had Rev. Susan Grimm provided our devotional afterward, she provided ashes for those who wished to receive them. The remaining schedule is as follows:

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. Bill Boelte 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

Bring a bagged lunch at noon each Wednesday, drinks and desserts are provided. Enjoy fellowship and the Good Word, as we prepare for Easter.





Ukrainian Refugee Family Coming to Halifax Co.!

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If you have felt helpless in the face of Russia's brutal attack on Ukraine, there is now an avenue for assistance close to home. You are invited to partner with St. John's Episcopal Church in Halifax in resettling a Ukrainian refugee family here in Southside Virginia!

Through the U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security and other organizations, St. John's has been approved to bring a Ukrainian family to Halifax County. They expect to need \$15,000 to support the family for about six months, at which time they expect the family to be fully self-supporting.

St. John's has separate teams for helping the family find jobs, getting the children enrolled in school, and setting up their lodgings. There are still a lot of unknowns, and there are plenty of other needs, such as items to furnish a home.

If you feel led to contribute to this project, you can write a check to St. John's Welcome Circle Fund and mail it to St. John's Welcome Circle, P.O. Box 905, Halifax, VA 24558.

The family will also need a good used car. If you have one to give, contact David Martin at davidellismartin@gmail.com.

For more information the article that was published in the News & Record is posted on the bulletin board in the main lobby.

PNC Update -

"Yet even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments." Return to the Lord your God for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.
Joel 2:12-13

Christians around the world celebrated Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent. Lent takes place over the forty days before Easter (not counting Sundays) and is traditionally a time of repentance and preparation for the celebration of Easter.

The goal of the Lenten season is to draw closer to God. There are many traditions surrounding this season, but whatever you do, it's great to start by reflecting on your life, and the parts of your life where you feel disconnected from God and his people.

For example, you may have heard about people giving something up for Lent—often things that bring pleasure, like sweets, alcohol or TV. When I was in college, I tried to give up sugar for Lent. It didn't last long (I have an epic sweet tooth), and one of the reasons I did it is that I was hoping to lose a few pounds. It didn't have much to do with my relationship to Jesus!

If you plan to give up something, I encourage you to take a different approach. If you are giving something up, do it as an intentional act of worship and sacrifice to God. This year, I am going to try to put away my phone when I get up in the morning and take that time for intentional prayer. We will see if it is more meaningful than my ineffective sugar fast!

Giving something up is just one way to observe Lent. Maybe, like me, you hope to add something into your life—a time of prayer, or Bible reading. Some believers take these forty days to read through one of the gospels. Another way of observing Lent is through giving—time, money, or talents. Again, your goal should be to see this as an act of worship and sacrifice, not just as a good thing to do. (By Christy Prins)

This month your PNC chose to bring a candidate to South Boston for a visit. Unfortunately, during the visit it became clear that this person was not our next pastor. Please continue to lift us up in prayer as we seek God's will for our church...

Grace and peace,

Don Cherry, PNC Chairman





How is Your Faith?

Recently at church we had a guest speaker who made a comment I had not previously considered.

He mentioned the story, we are all familiar with found in Matthew 14:22-32: after feeding the 5, 000 Jesus sent His disciples ahead in a boat to the other side. By the time Christ began heading their way it was late at night and strong winds were blowing on the sea. He came to them walking on the water. When the disciples saw him, they were all frightened thinking they were seeing a ghost, Christ reassuring them said, "Be of good cheer, it is I; be not afraid". "Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." Then Christ "said, Come".

As Peter stepped out of the boat he walked on water to Jesus. "But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me." Peter took his sight and thoughts off Jesus, paying more attention to what was going on around him. "And immediately Christ stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith ..."

It was at this point the speaker commented "if Peter's faith was found 'little' how much faith did the other disciples have?" I had never thought about the other disciples in that story. I had always put my attention on Peter and the lessons learned by him. But what can we learn from those who didn't even try to get to the Lord. What can we suppose their lack of making that attempt says about their faith?

How can we learn and judge our faith because of this story? I wonder, if I'd have been there, would I jump out of the boat with Peter to come to Christ, or would I think Peter was crazy for even asking such a request, and stay safe in the boat?

How is our faith? Do we pay more attention to the world around us and the commotion going on, or do we center our attention on the One who can save us from the storms? I am grateful for the speaker and his message. I know I need to work to have greater faith, but, I am also grateful for the scriptures that help me to know Christ and His love for me, and to know He will rescue me as I look toward Him, keeping centered on Him. ~ *Sherolyn*



Daylight Savings Time - It is nearly time for us to again lose and hour of sleep as we gain more daylight in our active day. Do not forget to set your clocks ahead 1 hour on Saturday, March 11 before going to bed, so you will be on time for church on Sunday morning.



Souper Bowl of Caring - We received this note from Tackle Hunger, the mother group for Souper Bowl of Caring. Thank you to all who helped make this year a success.



March

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26 10:00 - Sunday School 11:00 am—Worship	27	28	March 1 10:30 am Women's Bible Study 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
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 Lenten Luncheons 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— Daylight Savings Begins 10:00 - Sunday School 11:00 am Worship	13	14	15 10:30 am Women's Bible Study 12:00 Lenten Luncheons 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	16 7:00 pm—Al-Anon 8:00 pm - AA		18 AA 1-3
19 - 5 Cents a Meal collection 10:00 - Sunday School 11:00 am Worship 12:30 pm Session 3:00 pm Deacons	20	21	22 - 10:30 am Women's Bible Study 12:00 Lenten Luncheons 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	29 10:30 am Women's Bible Study 12:00 Lenten Luncheons 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	30 7:00 pm - Al-Anon 8:00 pm - AA	31 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	April 1



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Don Cherry
- 6 Shannon Cherry Vallia
- 10 Carrington Thackston
- 10 Jack Watkins
- 12 Joanna Blackstock
- 14 Stewart Nelson
- 15 Bettie Bardsdale*
- 20 Frances Ann Thackston*
- 20 Amanda Morgan
- 23 Julia Baskervill*
- 24 Caroline Edmunds
- 26 Jim Sizemore
- 27 Peyton Wickemeyer
- 27 Ray Shields
- 30 Chris Lumsden

* In Memory

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



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

The Session met on Sunday, February 19, 2023

1. Rev. Coleman opened the meeting with prayer.
2. News of the congregation was shared.
3. Minutes from the January 15th Joint Officer Training and Stated Session meeting were approved.
4. The 2022 Church Statistical Report was reviewed and approved
5. Presbytery Meeting Report – February 16, 2023, (Don Cherry presented report from Kim Albert – Commissioner)
6. Membership Roll –
 - Joan Akers Owens went to be with the Lord on January 25, 2023.
 - Frances Ann LaNeave Thackston passed away on February 14, 2023.
7. PNC Report – An onsite visit and interview with a potential candidate for pastor is under way.
8. Budget & Finance – Financial report for January 2023 was reviewed.
9. Property –
 - Rick Harrell presented an update on the progress of the repair/renovation of the manse.
 - The Session approved accepting the insurance quote from Church Mutual for coverage for the church and employee workman's compensation.
10. Next communion dates are Sunday, April 9th (Easter Sunday).
11. Lenten Luncheons – Schedule of speakers listed in the newsletter and on the website. Lent begins Wednesday, February 22nd.
12. The Session approved returning to mailing out paper copies of the newsletter.
13. Souper Bowl report - \$366 collected, and 40 canned goods. (Last year was \$356 and 123 cans.)
14. The Greeting Card Ministry continues to meet, good participation.
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 - March 7 at 10:30
5 Cents-a-Meal collection - Sunday, March 19
Deacons and Session - Sunday, March 19.
Elders at 12:30, Deacons at 3:00 pm.

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