

First Presbyterian News

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First Pres. Family,

Pastor John's first sermon with us was an inspiring message on "Growing God's Presence" at First Pres. He really made us think about how we at First Presbyterian can live out our mission statement within our church and community. This fall, we will have several opportunities and events to help us do just that! Here's a brief list of some of those upcoming activities from our "Mission Corner."

In a few weeks, we'll provide the congregation with information on supporting the Persecution Project with an emergency tarp initiative for the displaced people in the Nuba mountains of Sudan. Recently, we have received urgent updates from the project informing us that the situation has escalated in the region. The tarp initiative will give us a way to provide some assistance during this horrific crisis.

Pastor Glenn had mentioned that he'd seen an increase in the number of people stopping by the church seeking food assistance. I can still see him saying, "they were really hungry!" It's hard to imagine hunger in our community. While there are food pantries available locally, they are normally only open on specific days/hours. In the past, we've not had anything to offer those seeking assistance except to let them know when food banks are available.

To help with that need, we would like to have on hand a few ready- to- go bags of nonperishable foods to offer when someone shows up on our doorsteps hungry.

These bags might include snack type items, such as protein bars, dried fruit, nuts, peanut butter crackers, Gatorade, water for example. We would also include a list of local food and social service resources in the bags.

In October, we will discuss ways in which the congregation can help with this effort. World Food Day is October 16.

For many years the members of First Pres have participated in Samaritan's Purse's Operation Christmas Child. Many of you will remember providing shoe boxes filled with items for disadvantaged children. We will continue to participate and are currently looking at the possibility of becoming a collection center for this area. More info to follow!

We're discussing plans for having fellowship time between Sunday School and worship. This gives us another opportunity to grow God's Presence at First Pres!

We're excited about the opportunities ahead of us! Let us be the hands and feet of Jesus.

***"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God."
2 Corinthians 5:20***

*In Christ's love,
Joni Owens*





September 3 - 14th Sunday after Pentecost ²
Sermon Title: "Love Will Empower Your Gifts"
Scriptures: Jeremiah 15:15-21; 1 Corinthians 12 & 13

September 10 - 15th Sunday after Pentecost
Sermon Title: "Where Is Your Focus?"
Scriptures: Psalm 119:1-8; Matthew 14:22-33

September 17 - 16th Sunday after Pentecost
Sermon Title: "Remain In Me"
Scriptures: Psalm 119:9-16; John 15:5-8

September 24 - 17th Sunday after Pentecost
Sermon Title: "Fruit of the Spirit"
Scriptures: Psalm 119:17-24; Galatians 5:13-26

October 1 - 18th Sunday after Pentecost
Sermon Title: "Armor of God"
Scriptures: Psalm 119:25-32; Ephesians 6:10-20

Prayer List - George and Margaret Hayes - life transition. Patricia Burton - knee surgery late August. Mike Walden - cancer diagnosis. Students and Teachers as they head back to school.



Fire victims and families of former Woodview and those in Hawaii and Maui. Sizemore and Butterworth families after the passing of Janae Butterworth. Col. John Harris (Pat Hay's son) had heart surgery, now recovering well; Barney Newberry completed chemotherapy treatment and returned home - cancer free! Jake, boyfriend of Robert Guthrie's niece, Claudia, has lymphoma. Eric Morris—began treatment of chemo and radiation for aggressive brain tumor. Alicia Coleman - cancer.

Prayers continue: ; Kim's sister, Sherrie; Kathy Choate; and Chris Jones' friend, David's, mom, Rosa.

Greeting Card Ministry - What a joy to make these beautiful cards, and know that they are brightening others' days. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, September 5 at 10:30 am. We meet in the classroom across from the nursery. Come and join us.



Women's Bible Study – A new study will begin Wednesday, September 6 at 10:30 am in the Philathea Room. They will return to meeting each week on Wednesdays at 10:30. The new study will be *The Story*. This excerpt is found on the cover of the book "The Story".



This book tells the grandest most compelling story of all time: the story of a true God who loves his children, who established for them a way of salvation and provided a route to eternity. Each story in these 31 chapters reveals the God of grace- the God who speaks; the God who acts; the God who listens; the God whose love for his people culminated in His sacrifice of Jesus, His only son, to atone for the sins of humanity.

In this book there is the **Upper Story**. God is real, he is present, and he working on our behalf. Heaven is breaking into the world more than we recognize, and the story of God's seeking love, perpetual grace, and longing for relationship with ordinary people is breathtaking.

There is also the **Lower Story**. We live on earth. We make mistakes, run from God, and resist his overtures of love. Sometimes we get so mired in the Lower Story that we fail to recognize God's presence breaking into our world. We forget the God of Heaven longs to have a growing

Support for Persecution Project Foundation (PPF)

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On April 15, 2023, fighting erupted in Sudan between competing Islamist generals. This war has created a major humanitarian crisis in that country which is affecting tens of millions of people. The mainstream press is not reporting on this, making it hard to find much news coverage on this desperate situation.

Hundreds of thousands of families have already been displaced. As many as 250,000 ethnic Nubans have fled the cities to their ancestral mountain homeland in Southern Kordofan State (SKS), where the Nuba Mountains provide not safe haven, but at least safer than in the cities. SKS is home to the largest community of Christians in Sudan.

You may recall that a few years ago our congregation assisted in purchasing a tractor for the hospital in that region, so they could grow their own food. It is wonderful to know that the hospital is still thriving and providing medical care for the Nubans there. It serves as many as 3,000 patients per month.

PPF is engaged in assisting as many displaced Nuba Christians as possible.

One of the most urgent needs is heavy-duty emergency shelter tarps. These are used to cover the temporary grass huts constructed by refugees as they seek to rebuild their lives after losing everything.



Will you help us help PPF to shelter more families? A \$40 gift represents the cost to purchase and distribute a heavy-duty shelter tarp to one family. You are asked to prayerfully consider making a donation of \$40, or any increment of \$10, for purchasing these tarps for our Christian brothers and sisters in this region. This campaign will last until Sept. 17. Checks should be made out to First Presbyterian Church, with "Tarps" on the memo line. You can use a pew envelope marked "Tarps" and put it in the offering plate, or you can mail or bring your donation into the church office.

~ Kim Albert,
Church Outreach co-Elder

PNC Update - New Beginnings!

Who knew when you called us to begin the process of searching for a new pastor in March of 2020 that it would take over three years to find God's choice to lead us into the future. The countless hours spent meeting, identifying our search criteria, reviewing resumes, and communicating with potential candidates just seems to be a blur. At times we felt frustrated and discouraged with our lack of progress. It seemed that there were very few candidates (in our salary range) interested in being a solo pastor in rural southern Virginia. Through it all, we learned that God is faithful and that His choice would be revealed in His time.



¹³ *I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.*

¹⁴ *Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord. - Psalm 27:13-14 (NIV)*

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Pastor Nominating Committee for their contributions of time, discernment, and prayer (Rick Harrell, Joni Owens, Sterling Byrd-Roberts, and Colter Wickemeyer). Their love and commitment to the future ministry of our church was clearly evident.

While the PNC will not disband until Pastor John achieves ordination, we will continue to support him as he prepares to take the ordination exams and meets the requirements set by the Presbytery's Commission on Ministry. John has been put in contact with the Committee on Preparation for the Ministry who will assist him as he navigates the path to ordination in the PC(USA). After 37 monthly articles, this will be my last monthly update for the newsletter.

Yours in Christ,

Don Cherry, PNC Chairman



S.M.I.L.E

In studying Paul's writings recently for Sunday School, I came across⁴ an acronym that made an impression on me. S.M.I.L.E. = Spiritually Minded Is Life Eternal.

In his letters Paul is wanting to bring the various groups of Christians together and thinking of Christ. There were several conflicts as the newly formed Christian church had both gentile and Jewish Christians. The Jewish people had hundreds of years of following the Mosaic Law, and many got so centered on the Law that they forgot who gave them the Law and why the Law was given: to bring them closer to Christ.

In Romans 8, Paul is correcting the Jewish people who are sure that Gentiles need to conform to the Mosaic laws, then move on from there. He lets the Jewish people know that the Lord loves all people. Romans 8:1, "There is ... no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." Paul was teaching that all people who love the Lord and follow Him are loved and accepted. He later goes on to say in Romans 8:6: "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Paul wanted the people to see that living by the Law wasn't the way to salvation. It is only through Jesus Christ that we can be saved from this wicked world.

Paul was teaching the saints to be in constant thought of Christ; to be open to hear the promptings of the Holy Ghost in all they do. Even in trials, they should be seeking after Christ, and the Spirit which He sent, would then be with them, to give comfort and guidance.

As we listen carefully and keep our thoughts on what Christ wants us to do, we can become more than we could on our own.

I am reminded of the wrist bands which were very popular some years ago; on the wrist band were the letters WWJD. If we have those thoughts primarily in our minds, and not worry about the worldly commotion, we can find much more peace and true happiness. Then as the acronym states we can SMILE and feel the love of God and the blessings of Christ's atonement on our behalf. In that way we can feel more secure in our daily activities and crisis.

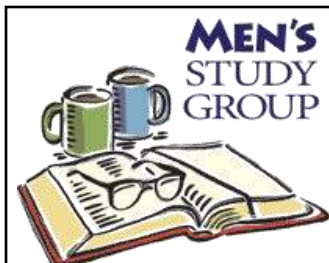
As we literally SMILE, may we remember that to SMILE is the best way to live, and will help us feel closer to the Lord.

Having more assurance of peace in this life and hereafter. ~ *Sherolyn*



Birthday Party – Moyrah will celebrate her 5th birthday with a party on Sunday, September 3 at the Manse immediately following Worship. All are invited. Light refreshments and cupcakes will be provided.

Rally Day - Mark your calendars and please plan to attend a Farewell to Glenn/Welcome McCarthy Family/ Rally Day Covered dish luncheon on Sunday September 10, 2023 immediately following service. Please bring a side dish, casserole or entree to share. Deacons will provide drinks and desserts.



Men's Bible Study - The Men's Bible study is beginning again. The first meeting will be Thursday, September 7 at 6:30 pm at the Factory Street Brewery. Calling all men. Come out and enjoy some male time together.





Sunday School – The adult Sunday School class is taking a brief break before starting a new study. Beginning Sunday, September 3 the study will be "The Gospel Project". Mark your calendars.

New Time - Starting 9/17 Sunday School will be from 9:30-10:15.

Fellowship Time - 10:15—10:45.

September

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27 August No Sunday School 11:00 am—Worship	28 August	29 August	30 August 12:00—AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	31 August 7:00 pm - Al-Anon 8:00 pm - AA	September 1 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	September 2
3 10:00 am New Sunday School class begins today 11:00 am—Worship	4 Office Closed 	5 10:30 am - GCM (Greeting Card Ministry)	6 10:30 am - WBS (Women's Bible Study) 12:00 - AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	7 6:30 pm - MBS (Men's Bible Study) 7:00 pm—Al-Anon 8:00 pm - AA	8- Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	9
10 Rally Day 10:00 - Sunday School 11:00 am Worship 12:00 - Welcome/ Farewell Celebration	11	12	13 10:30 - WBS 12:00 - AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	14 6:30 pm - MBS 7:00 pm - Al-Anon 8:00 pm - AA	15- Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	16 9-12 NA
17 - 5 Cents a Meal collection 9:30 am - Sunday School 10:15 am - Fellowship 11:00 am Worship 12:30 pm Session 3:00 pm Diaconate	18	19	20 10:30 - WBS 12:00—AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	21 6:30 pm - MBS 7:00 pm - Al-Anon 8:00 pm - AA	22 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	23
24 9:30 am - Sunday School 10:15 am - Fellowship 11:00 am—Worship	25 	26	27 10:30 - WBS 12:00—AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	28 6:30 pm - MBS 7:00 pm - Al-Anon 8:00 pm - AA	29 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	30

- 1 Mike Koch
- 6 Connie Marvin
- 6 Salli Pool
- 7 Connie Cox*
- 8 Harman Saunders
- 8 Michaella Freshour
- 8 Doris Koch
- 9 Joan Cranford
- 10 Sam Lewis
- 10 Juianna Berry
- 10 Carole Woodward
- 11 Tommy Wilkinson
- 14 Matthew Lee
- 16 Eric Roberts
- 17 George Burton
- 17 Sallie Adams



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 18 Dylan Berry
- 18 Jeremy Luedtke
- 21 Tee Godbold
- 21 Courtland Thackston
- 22 Mike Freshour
- 24 Grace McAbee
- 24 Parker Harrell
- 25 Joe Ferguson*
- 26 Fred Collins*
- 28 Jennifer McCarthy
- 28 Shirley Blackmon
- 29 Latane' Saunders
- 29 Susan Chandler

* In Memory

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





Since our last Newsletter, our Session on August 6th discussed:

1. Rev. Coleman opened the meeting with prayer.
2. John and Jennifer McCarthy were accepted into membership by profession of faith.
3. News of the congregation was shared.
4. Minutes of the June 18th Stated Session Meeting, the July 9th Called Session Meeting and July 23rd Called Congregational Meeting Minutes were approved.
4. John McCarthy was granted the right to speak at Session meetings.
5. Next Presbytery Meeting – August 26, 2023, Zoom Only (Rick Harrell – Commissioner).
6. PNC Report – John McCarthy started work as our new Lay Pastor on Monday, July 23rd.
7. Local Missions
 - a) We are gathering information on World Food Day on October 16th.
 - b) We discussed being a collection center for Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes.
 - c) We discussed having food support items or vouchers available for those who come in need of assistance.
8. International Missions - We will promote supporting the emergency tarp initiative being hosted by The Persecution Project for the displaced people in the Nuba mountains of Sudan.
9. Property –
 - a) Rick Harrell presented an update on the progress of the repair/renovation of the manse. Estimated completion is before the end of August.
 - b) The oak tree on the corner of Washington Ave. and 2nd Street is dying and will be removed.
10. Budget & Finance – Financial report for June 2023 was reviewed.
11. Next communion date is Sunday, October 1st.
12. The Deacons are planning a gathering to welcome the McCarthy's, to honor Pastor Glenn Coleman for his service to the church and to celebrate Rally Day .
13. Rev. Coleman closed the meeting with prayer.



Choir - Each Wednesday at 6 pm.

Greeting Card Ministry - Tuesday, September 5 at 10:30.

Women's Bible study - Wednesday, September 6 at 10:30 am

Men's Bible Study - Begins September 7 at 6:30 pm

Deacons and Elders - Sunday, September 17 Session at 12:30.
Diaconate at 3pm.

First Presbyterian Church
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