

First Presbyterian News

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John McCarthy - Lay 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



Milk or Meat?

Do we desire the deep things of God? Do we strive to understand the complexity, and the beauty, of salvation history? Do we ponder God's infinite and unchangeable character that compelled Him to act in the manner of covenantal love towards a fallen and broken creation? Are we astonished by the series of progressive covenants leading to Christ, and the New Covenant prophesied about in Jer. 31? Do we stop to marvel at the amazing reality that the same power that rose Jesus from the grave dwells within us as the Body of Christ? Or are we content with spiritual milk? Are we satisfied with the first step of the journey? That step being, accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior and repenting of your sins.

This is the question I pose this month, milk or meat? In our spiritual walks have we endeavored to go deep, to know God more fully? To give us a general indicator, you can ask yourself this question; Am I comfortable and willing to disciple a fellow brother or sister in Christ, or do I feel like I need someone to disciple me? Paul encourages us to grow in maturity in Romans, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will," (Rom. 12:1-2, NIV). Paul also, in the book of Hebrews, warns his audience about not becoming spiritually mature, "¹³ Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil." (Hebrew 5:13-14, NIV) By being spiritually mature we are able to discern the Lord's perfect will, as well as distinguish between good and evil. All of which is necessary when we consider the Great Commission by Jesus.

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Mt. 28:18-20) Notice it does not say make converts, or sway people to my philosophy, rather Jesus wants us to make Disciples.

I once had a good pastor friend tell me that everyone needs at least 3 types of people with them on their spiritual walk; 1) someone to teach and disciple them, 2) someone whom they can disciple, and 3) a friend on the same level to share the journey with (Teacher, Disciple, Friend). I write this to encourage everyone to desire the deep things of God, fostering the vertical relationship, so that you may bless those around you in your horizontal relationships (Vertical = you and God, Horizontal = you and the world around you). I strongly encourage you to find your Teacher, Disciple, and Friend, no matter where you are in your journey. One of the best ways to do this is getting connected with a study group. I can personally attest to the benefits of small groups. If you need more information about current groups running, or desire to start one of your own (either teach, facilitate, or host, all are possible), please reach out to one of the Elders or me to discuss the possibility.

May the Lord bless you and keep you,

Pastor John

Upcoming Sermon Schedule



November 5 - 23rd Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Title: "The Word, His Wisdom, Our Walk" 1 Cor. 2
Scriptures: Psalm 119:57-64; Galatians 5

November 12 - 24th Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Title: "Be Who You Are" 1 Thes. 5
Scriptures: Deuteronomy 7:7-9; Galatians 6:7-10

November 19 - 25th Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Title: "In All Things Give Thanks" 1 Thes. 5
Scriptures: Psalm 148; 1 Chronicles 16:7-14, 31-36

November 26 - Christ the King

Sermon Title: "Who Is Coming?"
Scriptures: Isaiah 9:6-7; Isaiah 66:1-2



December 3 - 1st Sunday of Advent

Sermon Title: "Hope"
Scriptures: Isaiah 64:1-9; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Prayer List - Nancy Pool - surgery at Duke, cancer relapse; Janet Adams - Hospice; Wayne Adams; Ed Fraser - fell, was in ICU, recovering; Ann Cabell Zimmerman - in Commonwealth; Ken McCarthy, John's uncle recovering post assault; Kevin Knouse - surgery and receiving chemo; Brice Warf, Brittany Hazelwood's boyfriend having complications from Crohn's disease. Danny Hazelwood had neck surgery, doing better. Brittany Hazelwood - having ablation surgery; Jimmy Moore, Maddie Fraser Freshour - ACL surgery; Tracey Rumer and family after the passing of her father, Ollie Hammock. Don Smith, Rowena's husband, was in hospital in Florida after several strokes. Prayers for Israel and the many that are affected overseas by wars and conflict.



Prayers continue: Patricia Burton as she continues to heal after knee surgery; Frances Sutphin, Avon's sister; Kenny Walden - Mike Rand's cousin; Kim's sister, Sherrie; Kathy Choate; Caroline Laughorn; and Chris Jones' friend, David's, mom, Rosa.



Daylight Savings Time - Don't forget to turn your clocks back, Saturday, November 3, so you will be on time for church on Sunday, November 4.

Office Hours - Please note that the office will have several closings during the month of November. Sherolyn will be on vacation November 9-13. Avon will be out Friday, November 10 as well. John will be available during normal hours. Thanksgiving is Thursday, November 23. The church office will be closed Thursday, and Friday, (November 23 & 24).



Emergency Food Pantry

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The First Presbyterian Emergency Food Pantry is now established! Over the years our pastors have encountered hungry people who came to our doors looking for help. Of course, they were referred to the local food banks, but these are not always open. We saw a need to be able to give these people something that they could eat immediately, without the need for preparation or eating utensils, until they could visit one of the other local pantries.

Thanks to all who donated, there are now eleven bags of ready to eat food items that are available to individuals and families who come to our church looking for help, and plenty more items on the shelf for resupply! Each bag includes hand sanitizer, and a card with information about food banks in the area with contact information and hours of operation. Cash donations provided for the purchase of Subway gift cards as well.



May God's light shine through this effort to Tackle Hunger! *"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat . . ."* Matthew 25:35



Operation Christmas Child - Samaritan's Purse has been sending Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes to boys and girls around the world for 30 years! In that time there have been 200+ million gift boxes delivered, 50+ million boys and girls discipled, 17+ million decisions made for Christ, and 1.7 million The Greatest Journey teachers trained. What an impact from a simple little box filled with basic items!

Once again we want to enable our First Folks who want to do their part. There are three ways to participate:

1. Pick up one or more shoeboxes. Inside will be a label, which includes information on what and what not to pack, how to make your \$10 donation, and how to track your box if you choose to. Go shopping, pack your box, attach the adhesive label, and return to the church. DO NOT TAPE the box shut, a rubber band is fine.
2. Build a box online by visiting www.samaritanspurse.org/occ. Click on Pack a Shoebox, then from the drop down menu select Build a Shoebox Online. Click on Create a Goal Page, then search for First Presbyterian Church South Boston VA. In this way we can track the number of boxes our folks have built online. The cost is \$25, payable by credit card.
3. Contribute to our packing party. Make a contribution of \$25, payable to First Presbyterian Church, marked OCC. We will take those contributions and purchase items for packing as many shoeboxes as we can. On November 12, immediately after worship, we will have a pizza and packing party where the young folks (and anyone else who would like to help) will assemble and pack the boxes.

The last day to turn in boxes to the church is November 12. Last year's goal was 30 boxes and we exceeded that number. This year our goal is 50 boxes. Let's make it happen!

"Let the children come to Me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God." Mark 10:14, ESV. (For more information go to www.samaritanspurse.org/occ.)

Christmas Cantata - Anyone wanting to sing Christmas music and help with the Cantata? The Choir and any others that would like to participate, will present the Cantata on Sunday, December 3 during worship. What a great way to bring the spirit of the season to life. Plan to attend and/or participate.



Greener Grass



Recently I came across a story about some horse ranchers trying to move their herd from one pasture to another where there was more plentiful green grass. While trying to move them, the horses would run the other direction to stay in the dried-out pasture. The writer wondered if God often feels as frustrated with us, as he was trying to move the herd to better ground.

Christ is our gate to greener grass. He asks us to follow Him and enjoy the beauties and blessings that He has to offer. When we find ourselves bogged down in the “mud” we may need to look at our spiritual well-being. As Christians, and believers of Christ’s gospel, do we ever wonder if we are where we are supposed to be? Do we feel sometimes that the grass may be greener elsewhere? When we go through a faith crisis, this is exactly what is happening. I heard it said, “Where is the grass greener? --- Where it is watered!” This means we need to tend the grass in the area we find ourselves. As long as we are following Christ, we have the “Greenest” grass, but Satan tries to convince us that things are greener elsewhere.

Another thought, along this line, “Grow where you are planted.” It is our responsibility to accept the Water of Life, the Sunshine (Son) and grow – reach out to others to share the Good News and help spread the beauty of Christ’s light and love. May we feel His blessings upon us, and enjoy the greenest pastures, share what we know so others may also enjoy.

~ Sherolyn



Community Thanksgiving - The Community has many changes that have taken place lately. There are three (3) new pastors at the churches here on Main Street. The works for a Community Thanksgiving are underway, and will undoubtedly be a great way to meet and join together as a community to celebrate and give thanks to the Lord for all His many blessings. The location is still to be determined, but likely will take place on Tuesday, November 21. Watch for more information as we get closer.



Stewardship Drive - Our Stewardship drive is well underway. We have sent out the packet of information which included pledge cards and the 2024 Budget. Please be in prayer about how God has blessed you and how you can be a part of this important effort to support the church and honor the Lord.

Update from Persecution Project in Sudan

This update is from October 13, just after our congregation sent the generous donations that our First Folks provided toward emergency shelter tarps.




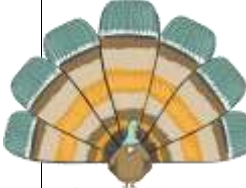

“Working alongside the local church and community in Um Dorein [a county in Sudan], our Nuba Relief and Shelter team managed to deliver emergency shelter tarps, food, mosquito nets, and audio Bibles to 1,000 additional families.

“These families survived five months of war, terror and targeted persecution by Islamist forces and finally reached the comparative safety of the Nuba mountains.

“This emergency relief intervention was possible because of your generous partnership with Persecution Project.”



NOVEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29 9:30 am - Sun Sch 10:15 am - Fellowship 11:00 am—Worship 2:00 pm - Cornhole	30		November 1 10:30 - WBS 12:00—AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	November 2 6:30 pm - MBS 7:00 pm - Al-Anon 8:00 pm - AA	November 3 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	November 4 Turn Clocks back tonight
5 9:30 am - Sun Sch 10:15 am - Fellowship 11:00 am Worship	6	 Election Day	10:30 am - WBS 12:00 - AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	6:30 pm - MBS 7:00 pm—Al-Anon 8:00 pm - AA Sherolyn out for Vacation	10- Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	 VETERANS DAY
12 - 9:30 am - Sun Sch 10:15 am - Fellowship 11:00 am Worship Sherolyn out for Vacation	13	14	15 10:30 - WBS 12:00 - AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	16 6:30 pm - MBS 7:00 pm - Al-Anon 8:00 pm - AA	17- Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	18 9-12 NA
19 - 5 Cents a Meal collection 9:30 am - Sun Sch 10:15 am - Fellowship 11:00 am Worship 12:30 pm Session 3:00 pm Diaconate	20	21	22 10:30 - WBS 12:00—AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	 GIVE THANKS	24 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	
26 9:30 am - Sun Sch 10:15 am - Fellowship 11:00 am—Worship	27	28 Newsletter DEADLINE	29 10:30 - WBS 12:00—AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	30 6:30 pm - MBS 7:00 pm - Al-Anon 8:00 pm - AA	December 1 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	December 2

HAPPY
 Birthday
 FROM YOUR
 CHURCH FAMILY



* In Memory

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

- 3 Norma Henderson
- 7 Susan Wilkinson
- 8 Jim Albert
- 10 Sarah McCollum
- 11 Irene Smith*
- 11 Matthew Bain
- 13 John McCarthy
- 13 Kim Wickemeyer
- 14 Bob Hughes

- 16 Peggy Burton
- 20 Russell Lee
- 21 Andrew Ferguson
- 23 Debbie Ferguson
- 23 Jean Long

- 26 Pat Hay
- 26 Charles Van Duser*
- 27 Maelyn Fraser Freshour
- 28 Mike Marvin
- 30 Kathy Debiec



Since our last Newsletter, our Session on October 15th, discussed:

1. Rev. Coleman opened the meeting with prayer.
2. News of the congregation was shared.
3. Minutes of the September 17th Stated Session Meeting were approved.
4. Next Presbytery Meeting – November 16, 2023, FPC Lynchburg (Don Cherry – Commissioner)
5. Membership Roll – A review of the membership roll is currently underway.
6. The Session approved allowing Bob Hughes (Habitat for Humanity) to continue to operate the Habitat office in our church and that appropriate signage be allowed.
7. PNC Report – The Presbytery Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) will recommend John McCarthy for enrolment as an Inquirer at the November Presbytery meeting.
8. Next communion date is Sunday, December 17, 2023.
9. Approved a Called Congregational Meeting after worship on Sunday, November 17 for the purpose of electing officers for the Class of 2026 and to review the 2024 Budget.
10. Plans are well underway for the Community Cornhole Tournament scheduled for Sunday, October 29th at 2 pm.
11. Local Missions
 - a) The non-perishable food drive ended October 16th with good participation.
 - b) Our Operation Christmas Child (OCC) shoeboxes drive begins on October 22nd. A packing party will be held on Sunday, November 12th after the Worship Service.
12. International Missions - The emergency tarp initiative for the displaced people in the Nuba mountains of Sudan, our church campaign had total donations of \$2400 (enough for fifty (50) tarps and some mosquito nets).
13. Property –
 - a) Rick Harrell presented a final update on the repair/renovation of the manse.
 - b) The church front doors are being restored at a cost of \$1800 plus materials.
14. Budget & Finance – Financial reports for September 2023 were reviewed.
15. Rev. Coleman closed the meeting with prayer.

Choir - Each Wednesday at 6 pm.

Greeting Card Ministry - Tuesday, November 7 at 10:30.

Women's Bible study - each Wednesday at 10:30 am

Men's Bible Study - each Thursday at 6:30 pm

Deacons and Elders - Sunday, November 19 Session at 12:30
Diaconate at 3pm.

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