

FIRST NEWS

Revs. Josh and Lara Musser Gritter, Co-Senior Pastors

June-July 2021



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CRT

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A New Normal...Coming Out The Pandemic, Who Will We Be?

Bob Dylan was right when he said, “Times, they are a changin.” Friends, what a year it has been. We’ve worshiped online, worshiped from Josh and Lara’s living room, worshiped on Zoom, worshiped outdoors, worshiped with masks, and worshiped in silence. In many ways, we have lived within the sadness of the Psalmist’s lament when Israel retreated into exile, “By the trees of Babylon we sat and wept. There on the trees we hung our harps...how can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land” (Psalm 137:1-4)? I think we can all agree that humans were not made for isolation—one cannot live by Zoom alone.

On Pentecost Sunday, we joyously pulled the harps from the trees. We stood together, and with one voice, we sang a new song aloud to the Lord. It was poignant, moving, and beautiful. As I stood looking out at the faces, smiles, and tears, I felt a deep sense of not only joy but gratitude. Thank you, God, for being with us. Even the worst of what can happen to us has not torn us apart. God has been ever-faithful, ever-watchful, ever-present.

Amidst all of the laudation and Pentecost glee, there was another question hanging in the air. Who will we be now, with God, with one another, with our neighbors? Gil Rendle, pastor and church consultant, says these are the questions asked by a flourishing church. These questions have been asked since before the church was born. We are, at this moment, so much like the early church in the book of Acts. We are moving through a period of great transition, and we wait together for the promise that Jesus told us about.

It would be foolish to believe that this time we are now entering as a church, as a culture, is normal. New Normal seems more fitting. Aside from the fact that normal is defined differently depending on whom you’re talking to, we cannot deceive ourselves into thinking that we are the same people we were in March of 2020. And let’s be honest, none of us were “normal” back then anyway. Of course, without a pandemic, this would be the case. To be human is to grow, change, shift, become. Even so, not unlike 9/11 and the housing crisis of 2008, 2020 will be not only a mark on our soul’s calendar for years to come, but it will also represent a significant shift in both American and global culture. What will this shift entail? Therein lies the rub.

Historically, massive cultural shifts have produced concomitant shifts in religious life. For example, in 1440, Johannes Gutenberg, a political exile from Mainz, Germany, began experimenting with printing in his new home of France. By 1450, Gutenberg returned to Germany with a working printing press. This invention had seismic implications for culture—and for us. For the first time, the masses could ingest the news of the day and, in the case of the church, religious texts. The Catholic church was at this time in the practice of reading and speaking about the Bible in Latin. But with the printing press, literacy

(continued next page)

A New Normal (cont)

became more widespread, and the laity wanted access to the bible in a language they could read and understand. Gutenberg could have never imagined that his invention would precipitate what is known as “The Reformation.” Religion and human culture would never be the same.

Prior to the pandemic, ours was a culture where everything was up for grabs—truth included. Perhaps the advent of “the selfie” says it all—modern life is about being an individual. Concern for the individual self has brought with it many cultural goods—the concern for racial and economic equity, the normalization of conversations about mental health, the recognition of American workaholicism, just to name a few. One earnest question I have is whether we will emerge from the pandemic more or less obsessed with this cult of individualism. Has isolation, masking, and the disappearance of communal practices opened our eyes to the significance of being together, or has it further entrenched our habits of self? I have the same question about religion. Phyllis Tickle says we’re entering a period known as “The Great Reformation.” We have a new printing press—the iPhone 12. News, media, and entertainment are at our fingertips more than ever before. We are becoming “technologically literate.” Some troglodytes among us bemoan what technology is doing to us. Others praise technology for its advances. The truth is probably somewhere in between. Human culture will never be the same. What do these technological changes have to do with religion and the pandemic? In a word, everything.

Before the pandemic, it was widely communicated that Americans were becoming less religious. An unhelpful stereotype has been that millennials and Gen Zer’s choose the yoga mat over the pew on Sunday morning. But it is actually the case that religiosity has declined in every generation. Why this change? There are about a thousand reasons, and they’ve been slowly happening to us since the ’60s. At least part of the answer is found in the American obsession with the individual. The more the individual becomes the locus of meaning in a culture, the more things like meaning, truth, and community are left in an amorphous flux. No matter our political persuasion, all of us are, by virtue of the times we live in, much more individual-oriented in our worldview than were generations before us—and especially more than those born before the Reformation and the printing press. If everything is up for grabs, and meaning is left in the realm of the abstract, the result is a society caught in an endless debate over who and what matters. A result of these changes has been a resounding ambivalence and even suspicion of institutions—capitalism, religion, healthcare, politics. As church abuse scandals, the recession of 2008, and the opioid epidemic have shown us, this suspicion is not entirely unfounded.

Enter the pandemic. Over the last 15 months, the very institutions that society has come to question have worked tirelessly to move human culture through this most arduous human plight (not always perfectly). If worship was once a chore, it became this last year either something to be ignored entirely or an absolute balm for the discontented soul. We used technology to be together. It was meaningful, but it wasn’t the same. Think for a moment about the fact that on the Sunday after 9/11, pews across the country were packed with people. After Covid-19 was declared a pandemic, our pews were empty—for months.

This year we also made it through the most bitter and polarized election cycle that American politics has ever seen, and many of us are angrier and more tribal because of it. And I don’t care whom you voted for; having a different president won’t ever solve our mutual distrust and hatred for those unlike us. Whether on a large or small scale, all of us encountered loss, which means most of us are grieving and mourning, though most of us don’t know it. And now that the world is so expeditiously returning to “normal,” we will sprint past our sadness. This worries me because we tend to turn unprocessed pain against ourselves or others. So, if you’re really angry in about 6 months, you’ll know why. Anger is one of the stages of grief. During this time, some of us also picked up good habits, some of us bad, but most of us found these habits on our own, and not because of our participation in a unifying communal story.

So, who will we be now, with God, with each other, with our neighbors? I don’t have the answer—we’ve got to find that together. But the good news is that on the other side of death is resurrection; on the other side of patient waiting is the coming of the Holy Spirit to teach us a language we have not known before. God never promised us a roadmap for the future, but God did promise to send someone to guide us and advocate on our behalf—the person of the Holy Spirit. Read through the story of the early church, and you will find a catalogue of the Acts of the Holy Spirit—disruptive, challenging, comforting acts. Who knows, maybe now everything will change, or we’ll retreat back to the way things always were. I can’t tell you what it all will mean. I left my crystal ball behind when I got ordained. But I can tell you that we ought to expect it to be surprising. Either way, the God of Israel who was, is, and ever shall be, remains the same. And today, in the quiet of the morning in which I write this, that blessed assurance is enough to keep me going, come what may. --**Pastor Josh**



From Pastor Randy...

Don't hesitate

"If you suddenly and expectantly feel joy, don't hesitate. Give in to it." That is the opening line to a poem by May Oliver. I was on that page on March 13, 2020, when we locked the doors and walked out of the office. While I have been back in the office at least part-time since the middle of May last year, I had not opened the book. The next line is ominous. "There are plenty of lives and whole towns destroyed or about to be."

As I read the poem again for the first time since the pandemic began, it feels prophetic. Of course, I know that Mary Oliver published these words ten years ago, but it feels prophetic the way the words of scripture feel prophetic. When their truth is most powerful, it is because they reveal a timeless truth about life. Oliver continues, "We are not wise, and not very often kind. And much can never be redeemed. Still, life has some possibility left." While much of the last year cannot be reclaimed or redeemed, there are new possibilities left. In the Presbyterian Women's Bible Study on Lament, we learned the importance of acknowledging our lost and complaints to God, but also our trust that God would see us through all of the difficulties of life. We may have lost friends and loved ones in the last year. We may still have some grieving to do, but God is still with us, and life is still filled with possibility.

It has been about a month since I got my second dose of the vaccine. I began to visit. The first two visits were to people in hospice who died within a few days. It was a joy to see them. I am glad I no longer had to hesitate. Maybe one of the lessons of the last year will be to embrace the "sudden and unexpected" joy. To give in to it, not to hesitate. Things can get away from us more quickly than we ever imagined. Friends, families, neighbors, and community. We are not back to the way we want things to be, but life is filled with possibility.

Oliver imagines the possibility is love. "It could be anything, but very likely you notice it in the instant when love begins. Anyway, that's often the case. Anyway, whatever it is, don't be afraid of its plenty. Joy is not made to be a crumb." Wherever you find it, don't hesitate. Embrace it. Whenever you feel it, give in to it and let it fill you. It may be a graduation or a birthday. It may be a wedding or a picnic. It will certainly happen at church. We will rediscover joy as we are able to be together again. Let us make the most of the time to the glory of God (Ephesians 5:16). "Joy is not made to be a crumb." ---Dr. Randy Kirby

Congratulations To:

- Christopher Cook and Taylor Pasin were married on March 20. Christopher is the son of Allen and Michelle Cook and the grandson of Bob and Sara Cook
- Bekah and Ryan Summitt on the birth of their daughter, Sloan Magnolia Summitt, on March 14
- Pastors Josh and Lara Musser Gritter on the birth of their daughter, Joanna Riley Musser Gritter on April 10
- Alicia Wilson and Wes Simons on their wedding on May 2.

Our Deepest Sympathy:

- Amy Shellhorn and family, on the death of her father, Jesse Robert 'Da' Anderson
- Duane Galloway and family, on the death of his father, Robert Galloway
- Tip McCachren and family, on the death of his wife, Dot McCachren
- Lillian Gascoigne and family, on the death of her mother, Martha Lou Gascoigne
- Ann Meredith and family, on the death of her husband, Sam Meredith
- Julie Fuller and family, on the death of her father, Donald Lee Daniels.

Notes Of Appreciation:

Church family,

I would like to thank our church family for all the prayers, get-well cards, flowers, and phone calls I received during this long bout with COVID-19, procedures, treatment, and surgeries. I feel very blessed indeed!!!

Acey Worthy



I would like to thank all of you at First Presbyterian for the wishes sent to me while I was going through so many illnesses recently. We would get one thing taken care of for another one to sprout up. Your cards and phone calls were so appreciated.

You never know how much you are thought of and prayed for until you have been there. I appreciate all of you and I am looking forward to singing in church and to being able to speak with all of you again.

Thanks be to God.
Glenda Hawkins Askew

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2021

HIGH SCHOOL

BROUGHTON, Raleigh NC

Matthew Russell Rostick (Dianne Scott's grandson)

JESSE C. CARSON

Maria Hudson

FIRST FLIGHT, Kitty Hawk NC

Logan Hanf (Richard Franklin's grandson)

SALISBURY

Maggie Alexander

Meredith Burton

Natalie Lusk

Piper Muire

Emma Nianouris

Jack Richard

SOUTH ROWAN

Emerson McMillin

WATAUGA, Boone NC

Zeb Coleman Scott (Dianne Scott's grandson)

WEST ROWAN

Ella Coleman

COLLEGE

APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Callie Alexander – BS in Marketing, Cum Laude

Madelyn Daily – BS in Exercise Science

BRUNSWICK COMMUNITY EARLY COLLEGE

Mason Tart – Associates Degree

(Jesse and Kathy Tart's grandson)

(Tom and Rochelle Bost's grandson)

CAMPBELL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

Olivia Smith – Juris Doctor

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

Max Fisher – BS in Mechanical Engineering

FURMAN UNIVERSITY

Katie Bullock – BS in Information Technology
and Communications, Magna Cum Laude

THOMAS JEFFERSON UNIVERSITY

Allie Billings – Master of Science in Nursing,

Neonatal Nurse Practitioner

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA - CHAPEL HILL

Cameron Walker - BA in Interpersonal and Organizational
Communications and Minors in Advertising and Religious Studies.

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA – SCHOOL OF LAW

Banks Fisher – Juris Doctor

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA - GREENSBORO

Hannah Adelman - BS in Elementary
and Special Education

(Nick and Gail Langdon's granddaughter)

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

Alyssa Potts - BS in Middle School Education

(David and Nadine Potts' granddaughter)

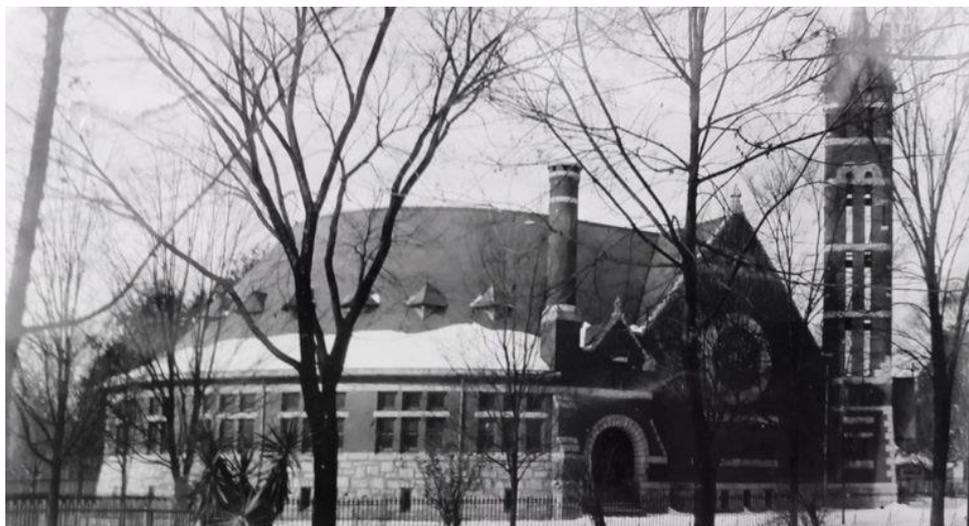


FIRST PRESBYTERIAN IS TURNING 200

The planning has begun for First Presbyterian's 200th Anniversary. The celebration will begin in August and go through December. There will be activities during this time that our church family will enjoy and find very meaningful.

More information will go out soon with the events and dates so you can mark your calendars. We look forward to this wonderful time in our church life.

Mark your calendars now for our 200th Anniversary Celebration day in the new Bell Tower Green on October 17. We will have worship and then lunch, all in the new park. Don't miss this special day.



Disciple 365 Awards Presented to Our High School Seniors

Discipleship is our call 365 days a year. Each year, an anonymous disciple in the congregation provides funds to remind seniors in high school that discipleship is a daily lifestyle.

All high school seniors received a letter with an application for the "Disciple 365 Award," a gift of \$365. Seniors were asked to give the names of two people who have inspired them and encouraged them to be a disciple of Christ.

This year, six seniors applied for this award. Here are the seniors and the disciples they chose who have encouraged them on their faith journey:

- **Maggie Alexander** – Melanie Burton & Doug Glasgow
- **Meredith Burton** – "I would like to thank all church leaders, teachers, and advisors who have spent their time teaching and guiding me."
- **Louella Coleman** – Tricia Johnson & Gail Langdon
- **Maria Hudson** – Margaret Harris & Delaine Fowler
- **Piper Muire** – Bob Harris & Jim Sink
- **Emma Nianouris** – Lyn Beaver & Rochelle Bost

Thank you to the anonymous benefactor for providing these funds and for reminding us that discipleship is a daily call within our own faith journeys.

And a very special thank you to each person chosen for supporting, teaching, inspiring, and encouraging a high school senior disciple in their daily walk of faith!



FAITH FORMATION

SoulCollage- A Spiritual Practice

Several weeks ago, I had the opportunity to participate in a SoulCollage workshop. In the wonderful way of the Spirit, the workshop leader turned out to be Michelle McDevitt-Askew, daughter-in-law of our very own Preston and Glenda Askew. Michelle is a SoulCollage Facilitator and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist.

SoulCollage was created by Seena Frost and is a combination of creativity, spirituality, and psychotherapy. It is a process of self-discovery through images. Without an agenda, one flips through a magazine, selecting images that evoke a response. The images are cut out and glued to a 5x8 card. Then you engage in a conversation with the card. Have I lost you yet? No, I'm not suggesting that you will actually hear the card speak, but through a series of questions, you will hear your heart speak.

In the workshop setting via zoom, Michelle had us in pairs to ask each other the guiding questions provided in the workshop materials. As we "read" our card, our partner took notes about what we said and then emailed them to us. That way, we could simply speak from our heart as the questions were asked, not worrying about keeping a record.

The hardest part of the workshop for me was limiting my pictures and fitting them on the card. This challenges the creator to really focus on the images that are most important.

The most enlightening part was my response to a particular image, that of an open door. I really did not want to put the image on my card. I wanted to put a window; it felt safer. Yet something would not let me exclude the door image. It ended up becoming the pivotal image of my collage, speaking to me about fears and anxieties that I had not recognized or articulated but needed to process as we move out of this strange year.

SoulCollage does not always reveal something "heavy"; it could be used at a time of celebration. Perhaps for graduates who want to mark their transition from one stage of life to another. It could be used at the loss of a loved one, the birth of a child, the start of a marriage, or on a day of no import whatsoever. There is no set age for SoulCollage either. This is a spiritual practice like any other in the sense that it can move us into a deeper understanding of ourselves and, therefore, a deeper understanding of God.

You can learn more about SoulCollage through their website www.soulcollage.com. Also, Michelle offers almost monthly workshops, and you can learn more about those through her website www.southprovidencencounseling.com.

Peace and grace, Elizabeth Snelbaker

Check it out!!

Salem Presbytery is striving to better support small churches and individuals in their Faith Formation. Recently a "Spirituality Center" has been added to the Salem Presbytery website. In this virtual space, you will find resources and instruction for a multitude of Spiritual practices. A few examples include Lectio Davina (a way to engage with the Spirit through scripture), using a labyrinth (a way to engage your body in prayer), and Visio Davina (a way to engage with the Spirit through art). To explore this wonderful resource, you can go to <https://www.salempresbytery.org/spirituality>. If you choose to start at the Salem Presbytery website (www.salempresbytery.org) you will want to click on the Resources tab at the top and select Faith Formation. From there, you will want to click on the Spirituality box, which will take you to the Spirituality Center.

Let's do it for the Kids!

Don't skip over this section just because it's about VBS!! Even if you don't have kids, you should keep reading. There is a way for you to support this ministry without volunteering for the week of VBS.

If you can fold paper or use scissors, we need your help! We need volunteers to cut out leaves and make tissue paper flowers to use when we decorate. Supplies and instructions will be provided. Contact Elizabeth Snelbaker (esnelbaker@salisburyfirstpres.org or 704-636-1321) to learn more.

Not knowing where the world would be this summer, we cut our Christian Education budget. Thankfully, we can host in-person VBS and provide dinner for kids and volunteers, something we have not done before. So in addition to the regular costs of curriculum, decorations, t-shirts, and music CDs, we are also providing a meal. As a result, we could use a little help offsetting our budget. You can help support VBS with a donation either by check or online (<https://app.easytithe.com/app/giving/fpcsalisbury>). Make the check payable to First Presbyterian church but put VBS in the memo. For online giving, select VBS in the "Fund box".

Thank you for all your help as we host Discovery on Adventure Island June 21-25!

Milk Money Mission Project

THIS YEAR, our VBS Mission project is to raise funds for the Heftier International "Milk Money" program. This program will educate and provide resources to increase milk production and delivery in areas like the southern highland region of Tanzania. To learn more, follow the link below. You can make a donation through the church by giving online or writing a check to the church indicating it's for the Milk Money project. Learn More: [Milk Money Project](#)



Embarking On A Path Back To Normalcy

Dear Members and Friends of First Presbyterian Church,

Just over a year ago, we, the Elders of our church, voted to close in-person worship. "Surely we will be back by Easter," we hoped. "We will be singing together again by Pentecost at the latest," we said. As the pandemic progressed, social distancing and masking became new norms. When we reopened indoor worship in October, it was without congregational singing.

But now, under the recommendation of the Coronavirus Response Team, we have voted to relax First Presbyterian's health policies. It is with joy and thanksgiving that we bring you this news. The following changes are effective immediately. We are grateful for your patience in the coming weeks as the church committees and staff work to apply these changes across our church's common life.

Mask Optional:

- Those who are vaccinated are not required to wear a mask inside or outside of the First Presbyterian Church facilities.
- Those who are unvaccinated are advised to continue to wear masks for their own safety and for the safety of others.

Distance Optional:

- Those who are vaccinated are not required to practice social distancing measures inside or outside of the First Presbyterian Church facilities.
- Those who are unvaccinated are advised to continue to practice social distancing (of at least 6 feet) for their own safety and for the safety of others.

Congregational Singing:

- Those who are vaccinated are invited to participate in all aspects of congregational speech in worship. This includes congregational singing as well as congregational responses in worship.
- Those who are unvaccinated are advised not to participate in congregational singing or responses for their own safety and for the safety of others.

We indeed are singing together again by Pentecost! While live stream worship will continue, we look forward to singing in worship with you on Pentecost this Sunday. Remember to wear red to celebrate the fire of the Holy Spirit falling afresh upon us just as it did the early Christians in Acts 2.

In Christ's Service,
The Elders of First Presbyterian Church

News From Wheels On Wheels

This month we welcome Mary Greene as the new MOW Volunteer Coordinator for First Presbyterian Church. Mary recently accepted this position, and we greatly appreciate her willingness to serve. Eleanor Sandifer served as Volunteer Coordinator for our church for a number of years and has now retired. We extend our most sincere thanks for her years of service.

Throughout the Pandemic, MOW has continued to provide partial meal service to MOW participants. At this time, the plan is to return to five days a week service effective on June 1. Through our church bulletin, we had recently expressed the need for more volunteers, and as of this time, all our volunteer positions have been filled. We are very grateful to Bill and Paula Troxler and Del and Carol Denny, who will be joining the MOW team in June.

Even though all the volunteer slots for First Presbyterian are filled, but we are always looking for substitutes to assist. If you would like to add your name to the substitute volunteer list, please call Mary Greene @ 704-633-4164.

Thanks to all our faithful volunteers who assist with this very important need in our community.



Prayer Warriors are back!

The Evangelism Committee has re-established the prayer group "Prayer Warriors." It is a small but friendly group believing firmly in the power of prayer. The group meets weekly, currently via ZOOM, and keeps a daily list of prayer needs. If you have a prayer concern of any kind are interested in joining the group, please contact Diane Coggin (ddcoggin54@gmail.com, text, or call 704-754-3650). Remember to let Christine in the office also know so she can list you in the bulletin.

‘Between the World and Me’ Focus Of New Book Study

A funny thing happened on the way to learning more about race in America; we got to know some of our Black neighbors better.

Their stories were more profound than funny. But as Barrie Kirby and I led book discussions recently on behalf of our church’s Race Task Force, our lives were enriched by the experiences people shared.

They told their stories in confidence; what happens in the book group stays in the book group. Though this country has advanced by leaps and bounds regarding race, it became clear that attitudes have been slow to follow in some corners. Many of us seldom think about race, but our Black friends deal with it every day.

Why is that? We explored that question and others as we read and discussed two important books:

- Barrie and Monica Green from Trinity Presbyterian Church led the study of Howard Thurman’s “Jesus and the Disinherited.” Thurman’s slim tome is said to be one of two books Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. kept with him everywhere he went. The other was his Bible.
- I led “Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race,” Debby Irving’s reflections on her evolving understanding of race.

Both groups drew more than a dozen people, black and white. Conversations were genial as we shared, listened, and learned.

Now it’s time to explore another book together, “Between the World and Me,” which Ta-Nehisi Coates wrote as a letter to his adolescent son. Barrie and Monica will lead Wednesday night sessions at 7:30, from June 2 to July 14.

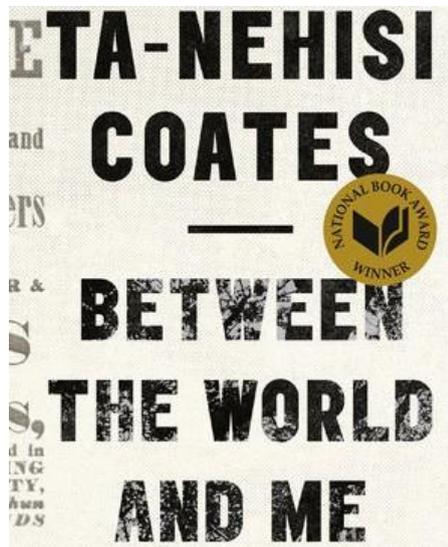
If there’s enough interest, I’ll coordinate with Esther Atkins Smith of Mt. Zion Baptist Church to lead a discussion of the same book on Sunday evenings.

To sign up for either group, please contact us at barrie.m.kirby@gmail.com or egravescook@yahoo.com.

If you’re concerned — or just curious — about the state of relations between Black and White people in our town, this is one way to explore the issue with others who seek understanding.

In closing, here’s a thought from Howard Thurman: “Don’t ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.”

— Elizabeth Cook



Race Task Force Moving Forward

A year and a half after meeting for the first time, our church’s Race Task Force has several initiatives going — initiatives you are invited to join.

- Learning more: The Education and Resources Committee is finding programs and curricula we can use to gain a better understanding of social justice, love for our neighbors, and how we as Christians are called to act. Debbie Collins leads this group with co-chair Karen Wenker.

- Understanding our shared past: The History Subcommittee is looking at our church’s past and how it fits into the country’s changing attitudes and laws. Mike Drinkard has been leading this effort with support from co-chair Steven Bullock.

- Sharing conversations: The Book and Media Studies Subcommittee led two book studies related to race during Lent. Elizabeth Cook and Barrie Kirby, the chair and co-chair, are starting new groups in June, co-leading with members of local Black churches and inviting all to participate. (See related story.)

The task force’s work is aimed at promoting the love and grace of Christ by promoting anti-racism, all in the context of building understanding. There’s room for disagreement, discussion, and discernment as we find our way together. In a Jesus-centered life, we’re opening our minds to Jesus’ call for justice for all and asking, what then shall we do?

Jenn Selby, head of the Task Force, has set two more meetings for the group this year:

Sunday, August 8 at 1:00 pm.

Sunday, October 31 at 1:00 pm.

These meetings will be open to all, regardless of age, background, or church membership. Look for more details in the church bulletin and Thankful Thursday emails.

For more information, contact Jenn Selby at 704-798-5241 or Jennifer_selby@ymail.com.



Have You Visited Our Church Facebook Page?

Did you know our church has a Facebook page? Every Sunday, you can watch our 10:30 service live on Facebook. During the week, you will see posts of upcoming events. We even share a picture of the beautiful Sunday flowers on our page along with the dedication. Sunday afternoons, we share the morning announcement videos, so you don't miss upcoming events.

In March of this year, we added a scripture and prayer post every Monday morning at 6:00 to help begin your week. It's called Meditation Monday. Have you noticed them? Enjoyed them? If so, leave a comment on the post.

At the beginning of May, we began four other new series, one on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Each Tuesday afternoon, we post "Trivia Tuesdays" that feature a different question for you to answer each week. We encourage you to start a conversation about the responses with other members. Through dialogue, even online, we can get to know one another better.

On Wednesday mornings at 9:30, we added: "Breathe in Life." A brief 1-minute video (actually, it is 68 seconds, so you have time to stop what you are doing and relax) to help you Breathe in Life. You never know what the video will show, clouds, mountains, animals, but it will always be accompanied by soothing music. We hope everyone will take time to stop and breathe deeply and relax while watching the quick videos.

Thursday mornings at 6:00, we offer "Don't have time to pray?" a brief 30-second chance to pray. We know lives are filled with work, activities, and stress, so much so that many feel like they don't have time to pray. So join us for 30 seconds to pray. Each week we will give you a specific topic. Some weeks will be praying for others, and some weeks will be praising God for a particular blessing he has given to you.

On Friday mornings, we have added "Where on Church Campus?" This series shows a different picture each week of something here on campus. Some are very easy, and some may be difficult to identify. Respond with your guess as to where the item is located. The following week the answer will be shown along with a new picture for that week. We also include a bit of history on the item at times, and we will give a shout-out to the first three people who answer correctly about where the item is located each week. This is just a Fun Friday way of staying connected and exploring the campus.

Do you have other topics or suggestions you would like to see on our Facebook page? Let Christine in the office know. If you have not 'followed' us yet, please do so. Just look for First Presbyterian Church of Salisbury, NC on Facebook and click follow.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY April 30, 2021

OPERATING

YTD Income 342,361.55

YTD Expenses 318,131.01

Cash Flow 24,230.54

Budgeted Income 387,151.67

Actual Income 342,361.55

Under -44,790.12

Budgeted Expenses 387,151.67

Actual Expenses 318,131.01

Under -69,020.66

DAY SCHOOL

YTD Income 25,111.91

YTD Expenses 18,050.33

YTD Loss 7,061.58

"Easy" Automated Giving for Your Busy Summer

Summertime is almost here! While summer travels may finally take you out of town, your tithe can still make it into the offering plate, thanks to the convenience of online giving. Simply set up your recurring gift through our new EasyTithe giving platform today at www.salisburyfirstpres.org/give, and enjoy that vacation! If you need help getting set up or if you would like to check your pledge balance, call Christina Lewis at the church office.



**Join Us This Sunday
In Worship!**

What a Year It's been in Youth Ministry!

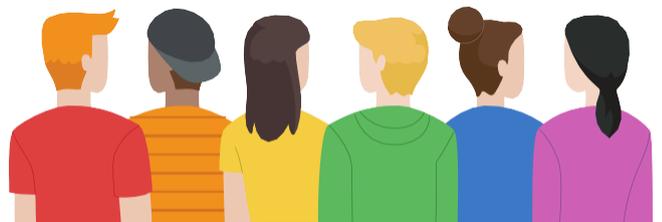
Our Youth have been up to a lot this year—in church and in life. We've played games in parks, watched movies in the courtyard, gone for hikes in the great outdoors, roasted s'mores in the pastor's backyard, and eaten lots, and lots, and probably too much, Go Burrito. As an aside, if you're ever wondering what's good there, just give me a call—I've been through the menu more times than I care to admit.

In the middle of May, I had the distinct pleasure of gathering with our Youth at our end-of-year party. I saw a lot of familiar faces and a lot of ones I have missed for quite some time. It was pure fun—what youth ministry should be. We talked about God's love, but mostly we played and laughed. Many schools represented, many ages present, many life-changes, too.

We often forget just how much is going on inside of our young people. Sometimes we adults even perceive them to be shallow. Especially now in the carefully curated world of Instagram and Tiktok, kids are faced with the difference between their external and internal lives, all while negotiating the many changes that adolescence brings to bear. I suppose the role of youth ministry is then to quite simply show up in the midst of all these changes, to be a constant communicator of God's grace and love. It's been a challenging year, to say the least, but we've always found creative ways to be together as a youth ministry.

It's been, as I've often said, a ministry of quality over quantity. Before the pandemic, it was so easy to stress about numbers. How often are we meeting? How many are showing up? How many kids are new? Who's missing? There are about a million different rhymes and reasons for why certain Youth show up on any given night. Sometimes their parents make them, sometimes they're genuinely excited to be at church, but most often it's because their friends are there, too. This year we've not played the numbers game as much as we used to. We practiced Jesus' principle of community, "Where two or more are gathered, I am there with them." Sometimes we had 30 kids, sometimes 5. Either way, there was an opportunity to be together because of what Christ has done for us.

Though our youth activities for the school year have come a close with our celebration of Seniors on Baccalaureate Sunday, the Youth Ministry at First Pres will continue to be together through service to the community. From June 7-9, our Youth will be partnering with Habitat for Humanity, building a home in our community. We'll build together, laugh together, eat together, and learn together. My hope is that this will not merely be an experience in volunteering but a participation in God's mission of love to the world.



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