Usually when I begin thinking of this monthly column, I’m peaking over the horizon at what’s next in our congregational life. But this month I’m looking over my shoulder and back at mid-February, at our hosting of the winter meeting of the Presbytery of Charlotte. First, four members of our church staff deserve a heartfelt thanks for their prep work that led to a successful hosting. Tawanda Brown coordinated the efforts of volunteers from our congregation and from Quail Hollow, met with presbytery reps to learn their requirements and expectations, and made certain that all the various activities on our campus that day – basketball teams, AA meetings, Girl Scout Cookie Sales, Seminary classes and volunteers were clear on parking arrangements. Khris Wigington set up the sound system with its various mics for the meeting and for worship, and redesigned the setup required for Sunday worship the next day. (If you are no smarter than me about sound systems, then you probably think that all one does is plug in a mic and flip a power switch. Nope.) Khris also removed the pews and secured extra chairs and tables from Quail Hollow, a physically demanding task, particularly demanding as it came just a couple of days after oral surgery with complications. Much of the physical effort couldn’t have been accomplished without Martin Pruitt. David Tang worked with the worship team from presbytery and with the preacher for the service and coordinated the efforts of our choir and the Quail Hollow choir, providing our meeting with a most wonderful worship experience. Ron Nelson and I did a little bit of the pew moving, too ... a little bit.

As significant as those efforts were in preparing for the day, what occurred all throughout the day is, to me, what was noteworthy: the multiple comments several of us heard regarding the hospitality of our volunteers. From directions for parking, to guidance all around our campus, all the guests on our campus that day were welcomed with warmth and kindness. This gracious reception of our guests was brought to my attention multiple times. Thanks to all of our Sharon members that gave up a Saturday to help host.
Upcoming Events

INVITE

**Hymn Fest!** - March 17th, 12:30pm, Sanctuary
Join music director David Tang and our other music ministers in a fun-filled introduction to our new hymnal: “Glory to God: A Presbyterian Hymnal.” A Potluck Lunch will be served in the gym at 11:30 am, following the tra-ditional worship service. Fried chicken and biscuits will be provided by the church ($5 per person; family maximum $15). Please bring a plentiful side-dish and/or dessert to share.

**Ash Wednesday Service** – March 6th, 7:30pm, Chapel
Ash Wednesday is a celebration and remembrance of the trials and temptations of Jesus. This will be an interactive service perfect for the whole family. Please come out and join us!

**Presbyterian Women Luncheon** – March 10th, 11:45am, Chapel
All women of the church are invited! Our guest speaker will be Renda Brinson. Contact Sharon Williamson at swmson11@aol.com for more information.

**WBT Father’s Day Pancake Breakfast** – March 16th, 8:00am, Gym
Our Cub Scout Pack will be cooking up and serving the pancakes. All donations received will go to the Men’s Shelter of Charlotte. All are welcome!

TEACH

**Women’s Bible Study** - Wednesdays starting March 6th, 9:30am, Gathering Room 202
If you have questions or need additional information, contact Carol Howie at 704-578-3350 or chowie723@gmail.com.

SERVE

**Change of dates!** Our 2019 Eastern North Carolina Mission Trip will now take place **April 25-28, 2019.** Contact Maria Harvey at maria@hahnmason.com for more information or to sign up.

Next Steps

As part of our ministry of hospitality in Christ, we invite you to “Take the Next Step!”

Come to a Next Steps Gathering and enjoy a meet and greet time with our pastors, find out how to get involved in the life of the church, take a campus tour, and learn more about what Presbyterians believe. You will also have the opportunity meet other newcomers and some not-so-newcomers.

All of our gatherings will take place in the Chapel (the old sanctuary) from 9:30-10:15am. We love little ones and will be providing a nursery in the gym building for newborns through age 4.

**Join us when you can for any or all of the upcoming events!**

**February 24th - Coffee with the Clergy:** Mingle with our pastors and a few elders in a casual gathering and feel free to ask any burning questions you may have about the church and its many ministries. Coffee, doughnuts, and warm fellowship provided.

**March 24th - Serving at Sharon:** How is Sharon Church organized, and how do I find a place to serve and feel a sense of belonging? Our committee chairpersons will be present to help guide you and to provide their insights.

**May 19th - Campus Tour:** What is the Gathering Room, and where is the gym? Did you know that we have a seminary, counseling center, and weekday school program on our campus? Wear or bring some comfortable walking shoes.

**June 2nd - Presbyterians 101:** What is exactly is a Presbyterian and what do Presbyterians believe? No prior knowledge assumed, and questions are always welcomed.

For more information or to RSVP for the Next Steps Gathering, contact Rev. Ron Nelson at 704-553-0869 or ron@sharonpucua.org. And, be sure to check out (and like!) our church’s Facebook page for more information about our many ministries and upcoming events. We hope you will take the Next Step with us in Christ!
GROW WORSHIP & MUSIC

Lenten Special Events

“The season of Lent is a time of prayer, fasting, and self-examination in preparation for the celebration of the resurrection of the Lord at Easter. It is a period of 40 days – like the flood of Genesis, Elijah’s journey to Mount Horeb, and Jesus’ time of testing in the wilderness.” (from Presbyterian Church U.S.A. online resources)

For Lent 2019, Sharon Presbyterian Church will present a number of special, musical events to encourage and enable all seekers to observe Lent and prepare for Christ’s death and resurrection.

Friday, March 15th, 7:30pm, Chapel:
THE BODY OF CHRIST IN MUSIC AND ART

Young, nationally up-and-coming musical ensemble, L’Académie du Roi Soleil, presents Membra Jesu Nostri (one of the greatest musical masterpieces of the 17th century) as part of a powerful Lenten meditation event. The 50-minute cycle of six cantatas will include art projections and be interspersed with readings by our clergy. (NOTE: the projections are not suitable for young children). Each cantata focuses on a different part of Christ’s broken body on the cross – his feet, knees, hands, sides, chest, and face. Beginning with a biblical reference (mostly Old Testament prophecy) to each body part, each piece reflects on the pain of Christ on the cross and then the significance of his pain to our salvation.

Special discount tickets to Sharon Presbyterian members and friends: $15/general admission and $10/students and seniors.

Sunday, April 14th, 4pm, Sanctuary:
PASSION OF THE CHRIST

On Palm Sunday, David Tang’s choir VOX, the Sharon Presbyterian Chancel Choir, full orchestra, and other guests present a powerful musical portrayal of Christ’s passion and crucifixion. The service will include Estonian composer Arvo Pärt’s Passio (St. John Passion) and contemporary British composer, Paul Carr’s Seven Last Words of Christ.

Pärt’s St. John Passion presents John’s dramatic and at times violent account of Christ’s Passion in unexpectedly reserved, repetitive, and mystical-sounding music. Unlike other musical settings of John’s account that mirror the events with vivid music, Arvo Pärt’s Passio utilizes a sophisticated and theologically profound compositional technique built on highly symbolic formulas governing the relationships between each and every note. The minimal vocal and instrumental forces create a transcendent and meditative experience as the events leading to Golgatha spin out.

In contrast, the Seven Last Words of Christ portrays Christ’s final, often intimate words in theatric, almost cinematic music. Using full orchestra, large choir, and a dramatic bass-baritone as Christ, Carr’s modern masterpiece is a stunning musical achievement that fully realizes the intensity of Christ’s humanity on the Cross.

The service is free and open to the public.

For information on any other upcoming musical events, contact David Tang at david.j.tang@mac.com
Special Delivery

Over the season of Advent, members of our congregation responded generously to the wishes of teachers at Devonshire Elementary, a Title 1 school with whom we have recently partnered through our Growing to Serve Campaign.

On January 9th, all of the donated items were delivered to the amazement of the school administration. Donations included many reams of paper, balls for recess, colored markers and school supplies, packs of new underclothes, and even a thermal laminator (to which one member of staff exclaimed, “That is HUGE!”) The staff at Devonshire was very grateful for the kindness shown by our members.

Congrats!

Ryan Tutwiler will be inducted into the Phi Beta Kappa Society at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill on March 25, 2019. Phi Beta Kappa is the nation’s oldest and most prestigious academic honor society. Phi Beta Kappa was founded during the American Revolution at the College of William and Mary. Ryan will graduate from UNC in May with a major in Political Science and a minor in Media Journalism. Congratulations to Ryan on his achievement!

If you want to publish an announcement or let us know of any accomplishments, please email spcsubmit@sharonpcusa.org.

Chilil Cook-off 2019

Our Annual Chili and Cornbread Cook-off was held on Sunday, January 27th. This mouthwatering F3 (Food, Fellowship, and Fun!) competition was fierce with more than 30 entries! There were multiple categories to choose from for both chili and cornbread. While all submissions were delicious, we are pleased to announce the 2019 winners: Amanda Buchanan, Beth Jarnecke, Paige Moody, Ron Nelson, and Libby Parker.

Way to Go!

Nick Tutwiler and Patrick Dillard recently participated in the CMS All-County Orchestra at Waddell Language Academy on February 8th - 9th. This is a competitive process that began last November with auditions and culminated in a concert on February 9th! Nick and Patrick were also selected to participate in the North Carolina Western Region Orchestra held at UNC Greensboro February 22nd - 24th. This was also a competitive process and involves hundreds of top orchestra students from all of North Carolina, from Greensboro west to Murphy! Nick and Patrick have been playing together in orchestra since the 6th grade and currently play in the Chamber Orchestra at South Mecklenburg High School. Congratulations to these talented young men!
Sharon Presbyterian Youth Summer Trips!

This year the middle school mission trip is returning to CROSS Missions, a program right here in Charlotte. Back by popular demand, this trip allows middle school students a unique opportunity to serve at local mission ministries in their own community. The students will have the opportunity to work with immigrants and their children, homeless men and women, women and their children displaced by domestic violence, and those who are unable to provide food for themselves. The trip this year takes place August 4th – 9th for all rising sixth through ninth graders. This year our High Schoolers will travel back to John’s Island, South Carolina. John’s Island, located just outside of Charleston, is home to Sea Island Habitat for Humanity. Every year, Sea Island Habitat builds around 12 homes for people who need help and are willing to work towards it. By building quality homes in good locations with affordable mortgages, Habitat for Humanity is able to keep families housing secure, out of homelessness, and to lend a hand up out of poverty. High School students will work hard, learning about every aspect of building a home, from the foundation to the roof. The trip will take place from July 7th – 12th for all rising ninth through completed twelfth graders.

To wrap up the summer, July 28th through August 2nd, our high school students will attend Week 6 of the Montreat Youth Conference! The theme for this year is “Let Love Lead.” The 2019 Montreat Youth Conference aims to equip and empower youth to make tangible changes within themselves and the greater community by hearing their peers’ voices and using their own. They seek to invite youth to be their authentic selves, to form deep, spiritual, and intentional relationships with God, themselves, and others, in order to grant assurance of wholeness. They will provide an affirming atmosphere to embrace the unknown and ask questions that lead to exploration as a means of faith development. Youth will spend time listening to Keynote speakers, in worship and small group conversation, play games, and relax.

For more information on all summer activities and trips, contact martin@sharonpcusa.org.

Mardi Gras

Every year, the Sharon Presbyterian Youth host a fun evening for the church to socialize and hopefully raise a little bit of money. Our youth fundraiser is used for youth group activities and projects, as well as scholarships for youth trips. This year our fundraiser happens to land right before “Fat Tuesday” and the end of Mardi Gras celebrations! Wear something festive and study up on your knowledge of Sharon Presbyterian History, Biblical Facts, General Knowledge, and more! We will have pancakes, red beans and rice, King Cake and more! We hope that you will join us on Sunday, March 3rd, at 5:45pm in the Chapel! A $5 donation gets you in the door, and pays for dinner and trivia.

Ski Trip 2019
Deepening Our Spiritual Journeys

Have you ever practiced giving up something for Lent: chocolate, caffeine, sleeping late on Sunday, arguing with your little sister, having a messy room – any habits that should probably be forsaken anyway? We make these small sacrifices to remind us of the ultimate sacrifice Christ made for us on the cross.

Now, what if we tweaked this spiritual practice of “giving up” and decided to “take on” something for Lent – something to deepen our spiritual life, to practice Christ’s teachings, to bring comfort and joy to another, to be good stewards of this magnificent world God has entrusted to us. Imagine the vitality this would set loose, the power of love that would be released!

Here are some ideas to jump-start your thinking about what you could choose to “take on” for Lent. Beginning Sunday, March 3rd, you will have an opportunity in worship to make a commitment to “take on” something for Lent that is meaningful to you by filling out a bulletin insert and placing it in the offering plate – with your name and contact information or anonymously, if you so choose.

We will follow up during Lent and after Easter to see how this new spiritual practice worked for you and to get your feedback on how to deepen the experiences of the Lenten season.

Here are some ideas for “taking on” something for Lent:

Make some time: Find time to dedicate regular time to devotions or reflections. This could include following a Lenten devotional, reading Scripture, listening to podcasts or reflective music, using reflective coloring sheets, or simply making time for prayer.

Make someone’s day: This can be done by striving to share a word or act of kindness or encouragement to someone each day, sending cards to the homebound, a college student, or any friend or church member in need of uplifting.

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Gym Oversight Committee

Our home is comfortable in size, but we have lots of multipurpose spaces. Our formal dining room is also a homework spot, my office, our crafting space, a gift wrap table, and where the dog watches over our front sidewalk. Our guest bedroom is where we fold laundry, store all of our sports gear, and where my daughter escapes to watch “her” TV shows. Our garage is an obstacle course of works in progress and devices with wheels. Because I feel we use our spaces so thoroughly, I am amazed by couples, and families, who commit to the “tiny house” lifestyle. You may have seen this phenomenon on television, or you may even know someone who has been inspired to live in 500 square feet or less. One thing is always true about these homes: everything must serve more than one purpose.

While our campus certainly isn’t “tiny,” it’s fair to say that all of our spaces are multipurpose. We constantly employ ingenuity, flexibility, and elbow grease to adapt our spaces for worship, shelter, making music, service, dining, athletics, education, fellowship, celebration, mourning, and other gatherings. These are all important functions in the life of a church community.

The new building planned for our campus will be no exception. Though we will enjoy the freedom, opportunity, and breathing room this new space will provide, we have such extensive need and vision for it that it will immediately be multipurpose.

The Gym Oversight Committee is currently working with an architect and general contractor to do pre-construction planning to get a sense for what the building we’ve planned will cost to build in today’s market.

The Campaign currently has pledges of about about $2.75 million. If you have not been visited and are ready to make a pledge, or would like to increase your pledge, please reach out to Rich Barefoot at 704-516-2462 or richardlbarefootjr@gmail.com.
Being Good Stewards

Many, many thanks to all from Sharon Presbyterian and Quail Hollow Presbyterian who helped visibly and behind the scenes to make it possible for us to host the almost 200 elder and pastor commissioners, as well as choir members, musicians, and other guests, for the 141st Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Charlotte on Saturday, February 9, 2019. On that same day, we had our youth basketball league games in the gym, our well-attended morning AA Groups using the Ward Building, seminary students and faculty attending class at Union Presbyterian Seminary - Charlotte, and a very successful Drive-thru Girl Scout Cookie Booth. There were many moving parts, but what a joyful way for us to be good stewards of the property and facilities entrusted to our care for the glory of God.

Deepening Our Spiritual Journeys

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Make an impact: There are endless opportunities for service for all ages and abilities: you can make an impact by getting involved one of the Serving or Teaching Ministries of the church. From ushering during worship, serving with Room in the Inn, preparing food for the shelter, attending or teaching Sunday School, to volunteering to help with any event in the life of the church, there are always new opportunities for participating in what Christ is doing.

Make it your own: Maybe you have an idea for something you’d like to add to your life for Lent that we haven’t suggested here. Let us know your ideas! In the coming Lenten season, as we journey with Jesus to the cross and on to the joyous alleluias of Easter, may God’s blessings guide our lives as we seek to grow in faith, hope, and love.

Play at Sharon Presbyterian Weekday School

“Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood.” – Fred Rogers

What does play look like at SPWS? It can be found in every classroom at any given time. In the Twos class, play is explored while sharing and taking turns. We explore the difference of hot and cold while playing with ice and penguins. We also talk about where penguins live and can count how many are in the box. This exploration extends into songs and books through circle time and a melted snowman painting for art. Learning is directed by the children with the classroom materials that teachers provide each day in our classrooms. In our young Threes class, students learn how to stack patterns on the light table. They see how you can make the color orange by putting a red tile on top of a yellow tile. Children begin to build patterns and work on our math skills in our morning calendar as well as daily routines. Students end the day with a game that incorporates learning of patterns, colors, numbers, shapes, letters, and positional concepts. In our Fours class, students extend that learning using their senses to feel the inside of the pumpkin, count the seeds, and turn it into an interactive art. We introduce Science through the life cycle of pumpkins and caterpillars transforming into butterflies. We also work on our engineering skills by copying pictures, counting the number of blocks, matching colors, and creating our own masterpieces. Play is vital and EVERYWHERE at SPWS!!

For more information about Sharon Presbyterian Weekday School, contact Jennifer Hulighan, Director, at 704-553-0869 or spws@sharonpcusa.org.
THE CHURCH SCENE