

First Presbyterian Church

PresbyNews



June 2020

Dear Friends,

God's Time, Not Ours! First Presbyterian Church, Cheraw

We all want to begin to gather again for worship. Please read all of this to know all of the details about how we would gather together again in a safe manner, and in keeping with the guidelines by our national, local and denominational entities.

Let's begin by considering what we are called to do at FPC, Cheraw. We love God! We love our families and our neighbors. Our vision is that we are rooted in Christ through love, growing in the Spirit, and reaching out with God's Mission. The way we have agreed to pursue this vision is articulated in our Mission Statement:

By the Grace of God, we are rooted in Christ through love. We grow in the Spirit by worshipping, by studying, and by cultivating relationships with Christ and others. As stewards of God's gifts and affirming our faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, we share God's Mission of reaching out with Christ's Love.

The central tenant of this vision and mission can be found in 1 John 4:7-12, 16b, 18-21

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹ God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

¹⁶ ...God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.

¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. ¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. ²¹ The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

Thus, whatever we do must be with the love of God and love of neighbor at the heart of it. It is not just about me and my desire to “gather” in the church building. The Jews got into trouble when they began to put more stock in the Temple and land than in the Spirit and loving presence of their God. Let us not make the same mistake.

If we reopen the church buildings, stay for prolonged periods of time in each other’s presence, and someone (who might be asymptomatic) passes the virus to a vulnerable person, and they become ill and perhaps die, that’s not a risk we should take lightly.

All of this being said, when we do reopen our facilities, here are some things we will likely be in place:

1. Shorter times of worship (perhaps 30 minutes total) and only about 28 - 30 people allowed in sanctuary based on distance guidelines.
2. Doors left open so that no-one has to touch the doors upon entering or exiting the sanctuary.
3. Masks required. No-one would be allowed in the building without a mask. Hand sanitizer and masks would be available, as they are now, for those who do not have them.
4. No congregational singing (no hymns, and no hymnals or Bibles will be in the pews for the time being. No talking allowed, even through masks - meaning no creeds or confessions, or Lord’s Prayer together out loud.)
5. No bulletins nor passing of the peace (Holy Interruptions)
6. Communion/The Lord’s Supper/Eucharist will be done in a way that allows you to do this in your homes rather than passing trays and/or using intinction (dipping bread in a common cup). We will make small portable containers with juice and wafer available for membership (already ordering those now).
7. There would be a children’s time, but children will not come forward. They will remain in their seats with their families. There will be no nursery, but do not worry about bring all children to the service.
8. Air conditioning would run until worship, but be turned off during actual worship service. Therefore, we will gather at an earlier time than 11 a.m., probably 9 a.m.
9. Offering plates will be at the entry and exits, but not passed during worship.

As of last Thursday, the Guiding Council of New Harmony Presbytery **STRONGLY ADVISED** that we NOT have any in person gatherings yet in the facilities. Our Worship Committee met and concurred with the guidance of NHP Guiding Council. We will keep you posted as things change. I will start doing a regular weekly “enews” for you to stay up to date on happenings and prayer requests within the church.

Please continue to make your tithes and offerings online or by mail. This is the safest way to contribute to the ministry and mission of the church. We continue to record the service and making a link available for those who are in a high risk medical condition and choose to remain home during this time. We love you and want you to continue to be a part of the church, but we value your health and safety.

We will let you know the exact date and time of our first worship back in the sanctuary. Keep praying for the church, our own families, and our world as we seek to share the love of Christ.

Dr. Fitzgerald

About Racial Injustice

In light of all that has been going on with the continued blatant systems of racism in our country and world, I share and agree with this wonderful musing by Rev. Gavin Meek, our Transitional Executive Presbyter of New Harmony Presbytery. Let us pray for change! Systemic change! It's not enough just to pray! It's not enough just to "be nice and kind." It's not enough just for us to do things "decently and in order." Amos put it this way when God continued to speak through the prophets about the injustices committed by His own people (the reason for their loss of land and Temple): "But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." Amos 5:24 ESV

A New Pentecost

Dear New Harmony Presbytery,

In the midst of this world pandemic now claiming more than 104,000 lives in the United States alone, we continue to deal with the deadly virus of racism in our country which also claims lives and brings destruction to our communities. We have all seen the news... the tragedy and devastation in Minneapolis and Saint Paul set off on Monday with the tragic murder of an unarmed black man, George Floyd, by police officers. The violence that followed – the product of a pent-up, long-practiced, systemic racism of being black in America – has torn those cities apart this week and many other places as well. And there is Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor and Eric Garner and Trayvon Martin and Philando Castile and Michael Brown and ... and... and... Racism continues and has not sheltered in place! Those of us who are white can only imagine the indescribable anger and pain and grief and exhaustion on the part of our African-Americans friends, colleagues, citizens... our sisters and brothers in Christ. I can only imagine as I live a life of white privilege in America. How long, O Lord, how long!

My friends in Christ, we need a new Pentecost! We need a new infusion and rush of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, a Spirit of peace and justice and accountability and truth and wholeness! This new Pentecost must bring a fire in all of us to pray for, work for, live for, and struggle for a new wholeness and community in the life of our communities and nation. This new Pentecost has to rest within and upon each of us gathered under the Gospel of Christ, filling us and our entire ministry with love and compassion. This new Pentecost must have all of us speaking in every way and at all times, "All are created in the same beautiful and divine image of God!" This new Pentecost must establish in us a determination to name sin within us, within the Church, within our community and nation, and then to call us away from that sin in order to live the Gospel in such a way that we become the beloved community of God.

To those of us who are white and preaching to and praying with white congregations, I urge you in Christ, to speak out against the heresy of white supremacy, naming racism as sin – an original sin for America. One third of our New Harmony congregations are African-American, the largest percentage in the PCUSA. This particular pastoral and prophetic work needs to be a part of every white pastoral leader in America, but for us, in New Harmony, it is and should be understood as personal. Let us speak a word from God into this American pandemic, a word of hope and change that disinfects. Let us name it as an absolute violation of what God desires for

human community and every human being, so that we might finally move forward. Let us speak the truth, the hard truth, a truth that will not be welcomed by all, calling all those of privilege to accountability, to humble confession of sins of omission and commission, and to action that brings justice, repairs communal health and creates wholeness in the eyes of God.

Let us all pray for the families and loved ones of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor...

for those in Minneapolis, St. Paul, Brunswick and Louisville and all our communities and our entire nation... for community leaders and law enforcement officers. Let us pray for our pastoral leaders... for receptive ears in our congregations and action beyond words... for a change in the hearts and lives of all... for an end of systems of oppression... for a coming of the Holy Spirit that brings a **new Pentecost** to the Church and the life of our communities and nation.

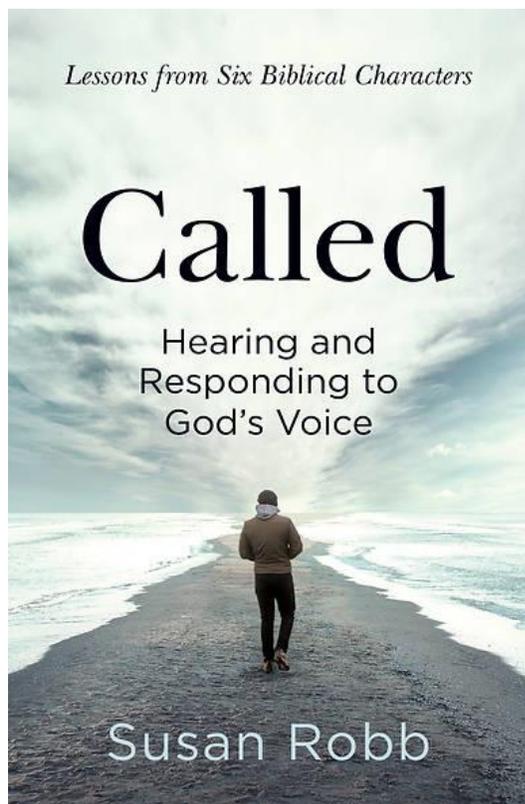
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be!

God bless. Gavin

Rev. Gavin D. Meek

Your Transitional Executive Presbyter and Stated Clerk

June 2020



Called: Hearing and Responding to God's Voice

By: Susan Robb

We begin a new adult study this past Sunday, May 31st by Susan Robb, Senior Associate Minister at Highland Park United Methodist Church in Dallas, TX. In this study Susan Robb shows us how God interrupts the lives of ordinary men and women, calling and empowering them to lives of service they never would have imagined on their own.

She shows us that the same God who called six of the bible's most iconic characters – Abraham, Samuel, Ester, Jonah, Mary Magdalene, and the Beloved Disciple – calls us too, to bring hope and transformation to the world.

Join us on Sunday mornings at 10 am via Zoom as together we can learn how God calls us in very special ways to bring hope to our world. We hope everyone will try to join us!

Time

As I write a note to you, the blessed flock of FPC, Cheraw, I have just calculated that we worshiped together only four weeks before we went online with the worship services. To date, through May 31st, your staff here have put together eleven online worship services for you. Please know how much your entire staff here loves you. Please know that we all pray for you to feel God's presence, promise and power. Please know that we are just like you in that we wish we could gather again just like we did prior to this pandemic. As I write this our country has just crossed the 100,000 deaths mark. That is staggering. We pray for your health in mind, body and spirit.

The staff and a Task Force created to assist me with decisions regarding the pandemic and our church life here, have been praying, reading, and discussing with the presbytery leadership, as well as our Worship Committee and Session about the possibilities and steps needed to be in place regarding reopening the facilities to worship, study and fellowship again. We take this responsibility with great sincerity. If there is one thing that I learned in the first four "normal" weeks here, it is that this is an incredibly loving place, both in the church and community. You miss being together in worship, discipleship, fellowship, missions and ministries.

I want you to think about Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

"There's a season for everything and a time for every matter under the heavens: a time for giving birth and a time for dying, a time for planting and a time for uprooting what was planted, a time for killing and a time for healing, a time for tearing down and a time for building up, a time for crying and a time for laughing, a time for mourning and a time for dancing, a time for throwing stones and a time for gathering stones, a time for embracing and a time for avoiding embraces, a time for searching and a time for losing, a time for keeping and a time for throwing away, a time for tearing and a time for repairing, a time for keeping silent and a time for speaking, a time for loving and a time for hating, a time for war and a time for peace."

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 CEB

Jesus knew this to be true and espoused God's special plans at work in "timing" throughout the Gospels. God had a time for Jesus to be born. God had a time for Jesus to grow in divine and human favor prior to his public ministry (read all of Luke 2). There was a time when Jesus' ministry was to go public (see Luke 3). There was a time when Jesus' work was done and it was time to return to the place where he was with God before the creation of this world (see John 17:1-5).

The point is, that as frustrating as life may be right now, know that God is at work in and through time today, just as God has been working in and through time from the beginning of time. We are not forgotten. God's plans for us is for good! Trust! Pray! Let go and let God!

Dr. Fitzgerald



The K-5 Sunday School teachers would like to congratulate Campbell Harris!
During the months we were able to attend Sunday School Campbell had the highest attendance.
She will receive a gift card from Walmart. Way to go Campbell!



Honoring Our High School and College Graduates

This year we would like to say a special Congratulations to our High School and College Graduates. We are so excited for all of them and hope the congregation will be able to reach out to them in special ways during this time of distancing.

Our High School Graduates are:

Andy Beck – Andy graduated from Cheraw High School on Friday, May 29th. He plans to attend the University of South Carolina this coming year and is majoring in Film and Media Arts.

Ethan Stafford – Ethan graduated from Chesterfield High School on Saturday, May 30th. Ethan is still in the decision-making process for this coming fall.

John Anderson – John graduated from Centre College in Danville, KY. He has earned a BA in Politics and Minors in International Studies and History. John will spend this next year in Germany working for the Department of Defense at their Military Resort – Edelweiss. He will return and then attend Law School at University of South Carolina in the fall of 2021.

Katelyn Evans – Katelyn graduated from Presbyterian College in Clinton, SC. She has earned a BS in Business Administration and a Minor in Biology. Katelyn is working for Dundee Nursing Home in their Business Department located in Bennettsville, SC.

Sallie McLeod – Sallie graduated from Clemson University in Clemson, SC. She has earned a BA in Communications, and a BA in Women's Leadership. She also received a Minor in Legal Studies. Sallie has been accepted to the Disney College Program and will go to work at Disney World sometime in August. Sallie plans on working toward attending Law School in the fall of 2021.



We congratulate all of these Graduates and pray that God will bless them as they begin a new journey in their lives!!

PRAYER LIST



Members:

Dee Pierce	Anne Bryan
Carole Kennedy	Jack Baker
Larry Gaddy	Bennie Moore
Robby Ashworth	Janie Taylor
Jacob Goddard	Sloan Baker

Relatives/Friends:

Shenell Malloy (Bill & Susan Malloy's daughter-in-law)
Bhree Barrett (Louise Carpenter's great niece)
Rose Via (Tammy Joyce's mother)
Cheryl Goldsberry (Shirley Brock's daughter)
Nancy Ingram Walters (Sloan Baker's sister)
Evelyn Petros (Jean Page Watson's aunt)
John Pruitt (Libby Pierce's brother)
Gene Brymer (Gina Goddard's father)
Robert Gantt (friend of Betty Davis)
Hope Griggs (friend of Tracie Phillips)
David Perdue (Jennifer Tillman's father)
Welbourne White (son of Betty Davis)
Peggy Hick (friend of Darice Gomez)
Pam Cook (Cathy Chapman's daughter-in law's mother)
Mia Lang (Shirley Brock's granddaughter)
Fred Craft
Elaine Craft
Dola Roberts (friend of David Nagel)
Joann Shoemaker (Larry Zimmerman's sister)

Residents at Presbyterian Communities:

Artha Sompayrac (Summerville)
B. J. Moore (Summerville)

Other:

Mid-East Conflict & Victims

Sympathy



may your memories
exceed
your sorrow

The family of Charles Watson would like to thank everyone for the prayers, phone calls, meals and concern shown to us during his illness.

We are so blessed to have such a caring church family.



JUNE

3-Kim Brabham

4-Claudia Brown

6-Gerry Rogers

12-Louis Anderson

13-Miller Ingram

15-Jacob Evans

16-Kelli Beck, Nadia Harris

18-Fred Craft

21-Robby Bennett, Harriet Conn

23-Jackson Goddard

24-Larry Gaddy

25-Marietta Melton-Burch

26-Josh Evans

27-Jack McLeod

THORNWELL NEWS.....

We continue to pray for your congregation and community during this time of crisis. We also want to update you on how Thornwell's Building Families Program is responding to the needs of our families and staff. First, we will share an overview of the program and then more specific to each host site.

We have been hard at work during this time of "stay at home". We have continued to engage our current families through phone calls, cards and emails. Some families have continued to work through their therapy goals and a few have graduated from the program. We have also reached out to families that we have served in the past few years to reconnect and check in with them during this stressful time. We know that many families are struggling with unemployment, e-learning from home, isolation for extended family and friends, virus worries and all the fears and anxiety of the unknowns. Our outreach efforts are to let them know we are here for them and to offer support in any way we can. We have mailed family fun packs that have included things like bubbles, sidewalk chalk, activity sheets, crayons and flower seed packets. We have also provided tools and tips to help manage stress during this unprecedented time.

We appreciate your continued prayers for the families we serve and for our staff as well as we navigate the process of moving back into offices and homes. We will begin using video conference the first week in June so families will have the option of phone calls or video. We are also beginning to think about ways we can safely work with families in person. Some of those early options might include meeting outside with a family on a porch or deck or arranging to meet in a park. As we have more specific information we will update you again.

Carisa has worked on researching curriculums for ages 0-5 and detailed a report on how we can expand Teaching Families to target the 0-5 population. Carisa has been developing resources for all Building Families staff to use with our clients. In the resource group, she focused on resources for Special Needs (i.e., Autism, Asthma, etc.) and located

books, articles, podcasts, and websites that would be beneficial for this group of parents/clients. As a team player, she also assisted her teammates by contributing resources to each of their topics. Carisa continued to provide Telehealth services to 3 families during this time and successfully completed two families this past week. She is also providing Aftercare support to several families.

Kind Regards,

Carisa M. Gerald, MA, LPC-A
Family Specialist, Building Families Program
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carisa.gerald@thornwell.org
Thornwell Building Families local office at
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843-501-1599-office
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Congratulations to FPC Scholarship Recipients for School Year 2020/2021

Leighton Becker
Grace Witherspoon
Andy Beck
Charlotte Hurst
Caroline Holter
Lauren Howle

Did You Know?

Did you know that one of our busiest Ministry Teams in our church during the pandemic is the Membership Ministry Team? They are reaching out to every member to make sure all is ok with us. If you have not been contacted, call Kim Brabham, Home-843-921-9215; Cell- 843-921 2982, and someone will check on you. The folks on this committee really do want to help, so if you need assistance call them. We are thankful for their work and never dreamed it would be so important every day. The members of the team are Kim Brabham, chair, Kathy Bradshaw, Mary Gullede, Bea Sloop, Becky Childers, Sue Funderburk, Debbie Jewart, Larry Zimmerman, Melanie Flynn, and Miriam Strickland.