



Network News

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH • Jacksonville, NC



January 2016

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

— Romans 8:26-28



Beloved in the Lord,

It wasn't until I was a young mother that I began reading the Bible outside of church. Before that time I went to church, was active in church, but generally assumed that Scripture was a part of the worship service; it was something only the pastor read. It didn't occur to me that I could, and should, read it on my own. I never considered the idea that through the Scriptures God might have something to say to me! My mother-in-law, Kitty, gave me my first modern translation Bible, and when I opened it up I realized it came with footnotes and cross-references and mini-commentaries that made it understandable. A whole new world was opened to me the day I opened the covers of that Bible!

Kitty also gave me a subscription to a quarterly Scripture Union publication of daily devotionals. It wasn't long before I was reading and understanding chapters of the Bible that I had never heard of before. And, much to my delight, I found that what I was reading and learning applied to my life! It was helpful! It gave me a basis from which to live my life, to make decisions, to interact with my family and friends. As I found myself growing in knowledge of the Word of God, I also found myself growing in knowledge of God, and of myself as a child of God.

When I first studied the passage from the book of Romans that I quoted above, I was profoundly moved by what Paul wrote. Those words brought me such comfort and hope that I was moved to tears; many years and seminary classes later, those simple words still touch me deeply and continue to bring me comfort and hope.

Pastor's Message...continued on page 5

January Birthdays



- 7 Genevieve McKinney
- 7 Gary Danford
- 9 Kathleen Dillingham
- 15 Daniella Valez
- 19 Angela Thorton
- 19 Forrest Brown
- 22 Ella Sheegog
- 26 Betsey Hussey-Jones
- 27 Angela Sheegog
- 30 Jeff Story
- 31 Liza Story



- 1: New Year's Day
- 6: Epiphany
- 18: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 24: Two Cents a Meal

Martin Luther King Jr. DAY

Sanctuary Flowers

If you would like to provide flowers for the Worship Service, please sign up on the sheet across from Pastor Marie's office, or call the Church office.

SUNDAY ASSISTANTS IN WORSHIP

Dates	Liturgists	Usher Leaders	Treasurer Assistants
3	Walter Bateman	Barbara Krause	Kaye Bledsoe
10	Bob Krause	Walter Bateman	Ariel Rymoff
17	Gary Danford	Tim Hunter	Jackie Southerland
24	Bobby Sheegog	Jackie Southerland	Mary Ellen Andrews
31	Walter Bateman	Tim Hunter	Sue Lowery



Network News of the First Presbyterian Church

400 Bayshore Boulevard, Jacksonville, NC 28540 • (910) 455-2434 • www.jacksonvillepresbyterian.com
 Coastal Carolina Presbytery www.presbycc.org • Presbyterian Church (USA) www.pcusa.org

A monthly publication of First Presbyterian Church—its purpose is to inform members and friends of the meetings and programs of the church, to provide newsworthy articles, and to strengthen communications in our church family. Please send articles and news to the editor.

Feb. 2016 Newsletter Submission Deadline.....FRIDAY, JANUARY 22

- MinistersThe People of the Church
- Interim PastorThe Reverend Marie Cone
- Choir DirectorJeff Story
- Organist.....Sheila Miller
- Pre-School Director.....Melody Abshear
- Church Secretary.....Gloria Parker
- Newsletter Editor.....Lisa Colwell, (910) 937-0190, colwellster@gmail.com



tacklehunger.org

Souper Bowl of Caring Changes the Game

On **Sunday, February 7, 2016** who will be the winner? You are invited to join the game to fight hunger in our community. Since 1990, when a Presbyterian youth group in Columbia, South Carolina began the **Souper Bowl of Caring**, each year on the weekend of the Super Bowl, churches and organizations armed with soup pots, collect donations to help fight hunger. Each church determines the recipient for their donations. As our recipient this year, **Onslow Community Outreach** will be our Souper Bowl of Caring winner. For

more information about Onslow Community Outreach, go to www.onslowco.org.

With a simple, yet significant act of caring for others, we demonstrate God's love by loving our neighbors. How can you participate?

- Bring non-perishable food, peanut butter, and jelly.
- Drop \$1 (or more) in the soup pot of your favorite Super Bowl team as you leave the 11 a.m. Worship Service.
- Attend the free Souper Bowl of Caring Luncheon in the fellowship hall immediately following the 11 a.m. worship service. The menu consists of sandwiches, a variety of warm soups, bread, crackers, fruit, and cookies.



Gift of the Heart Kits Fundraiser

How will you show your love during the Valentine season? The **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA)** is the emergency refugee program of the PC (USA). There is a need to replenish their emergency kits following the October flooding in South Carolina. First Presbyterian is sponsoring a Gift of the Heart fundraiser to purchase and assemble hygiene kits (<http://pda.pcusa.org/page/kits/#hygiene>).

We are offering a unique way to show your Christian love to family and friends. You are invited to reserve three large outdoor, yard heart valentines to be placed in a recipient's yard for three days, along with a note of explanation. The cost is \$15 per recipient. The youth and children of First Presbyterian will create the yard hearts in mid-January and volunteers will move the hearts from the designated locations throughout the month of February.



Watch for more details in January about signing up to give a Gift of the Heart and for ways you can help make this mission project a success. If you'd like to help create the hearts or team with someone to move the hearts, please contact Kaye Bledsoe.

Session Notes

Called “Cyber” Session Meeting, October 27, 2015:

Pastor Marie Cone approved a “cyber” session meeting regarding approval of payment of approximately \$1,800 moving expenses above that approved in the initial estimate and contract. Members responding were Walter Bateman, Kaye Bledsoe, Gary Danford, Tim Hunter, Connie Kellum, Connie Kitchen, Barbara Krause, Sue Lowery, Jackie Southerland, and Judy Woodard.

Because there were questions raised about the propriety of this matter being handled via mail, no action was taken via email.

Stated Session Meeting, November 15, 2015:

Members present: Walter Bateman, Kaye Bledsoe, Gary Danford, Tim Hunter, Connie Kellum, Barbara Krause, Ariel Rymoff, and Jackie Southerland. Also present were Pastor Marie Cone, Moderator; Brad Kuegel, Treasurer; and Dan Roerman and Mary Ellen Andrews, members of the Class of 2018. Connie Kitchen, Sue Lowery, and Judy Woodard were excused.

Action items:

- Approval of the following mission statement for First Presbyterian Church:

The Spirit calls us to be **Welcoming** to all:

- Sure and Unsure
- Whole and Broken
- Insiders and Outsiders

We explore together issues of faith, **Growing** more like Christ,

Serving with gratitude and grace,
To the glory of God.

- Approval of a plan presented by Pastor Marie for “A Focus for Interim Time” with the addition of Strategic Planning through New Beginnings Follow-Up, including Buy-In and Communication
- Approval of transfer of membership of Robert H. Nichols to Triangle Presbyterian Church, Durham, NC
- Approval of implementing a church video/photo release form and social media policy to be developed by Walter Bateman
- Approval of recommendation of Dan and Elizabeth Turk (missionaries to Madagascar) as our church missionaries

- Approval of a Valentine fundraiser for purchasing Gift of the Heart hygiene kits
- Approval of Souper Bowl of Caring luncheon and emphasis following worship on February 7
- Approval of purchase and use of LED candles for use during Christmas Eve worship service
- Approval for the church to pay one-half of the additional moving cost above the contracted \$2,500
- Approval for Kaye Bledsoe to serve as Commissioner to the Called Presbytery meeting on December 5, 2015, at Graves Memorial PC, Clinton, NC

Discussion items:

- Review of Pastor Marie’s report
 - Hospital visits to Ed Hawes and Judy Woodard
 - Scheduling of Inquirers Classes
 - Advent in Narnia Wednesday dinner and study sessions
 - Weekly preschool chapel sessions
 - Acknowledgment of homebound communion for one member
- Review from Christian Education written report
 - Christeen is using (former) crib nursery for Sunday School and worship nursery
 - Children will sing in worship December 13
 - All-church event (A Night in Narnia) planned for December 18
- Successful honoring of veterans during worship and at reception November 8
- Plans for fellowship luncheon following Hanging of the Green service on December 6
- Update of pictorial directory is ongoing
- Operating fund continues to run in deficit
 - Narrative of how church funds are used in each particular ministry has been mailed to all members
 - November 22 is commitment Sunday for receipt of pledges

I realize I am late with Session Notes. In November, bronchitis and I were very good friends. In December, my grandson’s Clemson graduation called my name. Many and huge thanks to Kaye Bledsoe for taking notes and writing minutes for November and December.

Sue Lowery, Clerk of Session



Prayers of the Church

Please
Pray
for...



Our beloved Judy Woodard died Wednesday, December 9, 2015, at her home. Please keep Harry and his family in your prayers.

~ **At Home** ~
Martha Jacob
Macie Ruddell
Slim Ruddell
Roberta Siegriest

~ **In Hospitals, Nursing Homes or Rehab Centers** ~
Lei Ashley – Onslow House
Donna McIntyre – Liberty Commons
Dot Keel – Liberty Commons

Financials

November 2015

General Fund.....	\$27,607
Building Fund.....	\$330
Total	\$27,937

Through December 15, 2015

General Fund:	
Income	\$184,563
Expenses	\$190,130
Net	<\$5,567>

***In nothing be anxious,
but in everything, by prayer
and petition with thanksgiving,
let your requests be made known
to God. — Philippians 4:6***

Roof Repair Fund:

This has been refinanced and the balance is approximately \$30,000.

*Thank you for your support.
The Stewardship Team*

Pastor's Message...continued from page 1

A New Year is upon us; a year where we will complete a Mission Study and form a Pastor Nominating Committee. This is the time to lay a solid foundation for a blessed future with your next pastor; a time to begin rebuilding our programs, our finances, and our congregation. I can think of no better way to begin this New Year and this rebuilding than by committing to spending time regularly "in the Word." There you will not fail to be delighted, challenged, comforted, inspired. If you need some help getting started, just give me a call, send me an email, or set up a time to meet with me. I would consider it a privilege to do for you what Kitty did for me.

Yours & His,
Pastor Marie



Epiphany's Significance

The church season of Epiphany begins on January 6 each year. The name comes from the Greek word *epiphaneia*, meaning “to appear, to show or to manifest.” The ending date of the Epiphany season is determined by Ash Wednesday, which is determined by the date of Easter.



Traditionally, Epiphany Day marks the arrival of the Magi, or wise men, to worship the infant Jesus. The significance of Epiphany for Christians is that it symbolizes the first recognition of Christ by Gentiles, or non-Jews.

The season of Epiphany emphasizes the divine nature of Jesus, the Light of the world. Symbols for the season include light, a star and the color green, which represents life, growth, hope and eternity.

Fill a Jar



Need a new tradition to begin the new year? One way to reflect on your blessings as the days and months pass is to fill a Blessing Jar. Simply find a container (ideally with a lid) and place it in a prominent place in your home.

Next to it, set slips of paper and writing utensils.

Encourage each family member to jot down one thing they're grateful for every day. If you have a large family, you may need one jar per person. You can also use different-colored paper slips for each family member.

Every week, sit down together and review the many ways that God is present in your lives.

Where's your Ebenezer?

The words of the well-known hymn “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing” were written in 1757 by pastor and hymnist Robert Robinson. While most of the lines resonate with singers and listeners, the reference to “Ebenezer” may prove confusing:

Here I raise my Ebenezer;
Here by thy great help I've come.

In 1 Samuel 7:12, Ebenezer, Hebrew for “stone of help,” is what Samuel names a stone memorial he erects to God after Israel wins a battle against the Philistines. (Similarly, the name Eliezer appears several times in Scripture, meaning “My God, [my] help.”)

If you were to “raise [your] Ebenezer” in memory of a place where God helped you, where might it stand? Maybe it's at the scene of a car accident you survived, or on a college campus where your faith was challenged or molded. Maybe it's a peaceful spot in nature where you sensed the Spirit's presence. Or maybe it's simply in your heart, where a figurative Ebenezer monument can remind you of the Lord's constant care and love.



Happy Holidays! **Merry Christmas!** *Happy New Year!* We waited with anticipation to celebrate our Savior's birth, we welcomed Him once again on Christmas Eve, and now we have celebrated the beginning of another calendar year. With much to be thankful for, we look forward to a new year filled with joy and service.

During the month of December, the Christian Education team sponsored a four-session study based on C.S. Lewis' book *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Members and friends, guided by Pastor Marie, were led in lessons that explored Christian principles and symbolism, with relevant applications for Advent and for daily living. We enjoyed great food and fellowship each Wednesday night with church members as well as friends from other churches. Parts of the book were read each week, supplemented with daily devotions as well as thought-provoking observations and questions from Heidi Haverkamp's book *Advent in Narnia — Reflections for the Season*. Using our imaginations and becoming 'like children,' we learned about our own humanity, our gifts, and God's amazing grace.



On Friday, December 18th, we celebrated "**A Night in Narnia**" in the fellowship hall at the church. We enjoyed a wonderful dinner, tasted Turkish Delight, took pictures in the White Witch's sleigh, prepared gift bags for our shut-ins, shared in worship, and made crafts to remind us of how Lewis' book inspires us to consider the holiday season in a new and different way. Many, many thanks to Pastor Marie for leading the study and providing our main course for the meals, for all those who brought side dishes and desserts and helped with dinner preparations, and a special thanks to all the hands that helped set up, decorate, and prepare for the special Narnia night, including Pastor Marie, Kaye Bledsoe, Connie and Barry Kellum, and Don Edmondson. It was a magical celebration!

Congratulations to our youth who sang during worship on December 13! What a wonderful gift they shared! Special thanks go to our families who helped them practice and learn the songs, and to Jeff and Sheila who rehearsed with them to help prepare them for their participation in worship.

The Christian Education team will meet on Sunday, January 3, 2016, following worship. You are welcome to join us! We would love to have your participation, and thank you for your support. HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!



Believe it or not, plans are already underway for VBS 2016! Tentative dates are Monday, June 20 – Friday, June 24. Stay tuned for updates.

The Christian Education Team thanks each and every one of you for your prayers, donations, support and involvement. We couldn't do it without you!



400 Bayshore Boulevard N., Jacksonville, NC 28540

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

CENTERPOINT

“Be still and know that I am God.”

The words from Psalm 46 remind us how to seek emotional and spiritual nurture.

Oftentimes I share some rewording of that verse with clients. They despair that their day-to-day life has become so cluttered and hectic. They detail some challenging difficulty and look to me for suggestions of what they might do in response. They are so intent on what to do that they have overlooked their own thoughts, daydreams and devotions.

Learn to appreciate stillness. Don't apologize for it and don't compromise it. Decide to be intentional about providing opportunity for emotional and spiritual stillness. In the stillness, let yourself know God. The result may well be a dawning peace. That peace is the source of fulfilling our responsibilities as a spouse, parent, friend and good neighbor.

Call the Center at **(910) 452-7370**, and visit **www.presbyteriancounselingcenter.org**.



— Jonathan R. Kelley, Counselor