



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Newsletter Article – March 25, 2025

Dear friends,

This weekend, under the leadership of our McPherson lecturers, Amy Robertson and Bobby Williamson, we practiced an ancient Jewish method of study called *havruta*. The word *havruta* comes from Aramaic and means “friendship” or “companionship.” Often, in this method of learning, two people study a text together, alternating the one reading and the one listening. Together they ask questions, discuss potential meanings and interpretations, and explore various viewpoints. Amy and Bobby, Biblical scholars from different faith traditions, practice *havruta* on a podcast called “BibleWorm” (<https://www.biblewormpodcast.com/>) and invite others to listen in to their conversation to embrace their own deep understanding of the text.

At First Presbyterian Church this weekend, these two scholars led many of us in a similar *havruta* practice expanded for group learning. Sunday morning, in our adult faith formation class, they led almost 70 people in an exploration of Leviticus 19:9-18. Together, we asked questions of the passage, often hearing thoughts and perspectives we never would have considered in a solo study. Later, at our 4 p.m. community gathering, we looked at Exodus 16, again asking questions, making observations, and seeing things in the text we hadn’t seen before. This morning, ministers and rabbis from around the Triangle used this method to study Isaiah 61:1-11. We learned a lot from each other in these gatherings! It was an important reminder of the value of community learning.

At First Presbyterian Church, we offer many ways for adults, youth, and children to come together, study scripture, dig deeper, and seek to understand what God is calling us to do and who God is calling us to be in the world. If you haven’t already found one of these groups, I encourage you to do so. In these spaces we hear different perspectives, form community, and grow in our faith.

On Sunday morning at 9:45 a.m., we offer classes for children (2nd floor education building) and youth (basement classrooms under the sanctuary).

Adult classes on Sunday morning at 9:45 a.m. include the Faith and Community Class in Watts-Hill Fellowship Hall, the Journeys class in the Wilson Parlor, and the Lectionary Bible Class in the Daye Meeting Room.

On Sunday night, Meaning in the Middle, a class for adults in the 20s-50s age range meet on Zoom for a time of study and fellowship (<https://duke.zoom.us/j/7827947494>).

We also offer other Bible and book study groups throughout the year. Information about all these groups can be found in the bi-monthly newsletters (like this one!) and Friday emails. I hope you will take the opportunity to find a study group that works for you and your schedule. In this way,

we grow together in faith and community. In this way, we learn more about what it means to follow Jesus in the world we live in today.

May God be with you and guide you in your journey of faith this Lent.

Grace and peace,
Mindy