

September 2020

First Presbyterian Church
Huntsville, Alabama



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September 2020

Servant Leadership by The Rev. Dr. Tara W. Bulger



Yesterday, in worship, we unanimously elected our church officers for the next three years. Working with the nominating committee and seeing the names of all who will lead us, I am filled with gratitude. I feel gratitude for these wonderful people who have stepped up to this important work. I also feel such deep gratitude to God, who has provided the leaders needed throughout all time to lead the church of Jesus Christ.

Max De Pree, who has written extensively about leadership, says a leader has three essential tasks. De Pree writes, "The first job of a leader is to define reality, last to say thank you and, in between, to be a debtor and a servant." Our church leaders will discern a vision for our church going forward. They will pray and discuss and listen to where they think God is calling our church. Then they will offer their time and be a servant to that vision. They will give of themselves to bring our future into reality. Last, they will say thank you. They will identify those who have helped along the way, those who have used their gifts to serve too, and say thank you. This sort of leadership is good for the church, but it is also good for all Christians. It is a model for how we can lead within our own lives.

So I ask that you begin praying for our current church officers and the ones to come. May we each be servant leaders for the building up of the church.

In anticipation of all that God will author in this place,

Lifting Up by The Rev. Brett Gudeman



Though this is not how I anticipated our first program year together to look, I am thrilled about all the upcoming opportunities for us to connect and grow in the fall. I know there are many of you members who I have not yet met, which is an absolute tragedy.

I hope that if we have not yet been able to connect, you would consider participating in one of the classes I have the privilege of teaching in the fall. This way, we can know one another better, hold each other up when the stresses of life force us down, and together further the Kingdom of God in this beloved community of the church. You will be able to see and read about all the offerings in our upcoming fall brochure!

With Grace and Peace,

Brett

September 2020

How Can We Keep from Singing?

by Dr. Patricia Hacker



During this time of quarantine, First Presbyterian Church Chancel Choir is reading the book *How Can We Keep From Singing* by Joan Oliver Goldsmith. Chapter by chapter, the author relates her singing experience with the Minnesota Chorale, a community group that challenged her with extraordinary musical events.

In one of the chapters titled *Singing*, the first art, Goldsmith explains that “before we draw or dance or even crawl, we sing. We begin by making sounds with pitches attached. Some of our initial squeals and gurgles will become language, but some are on their way to becoming song.” How fascinating, if we think about it, sounds and songs are so intimately related that they cannot be separated.

That made me think about the relationship between poetry and music. Through centuries great poets and composers have collaborated so closely to create unique, timeless songs. Some examples of great collaborations are in German Lied Franz Schubert with Wilhelm Müller, Robert Schumann with Rucker. In France the art of French Melodie are embellished by Gabriel Fauré and Paul Verlaine and Claude Debussy with Charles Baudelaire just to mention a few.

In *Sacred Music*, words and music are so important, not just for the beauty of melodies, but for the importance of the words. Composers have used collaborations with great poets. Many composers have used scriptures from the Bible as a source of inspiration and others have used their own words inspired by their relationship with God. Every Sunday we sing those words and songs and I hope they can create in you a moment of reflection or inspiration to emit those internal sounds. Sing those songs soft, sing them out loud and think about internalizing them using your voice to lift those sounds to God’s glory.

I have to confess, one of my favorite tasks as music director is to find that special hymn or anthem that matches the sermon’s scriptures which sometimes it is just perfect. The seamless connection between the word proclaim and the response through song, I believe is the Holy Spirit working through us, how cool is that! And of top of that matching those words with familiar hymn-tunes, even better. So, what I look for in selecting hymns and anthems are first words, then the tunes.

Luckily, Ludwig Van Beethoven and Henry Van Dyke or Martin Luther, or Isaac Watts did the ground work for us. Poets or song writers as we called them today are many. Some of them have adapted their words to some familiar tunes. Our new Presbyterian Hymnal *Glory to God* have done a good job adapting new texts to familiar tunes. The titles have changed as they give new words to the hymn tune, but the melodies are the same. NETTLETON, BEACH SPRING, LOBE DEN HERREN, AUSTRIAN HYMN, LEONI, DIADEM, MENDELSSOHN, KINGSFOLD, HYFRYDOL, EASTER HYMN, HOLY MANNA, and so much more, are the hymn tunes that we know. How many of those hymn tunes you recognized? How many of those tunes have different text? That is a homework for you, I hope you take a look at the hymnal and find how many adaptations of words can be set to different hymn tunes. The goal is that each hymn speak to you one verse at that time, and from within, you can release that sound that God has giving us, after all, how can we keep from singing?

September 2020

Christian Education Preview for Fall by Kathy Gillmore



Options abound as we kick off our new CE year on September 20! If you are tired of working and schooling on-line, or if you have no access to or a difficult time with technology, you may be interested in the screen-free options we will have available this Fall:

Feasting on the Word for adults
Growing in God's Love for families
Read and Reflect for children and youth

We are making packets to take home that have the materials you will need to follow along with these three new, easy-to-use, learning plans. We'll have a Rally Day event on September 13 to pick up these materials, with a few options on how to do it!

1. If you worship in person, walk through Fellowship Hall and pick up your packets.
2. 5:00 – 6:00 pm drive through the parking lot to pick them up in a festive & friendly way!
3. Call or email me to request they be dropped off to your house.
4. Email me if you prefer to go paperless – I'll email them to you!

If you are craving connection and want to wonder and discuss what you are learning with others, you may be interested in several Zoom Communities we will offer this Fall:

Zoom Communities for Children and Youth (link to join in weekly email to parents):

- Godly Play Zoom with Stephanie Hyatt & grade school teachers (Sun 9:00 – 9:30)
- Peepers Sunday School Zoom with Tam Bevel leading music & preschool teachers sharing a Bible story (Sun 10:30 – 10:45)
- Presbyterian Youth Connection for middle and high school youth (time and plan TBD)
- Wednesday Night Live Zoom for children and music fun, with Patricia Hacker & Kathy Gillmore (Wed 5:00 - 6:00)

Children received a "hand cross" last year during a special worship series. Hand crosses are designed to rest in the palm of your hand. Children can hold them while listening to a story or praying to help them stay focused. During times of anxiety they can be a concrete symbol of holding on to your faith and the nearness of God's love and presence. If you are new to FPC or did not receive one last year, please let Kathy Gillmore know.



Zoom Communities for Adults (register on our website, fpchsv.org/registration)

- Feasting on the Word (Sun 9:30 am)
- Charles Danner Seminar Class (Sun 9:30 am)
- Men's Bible Study (Wed 7:00 am)
- WNL C.S. Lewis' Narnia Class with Pastor Brett (Wed 5:00 pm)
- WNL Creeds & Confessions Class with Pastor Tara (Wed 5:00 pm)
- Prayer Group (Thu 11:00 am)
- Friday Bible Study with Pastor Tara (Fri Noon)

Keep an eye out for our Fall Brochure for all the details!

September 2020

Mission and Evangelism by Karen Madison



In the month of September, we will be supporting our neighbors to the north, Fellowship Presbyterian Church, in their ongoing Food Distribution Program. Fellowship ministers to families in need by organizing, collecting and distributing at least 250 food boxes on the third week of each month with distribution happening on that Wednesday. These boxes are timed to assist 120 families who are food insecure with perishable and non-perishable groceries to help them make it through the month. Furthermore, there are 50 additional families on the church's waiting list who are awarded Special One Time Only Food Boxes during the Thanksgiving and Christmas season.

Elder Jackie Bennett, Convener of Fellowship's Witness and Service Ministry Team, says that Fellowship's members and the community at large have stepped up in a big way with plenty of hands-on volunteers. This cohesive team under the watchful eye of church member Dorothy Johnson, performs a myriad of duties each month to ensure that food is gathered, organized and distributed.

Fellowship obtains food from the Food Bank of North Alabama, Manna House, Commissioner District 6 and sometimes local farmers. However, especially in today's environment, there is always a challenge and need to have ample food to provide for and satisfy this community outreach ministry.

During the month of September, we will have a non-perishable food drive with the goal being to help "FILL THE FOOD PANTRY AT FELLOWSHIP". All members are asked to bring a sack (or sacks) of non-perishable food to church throughout this month. Examples of food needed are canned vegetables, fruits and meats, and pasta, rice and cereal. Food may be left at the office entrance or in the Historic Room.

For more information contact Karen Madison at karenmadison@comcast.net.

September 2020

Interim Youth Director by Anne Dillon Loflin



I have been a lifelong member of First Presbyterian Church. I am very excited to serve as the Interim Youth Director! I recently graduated summa cum laude from The University of Alabama and am currently pursuing a Masters in Marketing at UA. As an undergraduate, I sang in the choir of my local church and served as a worship leader.

Additionally, I worked with students at a Tuscaloosa elementary school as part of their after-school reading program, and recently returned to Camp Merri-Mac for Girls in Black Mountain, NC, for my 5th summer as a staff member (and 11th summer overall.) I look forward to helping carry on the wonderful traditions of spiritual growth and community within our youth program!

Men's Bible Study

Our Men's Bible Study group heard there was a need for separators in order to protect students at Second Mile Preschool. They answered the call, bought the materials, built the dividers, and were able to gift them to the preschool!





We love and miss our FPC family!



**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

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