

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

May 2021

FIRST WORD

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May 2021

The Circle of Life

by The Rev. Dr. Tara W. Bulger



Once, many years ago, when I was first ordained, I had officiated a funeral of someone I loved very much in my congregation. I was sad for days after the funeral. One of my children asked me why I was sad, and I told her that "funerals make me sad." She responded by trying to make me laugh. She said, "Mom, do I need to sing Circle of Life to you?"

That song from The Lion King movie reminds us that their life is a path with both "sadness and joy, hope and despair, faith and love." I am thinking today of the special blessing of living out the circle of life within the context of the church community. This is where we bring our children to learn about the love of Jesus and be baptized into the faith. This is the place where children get new bibles and make friends in faith. This is the place where folks are married and are cared for in their old age. We are the called and beloved community of faith. It is a privilege to do "the circle of life" in this church.

Please return to worship and the programs of the church as soon as you are comfortable. The gathered body is a joy, and it will not be the same without all of our members. May this pandemic pass, and may we stay healthy. And may we get back to the circle of life together.

Love to you all,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tara" with a horizontal line underneath.

May 2021

Practice Resurrection by The Rev. Brett Gudeman



“Our task as image-bearing, God-loving, Christ-shaped, Spirit-filled Christians, following Christ and shaping our world, is to announce redemption to a world that has discovered its fallenness, to announce healing to a world that has discovered its brokenness, to proclaim love and trust to a world that knows only exploitation, fear and suspicion.”

- N.T. Wright

This past month, our church had three funerals in three weeks for members of our congregation. Being on staff, I had the great privilege to participate in one way or another with each service. What was evident in each member’s life was how their love and faith affected so many people in a myriad of ways. As I listened to stories regarding each of our members who have passed to glory, I was deeply moved by how their lives have been influential on mine, even if I did not know them personally. Their love and care for members of this congregation, for the community in Huntsville, inspired and transformed lives with whom I interact every day. They left the world a better place than when they entered it; they helped to build the Kingdom of God here on earth as it is in Heaven.

In Hebrews 12, the author speaks of the great cloud of witnesses who surround us, encouraging us as we run the great race, the great race of a life in faith. I am grateful for the community here at First Presbyterian, the whole community of those living and those who have died, who witness to the love of Christ every day in word and in action. May we encourage others as we have been encouraged, and love as we have been loved. On a final note, we know grief does not end with a funeral. Please pray for our families who have lost their loved ones.

With Grace,

Brett



Congratulations to the 2021 Graduates!

High School Graduates

Sarah Kate Childs graduates from Randolph School in May, and then she will be starting her freshman year at Rhodes College, where she will be playing soccer and pursuing a degree along the pre-law track.



Landers Elijah Clayton graduates from James Clemens High School in May and attending the University of Alabama in the fall.

Michael Vincent Hyatt graduates from New Century High School in May, and will be attending University of Alabama in Huntsville this fall where he plans to study Computer Science.



Vivian Hightower Moore graduates from Huntsville High School in May, and she will be attending Sewanee: The University of the South in the fall.



Congratulations to the 2021 Graduates!

High School Graduates

Celeste Owens graduates from Sparkman High School in May, and will be attending Jacksonville State University in the fall majoring in exercise science and wellness.



Lori Ann Pate graduates from Huntsville High School in May. She plans to start school this summer, working towards a Medical Degree specializing in Pediatrics.

Audrey Caroline Rawls graduates from Huntsville High School, and will attend the University of Alabama in the fall. She plans to study chemistry.



Alex Yi graduates from Randolph School and plans to attend Auburn University in the fall.

May 2021

Christian Education
by Kathy Gillmore



Congratulations to the 2021 Graduates!

College Graduates

Natalie Fogle graduates Summa Cum Laude from Auburn University in May with a Bachelor of Science degree in Exercise Science. In January 2022, Natalie will enter University of Alabama Birmingham's Doctor of Physical Therapy program.

Shaun Elizabeth Hartwell graduates Summa Cum Laude from Auburn University in May with a Bachelor of Science degree in Human Development and Family Studies. Starting in August Shaun will be working for First Baptist Opelika as a campus missionary.

Anne Dillon Loflin graduates from The University of Alabama's Manderson Graduate School of Business with a Master of Science degree in Marketing.

Coleman Martinson graduated from Washington and Lee University in December 2020 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism. He recently started a temporarily remote copywriting position at a DC-based marketing agency. He currently lives in Nashville.

Harper Grace Niedermeyer graduates from the University of Southern California in May with a Master's Degree in Social Work (MSW).

Brandon Owens graduates from Jacksonville State University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music Education. He will be continuing graduate work in music education at JSU starting in the fall.

Moira Pokemire graduates Cum Laude from Troy University in May with a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice/Homeland Security. Next she will be an Air Force Security Forces Officer at Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri.

Mady Taylor graduates Summa Cum Laude from Auburn University in May with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Chemistry with Minors in Business and History. She will attend University of Alabama in Birmingham's Medical School starting in July 2021.

May 2021

Christian Education by Kathy Gillmore



May 23 is the last day of our regular Sunday School year for children, youth and adults. Some adult classes will continue into the summer and we are planning some summer special series in June and July. Look for more information in the newsletter next month!



Vacation Bible School 2021

Adults! Please join us to make our church a winter wonderland of fun and learning for the children in our church family. Email dce@fpchsv.org to offer your gifts to this great tradition. Child care is available for volunteers with young children. Register to volunteer [HERE](#).

Youth! You are rock stars to our children. Lead a group or assist in a teaching workshop this year! Contact Youth Director, Anne Dillon Loflin, to let her know how you would like to become involved.

Children! Join us as Knights of North Castle, June 21 - 24, 9:00 a.m. - Noon. We'll sing, dance, craft, play games, and learn about the Armor of God! All children entering PreK (4 years old by 9/1/2021) through entering 5th grade are welcome. Register [HERE](#).

VBS at Home! If you cannot attend this year, sign up for our "At Home" kit to experience VBS with your family and friends at home, in a smaller group, and at a time of your choosing. Register [HERE](#).

May 2021

Music Ministry by Dr. Patricia Hacker



Last Sunday the Chancel Choir gathered on the beautiful garden of Alicia Beam's house. After a year of being apart, members of the choir enjoyed catching up with each other while they enjoyed delicious finger food and amazing Spring weather. We are optimistic that soon the church will have a full choir to worship and sing God's praises in our sanctuary.



May 2021

Presbyterian Youth Connection

by Anne Dillon Loflin



Thank you to everyone who helped facilitate our April activities! We have had a great month and are looking forward to all that is ahead in May.

This month we will conclude Sunday School and PYC meetings until August. It has been a joy to continue meeting this past year, both virtually and in-person. I am very excited to transition back to a more normal routine of events and meetings.

During this period of uncertainty, our youth members have worked hard to create community with one another while giving back and serving others. Through the blanket-making project benefitting our homebound members to performing in the Christmas drive-by pageant, they have consistently brought sunshine to the gloomiest days. They are an exceptionally special group, and I feel grateful to witness and experience their joy for serving and praising the Lord.

If you would like to help with upcoming youth projects or have ideas for gathering and service opportunities, please reach out to youth@fpchsv.org.

May 2021 Youth Calendar (Subject to change due to weather, etc.)

**off-site event

- Sunday, May 2nd: **NO** Sunday School or PYC
- Sunday, May 9th: Sunday School (9:30am-10:30am), PYC (5-6pm GBH garden)
- **Saturday, May 15th: **RESCHEDULED DATE** Camp Maranatha Youth Retreat (9am-9pm)
- Sunday, May 16th: Youth Sunday School (9:30am-10:30am), PYC (5-6pm GBH garden)
- Sunday, May 23rd: **NO** Sunday School or PYC
- **Saturday, May 29th: Work Day at Lincoln Village (8:30am-11:30am)
- Sunday, May 30th: **NO** Sunday School, Final PYC, (5-6pm, Location TBD)

With love and grace,
Anne Dillon Loflin
Interim Youth Director

May 2021

Mission and Evangelism

by Vicky Goodwin

Update on our 2021 Mission of the Year

The **Backpack Ministry** is an ongoing mission opportunity. With the guidance of the Food Bank of N. Alabama, FPC is the sole provider of weekend food kits to disadvantaged children at The Academy of Academics and Arts (AAA). About 20 kits are taken weekly and discreetly provided to need-identified children on Friday afternoons. We hope that this much needed service in our own community will continue to be an ongoing priority in your mission planning. The list of supplies for the kits can be found on the bulletin board at the church and on the website.

Please remember that there is an ongoing need for supplies. There is a link on the mission page of the church website where you can volunteer to make foot kits or deliver them. Karen Madison will continue to be the contact person for The Backpack Ministry. If you have questions, contact Karen Madison at karenmadison@comcast.net.

Due to the generosity of our church community, this ministry has been well funded. In addition to providing the food kits to AAA, we have been able to send a check for \$3000 directly to the Food Bank.

Update on our April Mission of the Month

First Presbyterian Church now has a group of volunteers who are prepared to begin working on the Meridian Street project by Habitat for Humanity. If you would like to be a part of this team, contact Jeff Wyatt at jmh55dr@gmail.com or (256) 617-9437 for more information.

Update on our March Mission of the Month

To date, \$2695 has been collected by our generous congregation in support of the Haiti Hospital. This is over and above the donation of \$1000 which the church Mission and Evangelism committee sends to the project each month. Additional donations are always welcome!

The Kairos Prison Ministry

The Kairos Ministry of Huntsville serves the Limestone Prison by bringing the love of Jesus to prisoners and their families. Dedicated volunteers have been able to help prisoners make significant changes in their lives. FPC is beginning the process of forming a group of volunteers to come forward and participate in this incredible ministry. For more information, please contact Dave Smith at 256-698-2983 or <https://www.v-s-inc.com/>.

May 2021

Mission and Evangelism by Vicky Goodwin

May Mission of the Month

Our Mission of the Month is a hands-on opportunity at Maranatha Camp and Conference Center. Maranatha, located on Guntersville Lake, was founded in 1954 by members of North Alabama Presbytery. It has been an integral part of FPC Huntsville ever since. From children attending day and overnight camps, to young adults serving as counselors and staff, to adults serving as board members, and members of all ages enjoying fellowship camp, Maranatha is a special place to many in our congregation. Ask anyone who has been there-it is a beautiful setting that brings you closer to God.



Some of the highlights of Maranatha include the Lakeside Conference Center (with hotel style rooms), climate-controlled cabins, high ropes course, climbing wall, zipline, swimming pool, water toys, paddle boards, kayaks/canoes, and so much more!

If you would like to know more about Maranatha and how your children might participate- see their website Maranatha.camp.

HANDS ON MISSION OPPORTUNITY!

- May 15, 2021 FPC will hold a Workday at Maranatha
- Meet at camp at 10am. 1091 Jeff Rd, Scottsboro, AL 35769 (This is approximately 45 mins.-1 hr. away)
- Our main job will be repair and painting of the dock.
- Lunch will be provided.
- We expect to be finished by midafternoon.



Mission and Evangelism by Vicky Goodwin

Maranatha has hosted summer camp and groups of all ages and sizes since shortly after the initial purchase of 98 acres along the Tennessee River over 50 years ago. Maranatha's founders, members of the North Alabama Presbytery, created it as a ministry to serve the greater church and provide an affordable camp facility for youth and families in the region to allow them to connect with God in his creation.



Building on those early foundations, Maranatha ultimately expanded to 118 acres, constructed new facilities, and enhanced access to the lake with the construction of a sea wall and dock. As our alumni base grew, and camper numbers increased, Maranatha expanded its vision as well, becoming a favorite refuge to people of all walks, economic situations, and cultures to enjoy nature and use it to deepen their relationship with God.



In Spring 2016, to enable each to better pursue their ministry, Maranatha was separated from the North Alabama Presbytery to operate as a stand-alone 501(c)3 Non-Profit Organization. This opportunity opens new doors for Maranatha as it continues to draw from its deep historical roots and network of alumni to create new experiences in nature that allow campers to connect to God and be transformed for his purpose.

May 2021

International Missionary Fellowship by Bo Lundy

BABIES, BABIES, BABIES

A maternity update from the newly opened Maternity Center in Bombardopolis. We have had 51 births and 119 consultations in the months of January and February of 2021. Just as predicted the nice new spacious building brought out the expected mothers, and we are thrilled. We have hired a midwife and two nurses (sponsored by a private donor) that work in the center. God is Good.

In other news, the hospital and the other missions are continuing to operate as normal. The political unrest has really not made it out to the providence of Bombardopolis, most folks in our area have a high regard of the President, due to his efforts of improving the infrastructure (roads). Matt and I visited Bombardopolis before Christmas of last year, for a few weeks. We were able to meet with the staff and do many needed repairs. The covid requirements of having a negative test before flying down and a negative test before flying back have complicated visits. Matt will soon be going down again so prayers for Matt's safe journey and prayers for Sarah would be appreciated.

I just wanted to give everyone an update on the mission in Haiti. I hope you all are having a good 2021. We are always looking for new partners in the mission in Haiti so spread the word. Also we ask that you consider (if not already) being a monthly donor to the mission, all you have to do is go to the website, Haitihospital.org and sign up.

Blessings,

Bo Lundy



Session Meeting Minutes by Sheila Fogle

March 9, 2021

A stated meeting of the Session of First Presbyterian Church was held in-person in the Fellowship Hall and via Zoom on Tuesday, March 9, 2021. The meeting was convened at 5:31 pm by moderator the Rev. Dr. Tara Bulger. A quorum was present.

In attendance were elders: Mary Adams, Brian Clayton (zoom), Vicky Goodwin (zoom), Jeff Hyatt, Angela Rawls, Al Steenwyk, David Young, and Janis Williams (zoom). Absent were Andrew Bevel, Ryan Parker, Bob Frank Smith, and Lori Smith. Staff present were Dr. Tara Bulger and Rev. Brett Gudeman.

- Dr. Bulger led a devotional on Psalm 23 and convened the meeting with prayer.
- The meeting agenda was approved without changes.
- Minutes from the January 4, 2021, January 26, 2021, and the February 9, 2021 Session Meeting were approved with a spelling correction in each.
- The calendar was reviewed with the following upcoming items noted.
 - Maundy Thursday Service 4/1 at 7 pm
 - Good Friday Service at 7 pm
 - Easter services: Sunrise Service at 6:15 am in the courtyard, 8:30 am in the sanctuary and 11:00 am in the sanctuary.

Discussion was held related to registration for attendance at one of the in-person Easter Sunday services. The decision was made to have registration for attendance at the Easter Sunday services and will start registration now. This can help to determine if a fourth service will be needed.

- Communications
 - Clerk
 - The Session held an email vote on February 11, 2021 related to moving the Annual meeting to March 7, 2021 when the church has been re-opened for in-person worship. Those unable to attend in-person could attend virtually via Zoom. The motion passed unanimously.
 - The PC(USA) 2020 Church Annual Statistical Report for FPC was distributed and approved unanimously.
 - Current Members:607
 - Average Attendance: 8:30 – 50, 11:00 – 61, Total 111

Session Meeting Minutes

by Sheila Fogle

- Report on Streaming Services – The report was distributed. Rev. Brett Gudeman discussed. The statistics shown are for the new system. YouTube views have increased significantly and are a more accurate statistic. On Facebook, the statistics will show a view if someone scrolls through the post.
- Janis Williams and Tara discussed the report from the North Alabama Presbytery stated meeting held February 27, 2021. Tara was installed as Moderator for this year. Joe Lundy preached and was approved for candidacy for the ministry.
 - Guntersville First Presbyterian Church has been without a minister for about a year. Guntersville had requested to hire a Southern Baptist minister for 1 year which wasn't approved. Pastor searches are taking two years or longer. Others in the Presbytery will be working with Guntersville to help them move forward in their search for a minister.
- Staff Reports
 - Senior Pastor - report distributed. Tara announced that the Preschool is fully enrolled for this next year.
 - Associate Pastor – report distributed
 - Director of Christian Education – report distributed
 - Director of Music – report distributed
 - Youth Director – report distributed
- Committee Reports
 - Christian Education – report distributed.
 - Mission and Evangelism – report distributed
 - Finance and Personnel – report distributed. Donations were down quite a bit this February compared to last year. January and February 2020 were some of the highest giving months in years. Donations being down isn't a concern yet since there was a surplus from 2020 that will carry into 2021.
 - Worship – report distributed. The 2021 Communion schedule was distributed. **Motion made to approve the Communion schedule and was approved unanimously.** Since communion is prepared ahead of time and not served, Tara asked members of the Session to review the calendar and volunteer to prepare the communion packets and let the Worship Committee know when. Packets can be prepared on either Friday or Saturday. Since people are wearing masks, will let people stand for those parts of the service for which the congregation usually stood.

Session Meeting Minutes

by Sheila Fogle

- Old Business
 - A discussion was held related to use of the Church Facilities by outside groups. When Covid happened, the church was shut down for outside activities requested by a church member mainly due to the need to sanitize the building. The Head of Staff usually approves these requests and asked if it was agreeable to continue this practice. David Young asked if there are some policies that would be expected to be followed related to Covid, such as food and beverages. Tara suggested that since there isn't a pressing need at this time that the discussion be delayed. Tara envisioned that when the church is back up and running, then requests would be revisited.
- New Business
 - Alabama's mask ordinance ends on April 9, 2021. Tara would like the Session to pray and discern the best way to handle this. For example, whether to wear masks or not may need to be revisited; is there one service where all masks are required and one service where no masks are required. The CDC has said that groups where all are vaccinated can meet without masks. A decision will need to be made regarding requiring masks. Tara recommended that the next Session meeting be moved to Tuesday April 6 so that the end of Alabama's mask ordinance can be discussed. The expectation is that there will be a lot of science available before this time. Elders should start discussion with others in the congregation to see what their thoughts are.

With the Session meeting a week earlier, if a Committee has anything that comes up after reports are due, these can be brought up at the Session meeting.

- Looking Ahead

Tara asked each member of the Session for one sign of joy or the Spirit's focus they had seen this past week. Various examples were given.

Next stated Session Meeting will be April 6, 2021 at 5:30 pm.

Reports are requested by March 31, 2021 and emailed to Sheila Fogle fsfogle@knology.net.

Tara adjourned the meeting with prayer.

**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

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