

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

July 2021

FIRST
WORD

FPCHSV.ORG

July 2021

A Sabbath Rest

by The Rev. Dr. Tara W. Bulger



Dear Church,

If there is one of the Ten Commandments that is most egregiously broken in our culture, I would argue that it is without a doubt God's command to hold a Sabbath. Honoring the Sabbath, a time set aside from work and a time dedicated to rest, is almost unheard of these days. And clergy are no exception. We are not any better at taking a Sabbath than other folks seem to be.

To refuse to take a Sabbath is, quite simply, to refuse to trust God. The commandment to take a Sabbath was written to ensure rest, to be sure, but it was also written so that there would be a dedicated time in our lives when we would stop striving and put our trust in God to provide. Everybody needs rest. But everyone also needs to rest from the worry and striving of this world, which can only be found in trusting God. So, when we set aside a time for Sabbath, we set aside a time to lay aside our constant hustling and instead trust that God is in control and can be trusted.

By the time you read this newsletter article, I will be at home recovering from knee surgery. This surgery will mean that for 3-4 weeks, I will do my physical therapy, but I will also do a lot of resting. I will also leave the work of the church in the capable hands of our staff, and I will place my concerns and prayers for our community firmly in God's hands. I am not worried. I have never taken more than a week away from church work at a time; I expect this time will be good for my body and soul.

I am praying that you will all find time for your own rest and refreshment. When is your Sabbath? Is it Sunday? Is it the entire day or just a part of the day? Whatever your Sabbath looks like, I hope it allows you to grow in your trust in the very one who called us into being! Our Creator God knows us and calls us to rest and trust. May we be faithful in following this command.

In grace and peace,

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

July 2021

Scheduling Sabbath? by The Rev. Brett Gudeman



This past week many of our staff made the journey to Montreat, North Carolina to attend a conference presented by the Presbyterian Association of Musicians. Before the conference began, we had the opportunity to sign up for classes by hour blocks. For every hour block there was an opportunity to select “Rest/Sabbath,” meaning you would not attend a class, but find time to commune with God and rest. I selected this for three of my classes every single day. I was extremely looking forward to taking a few hours each day without phone or computer, and simply sit, looking at the beautiful mountains of western North Carolina.

However, as the conference approached, I realized I had filled every single “Rest/Sabbath” block with a meeting. Some were fun meetings, reconnecting with a fellow pastor; some were professional meetings, such as meeting with a retired professor to glean some wisdom. At the end of the conference I was completely exhausted, far more tired than when I arrived, and that was because I failed to understand the gift of a moment’s Sabbath and rest.

As a culture that loves to be busy, one of the most difficult aspects of our lives to honor is that of rest, yet this is what God has called us to do. Especially, with life regaining much of its normality, we try to cram this year’s, plus last year’s busyness into one life. I urge our church, and myself, to find moments of Sabbath and rest in our week. To carve out a few moments a week that are without distractions and are resting in the Lord’s arms. Maybe this is through putting your phone away and meditating for ten minutes, maybe it is going for a walk with a partner or friend and enjoying community and nature together, maybe it is spending time in the Word in the morning.

Maybe you can find moments in the day to do this, maybe you’re like me and you have to put in the calendar or you’ll forget. But, be intentional, and find respite in the God who graciously beckons us toward rest in Godself.

With Grace and Peace,

Brett Gudeman

July 2021

Christian Education by Kathy Gillmore



VBS was a blast! The Knights of North Castle sang, danced, crafted, played, experimented, acted, and studied the King’s Book, all week on their quest to find the Great Armor. We also learned to “be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power,” from Ephesians 6:10. Many thanks to all the volunteers who made this week of fun and learning possible!



After a few weeks of rest and relaxation we are offering another of our Intergenerational Sunday School series! This three-week series will be held in Fellowship Hall on July 11, July 18, and July 25, 9:30 – 10:30. We encourage ALL AGES to attend, as we want the blessing of stories and wisdom from our older generations, and we want the younger generations to share their playfulness and openness to the Holy Spirit. This series, Rain Before Rainbows, is based on a beautiful children’s book which is inspired by Psalm 30:5 – “Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.” We are going to count our blessings, discover footsteps to follow, friends to help us, and talk about times when we have experienced both “rain” and “rainbows.” Please join us!



July 2021

Christian Education by Kathy Gillmore



Register now for Fellowship Camp! Let's gather at beautiful Camp Maranatha for some relaxation and fun. Stay the whole weekend, or just come for the day on Saturday.

The graphic features the text "FELLOWSHIP CAMP" in large, bold letters, with "FPCHSV" in a smaller font above it. To the right, it says "Join Us at Camp Maranatha for a Weekend of Fun and Fellowship!" and "August 6-August 8" in a rounded box. Below this, there are several icons: a zip line, a swimmer, a game board, a worshiper, a person resting, a water bottle, a tree stump, a compass, a campfire, a guitar, and a lantern. A central box lists the cost: "\$125 PER ROOM (SLEEPS UP TO 4) \$5 PER PERSON FOR THE DAY". On the far right, a red box says "SPEND THE WEEKEND OR THE DAY!".

Save the date for **Rally Day, August 15**, when we will welcome everyone back to Sunday School, and celebrate the new education year with a blessing of the backpacks! If you are new to our church please contact me at dce@fpchsv.org so that I can add your children to the class list and prepare gift bibles for them on Rally Day. Children who are 2 years old receive The Beginner's Bible, Kindergartners receive The Spark Story Bible, those in 4th grade receive the Connect NRSV Bible, and those in 6th grade receive The CEB Student Bible. It's going to be a great year!

July 2021

Music Ministry by Dr. Patricia Hacker



What is rest? In music, rests are intervals of silence within the music: an absence of sound that marks a pause either to reflect the text punctuation or, in instrumental music, a final phrase.

Imagine a piece of music without rests, what a chaotic work that would be. That is why God, in all his wisdom, rested the seventh day. As in music, He rested to pause and admire His creation.

At the end of June, some of our staff decided to participate in Montreat Worship and Music Conference where we got some rest, sung His praises, refreshed our spirits, and learned from God through music, bible studies, worship reflections, and the best, God's creation.

For those who have been at Montreat before, you know that is a place where you can find God in every corner of those majestic mountains. You can rest in the Lord's presence, and I swelled in God's Spirit returning rested and invigorated to continue doing His mighty work.

Patricia

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Matthew 11:28

July 2021

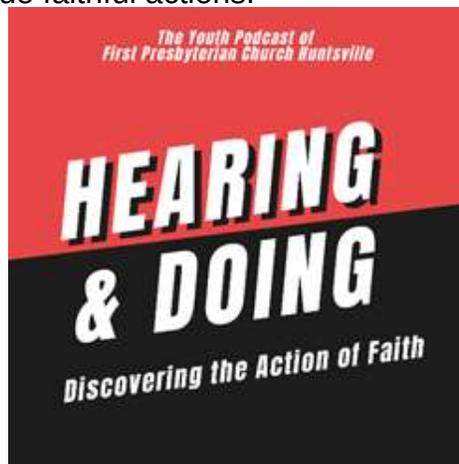
Youth Ministry by Anne Dillon Loflin



We have had a great start to Youth summer activities! We are looking forward to many more opportunities for fellowship and fun during the month of July.



Tune in to our brand-new Youth Podcast! Hearing and Doing: Discovering the Action of Faith is hosted by Anne Dillon, Pastor Tara, and Pastor Brett. Each episode of the series follows a chapter of the book of James, discusses topical issues for young people and outlines ways we can all pursue faithful actions.



Youth Summer Calendar:

- Tuesday, July 6th: Movie Night and Pizza at GBH, 6:30pm-9pm
- Wednesday, July 7th: Work Day at 2nd Mile Preschool, 9am-11am
- Sunday, July 11th: Trash Pandas Baseball Game, Time TBA
- Monday, July 26th: Lunch at Taco Mama, 12pm-1:30pm

Blessings,
Anne Dillon

Interim Youth Director

July 2021

Mission and Evangelism

by Vicky Goodwin



Kairos Prison Ministry

Kairos Prison Ministry International, Inc. is a lay-led, interdenominational Christian ministry in which men and women volunteers bring Christ's love and forgiveness to prisoners and their families. They take the participants on a journey that demonstrates the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ. Kairos Prison Ministry is Christian in nature.

One of their programs is Kairos Inside, which starts with a 3 ½ day weekend designed to start building the Christian community inside the institution. It includes a series of talks, discussions, and chapel meditations with many of the participants being negative leaders within the prison. For many of them, the Kairos weekend creates the desire to become a Christian and for others the desire to continue his/her spiritual growth. After the weekend, Christian community begins, where the Kairos Community prays and fellowships together on a regular basis.

First Presbyterian Church Support

The Kairos Ministry of Huntsville serves the Limestone Prison where its dedicated volunteers have helped prisoners make significant changes in their lives. Traditionally, FPC has provided cookies and special placemats for the inside weekends and an annual donation of \$1000. We are now forming a group of volunteers to participate directly with the program. For more information, please contact Dave Smith at 256-698-2983 or <https://www.v-s-inc.com/>.

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.

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

July 2021

Mission of the Month by Nancy Lundy

"And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile." -Matthew 5:41

We are excited to be supporting the Second Mile Preschool as our mission of the month for July. The preschool is just one of the ministries of Second Mile. Second Mile has community programs (such as The Neighborhood Thrift Store), educational programs (like the preschool), and family programs (for example Pride for Parents). Please visit their website to see the many ways they serve: secondmile.net.

FPC has been privileged to walk with Second Mile Preschool from its very beginning. The preschool was started in 1989 as a joint mission of First Presbyterian Church, Covenant Presbyterian Church and Central Presbyterian Church. Their mission is to provide an affordable, high quality education in a Christian environment where everyone feels respected, valued, and loved. Scholarships for each student help to keep costs low and parents can volunteer at The Neighborhood Thrift Store to cover the remaining expense. The preschool strives to inspire a love of learning and prepare the children for kindergarten by strengthening educational, social, and emotional skills. ESL (English as second language) is provided for students as needed. Over 600 children have been served so far. Our support will help to continue to keep tuition costs low and provide an inspiring environment for the children!

There are several supplies needed for Second Mile Preschool as they prepare for a new school year.

- Sturdy Hula Hoops
- Healthy snacks
- Toilet paper
- Paper towels
- Clorox wipes
- Liquid Hand soap
- Bottled water

We will be collecting supplies through the end of July.

Session Meeting Minutes

by Sheila Fogle

May 11, 2021

A stated meeting of the Session of First Presbyterian Church was held in-person in the Fellowship Hall on Tuesday, May 11, 2021. The meeting was convened at 5:32 pm with a moment of silence by moderator the Rev. Dr. Tara Bulger. A quorum was present.

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

- Dr. Bulger led Session Worship to include prayer, confession and Lectio Divina on Psalm 100. At the next Session meeting, worship will be held in the Sanctuary.
- The meeting agenda was approved unanimously without changes.
- Session Meeting Minutes from the Stated Session Meeting April 6, 2020 was approved unanimously with no changes.
- Calendar Review: There will be a first Sunday of the month fellowship activity held at Stovehouse starting in June. Elders were encouraged to participate and support this activity
- Communications
 - Clerk
 - Current Members:604 (death of Reggie Miree, Bill McAlister, Carroll Johnson)
 - Average Attendance during the month of April was: 8:30 – 73, 11:00 – 100, Total – 173. Graphs of streaming services will no longer be provided since they are difficult to read. Statistics will be provided instead. Streaming services statistics are the following: Soundcloud - 45; YouTube - 49; Vimeo - 50; Facebook – 191
 - An email announcement from the North Alabama Presbytery Executive Commission was provided to the Session for their information.
 - Staff Reports
 - Senior Pastor - report distributed. Tara added that a person has expressed interest in joining the church. Based upon this interest, a New Member class will be offered in July and open to those interested in joining the church.
 - Associate Pastor – report distributed
 - Director of Christian Education – report distributed. This year there will be a Vacation Bible School (VBS) option for at home. Currently those that have signed up have signed up for in-person VBS. One family has asked for VBS materials since they will be on vacation.
 - Director of Music – report distributed
 - Youth Director – report distributed

Session Meeting Minutes

by Sheila Fogle

- Committee Reports
 - Christian Education – report distributed. Kathy Gillmore has asked for Session guidance for wearing of masks during VBS. Parents are asking questions. Kathy thought it would be the same policy used for Sunday School. First Friends Preschool will have a Summer Camp week in June and currently doesn't have a specific mask policy. Based upon how this goes, a determination will be made on how to handle VBS.
 - Mission and Evangelism – report distributed
 - Finance and Personnel – report distributed. Giving is a little more than expected at this point in the year. People seem to be more generous. The numbers will look a little off since some people paid pledges in full.
 - Worship – no report
- Old Business
 - Alabama's mask ordinance ended on April 9, 2021. Tara looked at the Alabama Department of Public Health page. About 44% of the population is vaccinated according to the site. Alabama has more doses of vaccine than what is being used. As of Thursday, Tara's pediatrician will be vaccinating those over 12. Tara has also talked to Dr. Nancy Lundy. Those at risk are those that haven't been vaccinated. Andrew talked to his father-in-law whose church has a masked and an unmasked service. The Session has previously talked about doing this. An option was discussed regarding making both services mask optional. Social distancing could still be used. At this point, most people eligible to be vaccinated have been vaccinated. A suggestion was made to wait until the first of June to no longer require masks to allow people time to be fully vaccinated. If the decision was made to wait until the first of June, this would give some warning to those that haven't been vaccinated and give them an opportunity to be vaccinated. The cleaning protocol currently in place will continue. **The motion was made and seconded that First Presbyterian would no longer require masks beginning the first Sunday in June.** The Motion was approved unanimously. There was a discussion regarding how to handle the communion wafers and the recommendation was made to continue to have the wafers in the small plastic cups.
- New Business –
 - Two Commissioners are needed for the June 8, 2021 Summer Stated Meeting of the NAP that are to be submitted no later than May 28. Lori Smith and Jeff Hyatt agreed to represent First Presbyterian at the meeting.

July 2021

Session Meeting Minutes

by Sheila Fogle

- o Other items discussed were an update on the new directory. Tara indicated that it was on her desk waiting a final review. There aren't pictures for everyone. Tara will ask Kelsey Worley if everyone that hasn't submitted a picture has been asked for pictures. Al Steenwyk has viewed the services online for the past 2 Sundays and there have been some audio issues. Brett indicated that the technical team is watching. This past Sunday there was an operator error. The week before there was an issue that required the trainer to come here to assess. The technical team monitors the feeds to see if problems are occurring. Tara also asked if there was a preference if she was at the pulpit for the sermon or in the middle. The thought was that it is Tara's preference as to where she wants to stand.

Looking Ahead

Next stated Session Meeting will be June 8, 2021 at 5:30 pm.

Reports are requested by June 1, 2021 and emailed to Sheila Fogle fsfogle@knology.net.

Tara adjourned the meeting with prayer at 6:24 pm

**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

307 GATES AVE SE
HUNTSVILLE, AL 35801