



FIRST WORD

*First Presbyterian
Church*

OCTOBER 2021

October 2021

Looking Ahead to 2022 by The Rev. Dr. Tara W. Bulger



Dear Church,

I find it very hard to believe that it is October. There is so much to look forward to this month. I am already planning my trunk or treat theme.

October is also the time of year when we begin budgeting for the 2022 church year. The budgeting process is a careful one; we must discern where God is calling us to serve as a church and how we can be good stewards of the support given by our church members. I believe God calls us to stretch ourselves in how we give and how we serve. We are called to this work by God because we can become more faithful and better servants in trying and growing. As always, our model is Christ, who gave of his very life to serve humanity.

So as our church staff and leadership begin making plans for this next year, please pray for us. Please pray, too, for discernment in how you might give and serve faithfully in 2022.

In hope for our Church,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tara". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a horizontal line underneath the name.



October 2021

Giving for the Next by The Rev. Brett Gudeman



The greatest part of my job as a pastor is teaching and telling others about the love of Jesus Christ. This joy is further increased when educating and showing our children the love of Christ. Last month we did our “Welcome to the Table” milestone for our six and seven-year-olds where they learned about communion. We learned about the theological significance of communion, but also what it means for our worship. It was a beautiful time, a reminder for me of how our giving, our stewardship, and our care moves through the generations. Just as we received much from the generations before, as we were taught through the great cloud of witnesses who have gone before, now we get to participate in the building of God’s Kingdom today, passing on the faith.

As we enter a season of stewardship, I challenge each one of us to think about what we can give and offer to make sure each new generation knows about Christ’s love. This happens in a myriad of ways, through our giving, through our volunteering, through our worship, through our prayers, and many more ways. Take some time to sit and listen to that question we should always be listening for, “What is God calling me to do today, this week, this month, and this year?”

With Grace and Gratitude for this Church,

Brett



October 2021

Christian Education by Kathy Gillmore



Sunday School Special

Have you wondered about how different versions of the Bible come to be? The Comrades class has invited a special speaker, Mark Palmer, to share with them the story behind the making of the New International Version of the Bible and they are inviting everyone to join them on **October 3 and October 10**, 9:30 – 10:30, in room #106. Mark Palmer is the son of the Executive Director for the NIV and his presentation will include: How did it start? Who worked on the translation? What was the policy of translation? Who sponsored it? How long did it take? Where was it translated? Email Kathy Gillmore, or tell Bill Lummus, if you are interested in attending so that we can prepare to have enough chairs for everyone.

Intergenerational Mission Night

We'll gather on Friday, **October 15**, 5:30 – 7:00, for dinner and a mission project in support of the Mission of the Month – Presbyterian Home for Children. People of all ages are encouraged to attend. We'll be putting together gift bags and baskets for residents and families of Presbyterian Home for Children, and decorating cookies and the gift bags to show our love and send a smile.

INTER-GENERATIONAL

Let's give Presbyterian Home for Children something to smile about!

MISSION

NIGHT!

October 15, 2021 • 5:30 p.m.
in Fellowship Hall

Dinner
Gift bag filling
Cookie decorating

First Pres. Church
307 Gates Ave SE
Huntsville, AL 35801

October 2021

Christian Education
by Kathy Gillmore



PKC

Presbyterian Kids Connection, our youth group for 3rd – 5th graders, will be exploring Creation Care from Noon – 2:00 on Sunday, October 17. Our special guests will be Stephanie Hyatt's bunnies! Stephanie will share with us what special care is involved when you have rabbits for pets. We'll also have lunch together, play fun youth group games, and have our rope prayer circle. Click [HERE](#) to register for this event so that we know how many to plan for the meal and for rotation through activities.

Trunk or Treat

Plan to wander the yard and parking lot on Friday, **October 29**, 6:00 – 7:00, looking for treats and fun! We'll have outdoor stations of all sorts for you to enjoy such as a hot dog supper, popcorn, sno-cone, cupcake walk, bouncy-slide, and crafts. Invite a friend to join you! Click [HERE](#) if you want to sign up to decorate your vehicle or wish to donate a bag or two of candy!



October 2021

Music Ministry by Dr. Patricia Hacker



Taking care of what God loves

Part of my job is to read and read a great number of lyrics from hymns and songs just to find the perfect words adequate to the scriptures of each service. Each song is an offering to God, to His glory, to His goodness, to His love for us. The care and dedication that each author spends to provide us authenticity and truth about their faith experiences is overwhelming. There are many books related to the stories behind the creation of hymns, but to be honest, each hymn and each song creates in us a particular and special truth, a relationship with our faith and our spiritual connection with God. It is personal and so special.

As we enter a stewardship season, the job of taking care of your spiritual journey of faith through music is a big responsibility. Our church is rich in musical traditions, and we are taking care of continuing to provide excellence and joy for God's glory. Offering the gift of song each Sunday is our goal. Developing children's faith through music is our duty; giving the opportunity to others to offer their gifts and talents to God is our dedication. Taking care of the instruments, scores, robes, equipment etc., is our responsibility. However, the care of our people through prayer, fellowship, encouragement, and love is what God taught us to do. Our brothers and sisters in Christ are God's beloved treasure. Let's take care of each other and all the gifts that God has given us.

Patricia Hacker

October 2021

Youth Ministry by Anne Dillon Loflin



Thank you to everyone who made this past month of youth programming so successful. September was full of exciting and fun activities, from going to Top Golf, to playing laser tag at the Fall Festival, to tubing and paddle boarding together at Lake Guntersville.

Sunday School classes have been working hard to develop a mission project of their own choosing in order to benefit the community and learn the process of executing a service endeavor. They have selected to host a sports equipment and donation drive for the Boys and Girls Club of North Alabama. We will be collecting gently used and new sports equipment to donate to their students. More information will be provided in upcoming bulletins and Sunday Service announcements.

Despite all the hurdles these young people have faced over the last 18 months, it is remarkable how each hardship has left them seeking more ways to serve others. As the group began brainstorming service projects to work on, I was expecting a short list of a few thoughts. However, I was overwhelmed by a list of over 25 incredible ideas, each with bullet points full of details for promotion, execution, and development of the project. Their hearts were overflowing with desire to make a difference. It was beautiful to witness.

May we all continue to face our circumstances through a perspective of service, helping to make a difference for others and therefore a difference in ourselves. The Lord is urging us to do our part to make the community a better place in whatever small way we can. I'm grateful to experience firsthand how the youth members continue to reflect and pursue that truth and purpose.

Blessings,

Anne Dillon Loflin
Interim Youth Director

October 2021

Youth Ministry by Anne Dillon Loflin



October Calendar:

Sunday, October 3rd: No PYC (Fall Break)

Sunday, October 10th: PYC Tie Dye Party (5pm-6:30pm, 6-12th graders)

Sunday, October 17th: PYC (5pm-6:30pm, 6-12th graders)

Sunday, October 24th: PYC at Tate Farms (Time TBD)

Friday, October 29th: Trunk or Treat



October 2021

October Mission of the Month by Vicky Goodwin



October Mission of the Month

The Presbyterian Home for Children is a more than 150-year-old ministry of the Presbyterian Churches of Alabama. It serves children, families and young adults who seek healing and hope for their troubled lives.

For children and adolescents, PHFC offers The Moderate Care Residential Therapeutic Program for teens who have been removed from their homes by the Alabama Department of Human Resources. These young people have emotional and behavioral management difficulties that interfere with their ability to function in a family or community setting. There is also an Ascension Leadership Academy, their accredited private school, that helps children succeed academically.

For families, there is the Secure Dwellings Program that provides safe housing on the PHFC campus to homeless children and their female caregivers. There are also supportive housing communities throughout the state that offer these same services. The Family Bridges program delivers services to families in their own homes to help preserve and unify them.

The PHFC Thrift Store serves its residents and the local community. Often the Thrift Store is a resident's first job after they arrive on campus, providing income and job skills training.

On **October 15, from 5:30-7:00 pm** there will be an Intergenerational Mission Night during which the congregation will be tasked with creating cards and gift bags for the residents of PHFC. These will be delivered on November 6, at a volunteer workday at the home which is located in Talladega, a 2.5-hour drive. We will be leaving at 7am and will return early in the evening. Projects planned are for painting either inside or outside depending on the weather.

The church bus will be available for transportation.

Contact Kathy Gillmore at dce@fpchsv.org for more information or to volunteer for the Intergenerational Mission Night.

Contact Nancy Lundy at nlundy@knology.net for more information or to volunteer for the work day at the Presbyterian Home for Children.

Mission and Evangelism Updates by Vicky Goodwin

Update on the August Mission of the Month

The Inner-City Learning Center of Huntsville expressed enthusiastic gratitude for the generosity of First Presbyterian Church.



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 food 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.

Session Meeting Minutes

by Sheila Fogle

Session Meeting Minutes First Presbyterian Church, Huntsville, Alabama August 10, 2021

A stated meeting of the Session of First Presbyterian Church was held in-person in the Fellowship Hall on Tuesday, August 10, 2021. The meeting was convened at 5:32 pm in the Sanctuary. A quorum was present.

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

- Dr. Bulger led the Session in Worship in the sanctuary, opening the worship with prayer.
- The meeting agenda was approved unanimously without changes.
- Session Meeting Minutes for the Stated Session Meeting June 8, 2021 and the Called Session Meeting July 25, 2021 were both approved unanimously.
- The calendar was reviewed with the following items included:
 - August 15: Rally Day
 - August 15: Installation and Ordination of New Elders – 11:00 worship service
 - August 24-25: Tara away for retreat with preaching group
 - September 8: Wednesday Night Live Begins
 - September 9: first Thursday night worship service at 5:30 pm
 - September 13-16: Tara at Stewardship Conference
- Communications
 - Clerk
 - Current Members: 602 (Deaths: Morris Hammer, Bill Wollett, Carlotta Gattis, Lillian Cowart, Dorothy Miree; New Members: Neil Sanders, Clint, Vida, Easton, and Lizzy Wann)
 - Average Attendance:
 - June average attendance: 8:30 – 57; 11:00 – 92; Total - 149
 - July average attendance: 8:30 – 50; 11:00 – 84; Total - 134
 - Average Numbers for Online Worship for June and July: Facebook: 167; Vimeo: 39; YouTube: 45; Soundcloud: 60. (these are weekly averages)

Session Meeting Minutes

by Sheila Fogle

- Tara ran a report of those people that attended in 2019 and early 2020. Once Rally Day occurs, she plans to start calling those that haven't been attending to invite them back.
- Staff Reports
 - Senior Pastor - report distributed
 - 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 – The June and July reports were distributed. There is a new ministry with the Huntsville Inner City Learning Center. Nan McBride and Jo Recio helped get their first library started.
 - Finance and Personnel – Financial reports were distributed. In reviewing the Giving report, Tara indicated that FPC is still over last year's number by \$49K; we continue to have a generous congregation. Despite some property issues with a tree that came down, staff is under budget. First Friends Preschool is down about 30 kids due to Covid. Lots of moms with babies have pulled their babies out. This may result in approximately \$7K deficit. First Friends can take preschoolers at any time as long as there are spots available. This is the trend for other preschools as well.
 - A tree on the property adjacent to FPC came down and damaged the roof of the Education wing. There was a \$5K deductible for the insurance. FPC had the tree removed from our property and repaired the roof. There is another tree on the adjacent property that appears to be diseased and the plan is to send a registered letter to the owners requesting they take care of the tree.
 - Worship – The report was distributed. The new Thursday service is different than the Sunday service and will be a time to worship for those that might not be able to attend on Sunday. The Thursday service will start in the John Allen Hall.
- Old Business
 - FPC's insurance covered the replacement of the catalytic converter stolen from the bus.
- New Business

Session Meeting Minutes

by Sheila Fogle

- Covid Considerations – The CDC has changed their recommendation and announced that vaccinated people can get breakthrough Covid but it should be a milder case. A vaccinated person can still pass Covid to someone else. A concern is that Covid will be passed along to children for which there isn't currently a Covid vaccine available for those under 12.
- The Session discussed what to do on Sundays. Information was provided in the Session packet from Huntsville Hospital and physicians. At the time the packet information was provided, there was no mention about wearing masks. Today the Huntsville Hospital Chief Operating Officer said that they are seeing Covid in children and they are now asking for masks to be used. The question was asked as to the percentage of people that are vaccinated that are getting Covid. Tara said the percentage is very small but she isn't willing for that very small amount be a child. The comment was made that if the recommendation is that masks are needed for schools, this should be an indication to use them at church. The Session discussed whether to require or request the use of masks. There was a concern that if we don't require masks, we may have families going back and worshiping at home. The reason for the use of masks is to protect the children who aren't able to be vaccinated at this time. Nativity and First Baptist are requiring masks. **Motion: we ask the congregation to please wear masks to start this Sunday in the interest of preserving the health of the children of our congregation.** The motion was approved unanimously. Tara also plans to send an email to parents asking for their feedback related to the wearing of masks.
- Amy Stucky requested the Session form a medical advisory committee of church member physicians to help the Session sort through the CDC recommendations, news from Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) and our local experience. Tara said she is open to however the Session would like to handle this. When Tara brings recommendations to the Session, she talks to medical personnel from our congregation as well as talks to others in the community. The Session discussed different options if a Covid task force were formed. An option would be to elect a Covid task force and let them make all the decisions. Another option would be to let the task force do all the work and bring it to the Session for the Session to vote on it. The Session is elected by the congregation to represent them and if the Session does their job, then a task force isn't needed. Tara recommended that she reach out each month to physicians and other sources both inside and outside the congregation to provide info related to Covid that will be include in the Session packet. **Motion: The Session will not form a task force and will seek outside opinions as needed.** The motion was approved unanimously.

Session Meeting Minutes by Sheila Fogle

- Motion: A Congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, August 29, 2021 to receive the report from the Nominating Committee and to elect new officers. The motion was approved unanimously.
- Tara asked the Session to consider moving the Session meetings from the second Tuesday each month to another day, possibly the second Sunday evening. This would allow her to minimize the number of missed sports events her daughter participates in. If it doesn't work to move the meeting, the meetings can continue on Tuesday evening. After discussion, the Session agreed to move the Session meetings to the second Monday of each month at 5:30 pm.

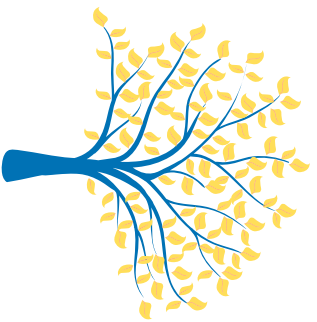
Looking Ahead

The Church Directory hasn't been distributed yet but should be coming out soon.

Next stated Session Meeting will be Monday September 13, 2021 at 5:30 pm.

Reports are requested by Tuesday September 7, 2021 and emailed to Sheila Fogle fsfogle@knology.net.

Tara adjourned the meeting with prayer Tara at 6:45 pm.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

Church

307 Gates Ave SE

Huntsville, AL 35801