



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

April 2021

FIRST WORD

FPCHSV.ORG

April 2021

Holy Week and Easter by The Rev. Dr. Tara W. Bulger



Dear Church,

As I write this to you, I am in the thick of preparing for Holy Week services. From Palm Sunday to Maundy Thursday, to Good Friday, to Easter morning, the story of our Lord and Savior never fails to move me. I am humbled and awed at both the darkness of Holy Week and the joy of Easter resurrection.

Eugene Peterson wrote, "It is not easy to convey a sense of wonder, let alone resurrection wonder, to another. It's the very nature of wonder to catch us off guard, to circumvent expectations and assumptions. Wonder can't be packaged, and it can't be worked up. It requires some sense of being there and some sense of engagement." I hope for us each this Holy Week a sense of wonder and engagement. I hope we are all caught off guard by the incredible beauty and truth of what we believe. The surest way to do this is to attend each of the Holy Week services. Skipping from Palm Sunday to Easter morning is to miss the experience of the whole story.

Remember that we will live stream all of the Holy Week services. If you are unable to attend, please try and watch online. But do try to join us here in worship. Being the Body of Christ gathered together during this holy time is very important.

In the Sure and Certain Hope of the Resurrection,



April 2021

Adult Education by The Rev. Brett Gudeman



Hello Church!

In addition to the many adult education opportunities, there will be two new ones offered this month which I hope you will be able to join!

The first is through our Amos 5:24 group. For those who are interested in learning about some of the injustices and inequities in our society, and discussing how we can respond and grow, we will be providing a four-week class where we will look at a resource during the week and then come together to discuss what we learned and what we were confused by. This will take place Wednesdays from 5:00-6:00 PM on Zoom and will be from April 21 through May 12th. If you are interested in joining, or desire to access the resource list to journey independently, click [**HERE**](#) to register, call the church office, or email me at associatepastor@fpchsv.org.

The second opportunity is a Biblical studies class on the Gospels. I will lead a four-week journey through the Gospels on Tuesdays from 12:00-1:00 PM and will be from April 20th through May 11th. This will be offered as a hybrid option, both on Zoom and in-person in the library. I will spend the first half of the class lecturing with general information about each gospel, providing some tools to help us understand the text. Then, we will spend the second half of class reading a story aloud and discussing together. No preparation is needed, simply come and let us learn from God's Word together. For those who are not able to attend, I will be posting the lecture aspect of the class online. If you would like to register for the class, or would like to be notified with the lectures are available, click [**HERE**](#), call the church office, or email me at associatepastor@fpchsv.org.

Hope to see you at one of these opportunities!

With Grace,

Rev. Brett Gudeman

April 2021

Christian Education by Kathy Gillmore



Christian Education News for Spring

Welcome back to Sunday School for all ages 9:30 – 10:30!

- Peepers for preschool aged children meets in room #110/111 (first floor of Education Wing)
- Godly Play for grade school aged children meets in room #011 (basement of Education Wing)
- Youth class (hybrid) meets in room #205 (CE Resource Room) and on Zoom
- Seminar class for adults (hybrid) meets in the Library and on Zoom*
- Feasting on the Word class for adults (hybrid) meets in Fellowship Hall and on Zoom*
- Comrades class for adults meets in room #106 (just past the Library and to the right)

*to receive the link in a weekly email register for these Zoom Communities on our website fpchsv.org/registration



Hats off to the Graduates!

May 9 is the Sunday we will be recognizing our High School, College, and Grad School graduates with a special blessing as they start a new chapter in their lives. Also we would like to list our graduates and include some information about them in the May First Word newsletter. Please contact Kathy Gillmore at dce@fpchsv.org to let her know.

Save the Date for VBS!!

We are planning Vacation Bible School for **June 21 – 24**. Children entering Pre-K through 5th grade in the Fall of 2021 are welcome! We are planning now for great in-person and at-home opportunities to explore our castle theme VBS – Knights of North Castle. If you are interested in being on the planning team and/or interested in volunteering that week to make this wonderful week possible please contact Kathy Gillmore at dce@fpchsv.org. Thank you!



April 2021

Music Ministry by Dr. Patricia Hacker



Spring is Here!!!!

And also, a new season for our Church. I feel that after a year of pre-recorded services, limited seating in our sanctuary for worship, and the choir presenting music through pre-recorded videos, finally this period is coming to an end.

It is so important as a community to worship together in person. One of my favorite moments is when we breathe together and say "Thanks be to God" after our Assurance of Pardon. Yes, it is that feeling of assurance that we are so grateful for life and all the blessings we receive every day.

Easter is upon us, and the hymn written by Shirley Erena Murray explains the feeling of new beginnings and life itself through Christ our risen Lord.

*Because you live, O Christ, the garden of the world has come to flower;
The darkness of the tomb is flooded with your resurrection power
The stone has rolled away and death cannot imprison!
O sing this Easter day, for Jesus Christ has risen!*

*Because you live, O Christ, the spirit bird of hope is freed for flying;
Our cages of despair no longer keep us closed and life denying*

*Because you live, O Christ, the rainbow of your peace will span creation;
The colors of your love will draw all humankind to adoration.
The stone has rolled away and death cannot imprison!
O sing this Easter day, for Jesus Christ has risen!*

Happy Easter!!!!

Patricia Hacker

April 2021

Presbyterian Youth Connection

by Anne Dillon Loflin



We have had a wonderful start back to in-person youth activities! Thank you to all of our participants and helpers for making this past month run smoothly and safely.

Youth members participated in several fun activities last month, including making kindness rocks to hide around Big Spring Park, stuffing and packing eggs for the children's ministry "Operation Egg Drop" project, and enjoying the beautiful spring weather at Lewter Park.



April 2021 Calendar

**- offsite event

- Sunday, April 4th: Easter Sunday, NO SUNDAY SCHOOL OR PYC
- **Saturday, April 10th: Hike at Monte Sano Mountain (11am-12:30pm)
- Sunday, April 11th: Sunday School (9:30-10:30am, Hybrid), PYC (5-6pm, GBH garden)
- Sunday, April 18th: Sunday School (9:30-10:30am, Hybrid), PYC (5-6pm, GBH garden)
- **Saturday, April 24th: Youth Retreat at Camp Maranatha (9am-9pm)
- Sunday, April 25th: Sunday School (9:30am-10:30am, Hybrid), PYC (5-6pm, GBH garden)

Blessings,
Anne Dillon
youth@fpchsv.org

April 2021

Mission and Evangelism by Vicky Goodwin



Mission of the Month for April: Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity of Madison County is an ecumenical, grassroots, Christian housing ministry that seeks to eliminate poverty housing from the community and make decent shelter a matter of conscience and action. Clients are offered the opportunity to purchase their own secure and affordable homes. The homes are not free, and homeowners are required to pay a monthly mortgage at 0% interest until they pay off the cost to build the home.

Habitat is excited to announce its **Meridian Street Community**, a center of influence located in Northeast Huntsville and future home to 31 families. We are pleased to make this our FPC Mission of the Month for April. We are requesting volunteers to form a First Presbyterian team of workers. The homebuilding work is done both onsite at the home, and in the Habitat warehouse/store located at Washington & Pratt. Volunteers are asked to sign up for a Zoom class that lasts for approximately one hour prior to beginning work on the project. It is offered every two weeks on Saturday mornings. Please contact Jeff Hyatt at jmh55dr@gmail.com or (256) 617-9437 for more information.



(A photo of the project that shows MLK Elementary in the upper left corner)



April 2021

Mission and Evangelism Cont'd by Vicky Goodwin

Photos courtesy of Habitat for Humanity of Madison County



As other metropolitan areas have struggled with the COVID pandemic, the greater Huntsville area continues to thrive as new businesses, jobs, and opportunities move into our area. With these new blessings, we are having to deal with challenges in our community, which already existed, but are now being exasperated. In the 2019 American Community Survey conducted by the Census Bureau, the median rent was estimated to be \$857 in our community. By January 2021, this number had increased by over 10% to \$946, according to RentCafe. If a family is looking to escape the rental market into homeownership, they are going to struggle to find an affordable home even with the record low-interest rates. The median cost of a home on the market in February 2021 was \$245,000, a 15.8% increase over the same time last year. Of the families in our area who make less than \$48,000 a year, 42% of them pay 50% or more of their gross income for housing. This is a statistic that needs to change. When people spend all their money, time and energy on their home, it leaves little for education, improvement, peace or purpose. We want to see our communities thrive.

Update on our March Mission of the Month

To date, \$2175 has been collected by our generous congregation in support of the Haiti Hospital. This is in addition to the annual \$2400 pledged to the project by the church.

April 2021

Mission and Evangelism Cont'd by Vicky Goodwin

Update on our February Mission of the Month

We have provided the Village of Promise with lunches for their "Infant University" participants. We are providing 15-20 lunches on 7 days throughout the semester. Volunteers are still needed to make the food, pack it, and deliver it. Please email Mission & Evangelism committee member Nancy Lundy at nlundy@knology.net. The remaining date is April 7. We are so thankful for the 24 church members who have volunteered so far.



The Mission and Evangelism Committee would like to recognize church member, Karen Lastovic, for her ten years of service as the director of the Second Mile Preschool. She has been a dedicated worker, a liaison to First Presbyterian Church. Health issues have forced her to resign her position, but she continues to volunteer her time at the school. Look for a detailed description of this mission in our upcoming Mission and Evangelism quarterly newsletter.

Cookies for Kairos

A big thank you to everyone who contributed cookies!



April 2021

Mission and Evangelism Cont'd by Vicky Goodwin



Prescription Pill Bottle Collection

We are continuing to collect empty prescription bottles for the Huntsville Community Free Clinic. There is a collection bin in the hallway outside of Fellowship Hall. Please remove the labels before dropping them off.

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.

**Look for our upcoming Mission
and Evangelism Quarterly
Newsletter next month!**

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307 GATES AVE SE
HUNTSVILLE, AL 35801