

November 2020

First Presbyterian Church

Huntsville, Alabama



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November 2020

Vital Worshiping Communities by The Rev. Dr. Tara W. Bulger



There is a TED Talk given by Rabbi Sharon Brous that I watched recently. Rabbi Brous believes that religious institutions can become nothing more than empty rituals if we are not careful. She believes that four characteristics must be evident in every vital worshiping community.

First, she believes that worshiping communities must be places of wakefulness. Wakefulness means being awake and aware of the world around us and our many problems. She thinks that faithful people must always have our hearts and eyes open to the world and realize that we are responsible for responding to these problems.

Second, she believes worshiping communities should be places of hope. Hope sees the world for what it is and still yearns and believes in the possibility of a better and more just future.

Third, she believes worshiping communities should be mighty. They must recognize that they have the ability and the strength to make a change in our world.

And fourth, she believes worshiping communities should have a sense of inter-connectedness. They must realize that we are all God's beloved children and that there is no such thing as "us and them."

Rabbi Brous' talk reminded me that those are also the things we strive for here at First Presbyterian Huntsville. Believing and rooting ourselves in our Risen Lord, Jesus Christ, we seek to serve and heal the world. I am grateful to be a part of a church community like ours. May we continue to strive for these goals as we are the hands and feet of Jesus Christ.

Grace and Peace to You,

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.

November 2020

Silence

by The Rev. Brett Gudeman



Dr. Bulger has begun gathering the staff on Mondays to participate in a *Lectio Divina* prayer together. This is a type of prayer that centers around a section of Scripture paired with silence. It does not last long; we usually complete the spiritual exercise in under 15 minutes. But, those 15 minutes of intentional, prayerful silence transforms the rest of the week. Silence with God is a very intimate, vulnerable place to be, and we have to make a conscious decision to exist there. I notice how often we use sound as a shield to refrain from entering personal moments with God. We keep the radio on in the car, the TV on in the background, podcasts while we're cleaning, music when we're working. We live in a deafening, chaotic world both by culture and by choice.

Choosing to carve out a couple of minutes of silence is difficult, even scary work, but it allows us to lay our anxieties and fears at the feet of Christ and instead be filled with love and grace. Henri Nouwen says when we enter into true silence with God, the Word which comes forth "is not emptiness and absence, but fullness and presence, not human silence of embarrassment, shame, or guilt, but the divine silence in which love rests secure" (*The Way of the Heart*, 41). The 15 minutes of *Lectio* done with the staff transforms my week because it starts the work week off with a reminder that God's presence, love, and grace transforms both us and the world. Therefore, church, I urge you to carve out a time in the weeks ahead for silence. When life feels heavy due to pandemics, election seasons, fatigue, sadness, loneliness, turn to the intimate divine silence, and rest in God's love.

With Grace, Peace, and Silence,

Rev. Brett Gudeman

November 2020

Advent Workshop Drive-By by Kathy Gillmore



Happy New Year! The first Sunday of Advent is November 29, and that date marks the first day of the new liturgical year. The church tells time a bit differently. It begins with the season of Advent, the four weeks we prepare to celebrate the mystery of Christmas - the miracle that God came to be with us as a tiny baby born in Bethlehem. We then move into a few weeks of "ordinary time" before entering the season of Lent, preparing for Easter. We spend several weeks celebrating Easter, and with the exciting day of Pentecost we begin another season of ordinary time until it comes around to Advent once more.

We have a gift package for all families with children to journey through Advent and help them prepare for Christmas. Drive by on Sunday, November 15, 5:30 - 6:00 (coming from Greene Street, down Gates Avenue) where our Youth will be handing the Advent packages to families and wishing all a Happy New (liturgical) Year! Look for the balloon arch in front of GBH and the funky, festive teens! Feel free to join in the fun by adorning your car or your pet or yourself with NYE finery or funnery!

Pick up a hard copy of the new unit of Feasting on the Word, to use with the Sunday School class or for your own personal devotional use, available starting November 15 in the Narthex or at the Advent drive-by event 5:30 - 6:00 in front of GBH.

Last year families participating in our Advent Workshop received an advent candle set. Remember to pull those out to use again this year! If you did not receive one let Kathy Gillmore know at dce@fpchsv.org. She has a few extras to share!

Presbyterian Youth Connection
presents

ADVENT
WORKSHOP
DRIVE-BY

November 15, 2020
5:30 pm - 6:00 pm

*In front of the
Gideon Blackburn
House off of
Gates Ave.*

November 2020

Live Nativity Drive-Thru by Kathy Gillmore



JOURNEY THROUGH BETHLEHEM TO FIND THE CHRIST CHILD

First Presbyterian Church

Live Nativity Drive-Thru

Music by First Presbyterian Church Choir and Huntsville Master Chorale

DECEMBER 13, 2020 | 5:00PM - 6:00PM
ENTER FROM SOUTH END OF LINCOLN ST

Beautiful music will fill the little town of Bethlehem as you journey past the Magi and then the shepherds in their fields, finally through a busy street to find the Christ child lying in a manger.

Travel down Lincoln street to Gates Avenue, then turn into the church parking lot for this wonderful adventure brought to you by our children, youth, volunteers, and wonderful members of our Chancel Choir and the Huntsville Master Chorale.

Save the date! Sunday, December 13 from 5:00 – 6:00 pm. An audio recording of the Christmas story read by FPC children and a written guide will be provided before your visit to help prepare you for the experience.

If you would like to help create a feature for our little town of Bethlehem, please let Kathy Gillmore know! A water well, potter's shop, synagogue, simple home, marketplace, village inn, or whatever your imagination can bring to life – all are welcome!

November 2020

Presbyterian Youth Connection

by Anne Dillon Loflin



Thank you so much to everyone for attending our October events and activities! We have had a wonderful turnout each week, and I look forward to continuing on this month with fellowship, fun, service, and time spent in God's word.

We are looking now to expand our volunteer and parent involvement. If you or anyone you know are interested in helping with our Sunday morning (zoom) or Sunday evening (in-person) events, or providing a meal for a Sunday night gathering, please contact youth@fpchsv.org.

Keep an eye out for the weekly Youth newsletter, which includes information on upcoming events and activities, musical selections and recommendations for your time of worship, and the weekly "Feasting on the Word" reading.

Sunday, November 1st:

Sunday School (9:30am-10:30am via Zoom)
PYC (All ages 5pm-6:30pm at FPC)

Sunday, November 8th:

Sunday School (9:30am-10:30am via Zoom)
PYC (All ages 5pm-6:30pm at FPC)

Friday, November 13th:

Galaxy of Lights Walking Tour (All ages, Time TBA)

Sunday, November 15th:

Sunday School (9:30am-10:30am)
PYC Advent Calendar Drop-Off and Celebration! (All ages 5pm-6:30pm at FPC)

Sunday, November 22nd:

NO SUNDAY SCHOOL OR PYC (Thanksgiving Break)

Sunday, November 29th:

Sunday School; PYC goes to the Tinsel Trail (All ages 5pm-7pm, meet at FPC)

*COVID safety & health regulations will continue to be observed at all events and activities. We will be practicing social distancing and masks will be required for all youth members and helpers. All food will be distributed individually and servers will be following health precautions (i.e. gloves, masks, etc.). Please contact youth@fpchsv.org with any questions.

Blessings, Anne Dillon

November 2020

First Friends Preschool by Lacey Guthrie



We are in full swing here at First Friends! We are so glad to have these children fill our halls with laughter and joy once again.



November 2020

Mission and Evangelism by Karen Madison

November Mission of the Month: Santa for Seniors

In November, once again this year, FPC will partner with TARCOG-Area Agency on Aging to provide Christmas gifts for 75 low income, disabled, homebound seniors.

This year, due to the uncertainty of COVID-19, TARCOG will only be accepting MONETARY DONATIONS, rather than gifts. The TARCOG case managers will use these donations to provide Christmas gifts for those seniors in need. This adjustment is being made for the safety of the sponsors, recipients, and TARCOG staff.

This has been a very difficult year for everyone. The forced isolation we have all experienced has been particularly hard on these homebound seniors due to their compromised health. Many of these seniors live alone and have very little help and support from family members. The gifts that we provide for them are often the only gifts they receive.

If you are able, please consider making a donation by mailing or taking a check made out to FPC and on the memo line, note that it is for Santa for Seniors.

In order to personalize the gift(s) you will be providing, you are asked to please select a specific name from the list provided by TARCOG. On the **Missions** page of the FPC website (fpchsv.org) you will find a link to a page that will allow you to sign up for a particular person or persons. If you need help going online please contact Marilyn McCorkle, or Karen Madison (see info. below) or contact Kelsey Worley, our Communications Director at the church. Then, please purchase or make a Christmas Card for the person(s) with a note of encouragement if you would like, and mail it or take it to the church with your check for the TARCOG gifts. This will hopefully be an extra fun Holiday Mission Project for families with Children and Youth, as homemade cards are particularly desired.

The deadline for checks and cards for our November MOTM is Sunday, November 29th.

If you have questions, please contact Marilyn McCorkle (marilynmccorkle24@gmail.com) or Karen Madison (karenmadison@comcast.net)

MISSIONS UPDATE

The September MOTM, "Fill the Food Pantry at Fellowship PC", was a huge success. The food donated by our congregation filled one Pickup Truck and one SUV. Delivery and sorting of the food made for a fun morning of fellowship. Pictured from FPC, Pastor Brett, Vicky Goodman, Doug Madison and Karen Madison. From Fellowship PC, Ms. Dorothy Johnson, Elder Jackie Bennett, Pastor Greg Bentley.

Endless Thanks to the Congregation for your generous expressions of the Love of Christ.



October recap from Mission and Evangelism

Thanks to all of our amazing church members, we were able to collect 103 dozen cookies, enough cleaning supplies to fill the back of an SUV, and notes from our Youth for the Presbyterian Home for Children!
We couldn't have done this without your support and generosity.



November 2020

Talent

by Dr. Patricia Hacker



In so many occasions, people often say “She/he has talent” but what does talent mean? A talent was an ancient unit for measuring value in Greece, Rome, and the Middle East. In the Old Testament, a talent was a unit of measurement for weighing precious metals, usually gold and silver. In the New Testament, a talent was a value of money or coin. Today, we relate talent with aptitude or skill, an exceptional and natural ability, especially in a particular activity, such as music. In Matthew 25:14-30 Jesus talks about the Parable of the talents, that teach us not to hide or keep the talents but multiply them.

This congregation has so much talent and skill. People have demonstrated over the years what they can offer to God’s glory. The chancel choir with their voices, the Westminster ringers with their skills of ringing bells, the Flower Guild with their magnificent flower arrangements, the teachers with their skills to lead the children and youth in their spiritual journey, the pastors with their outstanding ability to deliver the word of God, the ushers who with their people skills greet our visitors. The needle point crochet group making blankets to comfort people. The mission and evangelism group who lead our congregation to serve our community. The people that serve every Sunday on the sound board and video. All those and more are skills and talent that the congregation has multiplied to serve our God.

Personally, I am so grateful for the talent of our Chamber Singers who during this pandemic time have dedicated their talents to worship God each Sunday. Their voices add so much to our worship service, and their amazing gift is worthy to admire.

First Presbyterian Church of Huntsville is abundant in talents and I hope we can continue to multiply those talents to serve and praise God from whom ALL blessings flow.

Patricia Hacker

November 2020

Zoom Communities

It's not too late to join one of the many Zoom communities we offer! We have groups for all ages and interests. To register, please visit our website and click on the **Registration** tab.



**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

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