

An aerial photograph of the ocean with deep blue water and white-capped waves, serving as the background for the entire page.

# FIRST WORD

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*First Presbyterian  
Church*

SEPTEMBER 2021

September 2021

## The Best, Last Advice by The Rev. Dr. Tara W. Bulger



Dear Church,

At the end of Paul's letter to the church in Philippi, he gives them his final piece of advice. He writes, "Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you." (Philippians 4:8-9).

What an unusual piece of last advice! Does Paul tell the church to start new initiatives, new ministries, or new programs? Does he tell them to evangelize more and bring more people into the kingdom? No. He tells them, "Keep on doing the things you have learned and received and heard and seen."

In the past month, I have had the privilege of seeing the beauty of this church in a new way. After my knee surgery, I received cards, notes, texts, and meals from many in our church. I was humbled and awed by the care and love you showed me through my recovery. I also got a front-row seat on Rally Day as you greeted each other and our guests with joy, love, and delight. I got to see kids dashing through the fellowship hall on their way to Sunday school and hear parents share their highs and lows with each other. I have been so fortunate to see the best of this church. You are a remarkable church; you know that, don't you?

So as we move into another month, I want to say to you, "Keep doing the things you already do." Keep loving and caring, welcoming and working. All of those other things--programs and new members and new ideas--will come if only we keep being who we are. I know this is a tough time for so many. I know we don't agree with each other on everything. But keep offering the love of Christ within and without our church, and everything else will follow.

I love you all so much!

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

September 2021

# Framing Gratitude by The Rev. Brett Gudeman



“Piglet noticed that even though he had a very small heart,  
it could hold a rather large amount of gratitude.”

— A.A. Milne, Winnie-the-Pooh

With the rise of Covid numbers, familiar precautions that we thought were over going back into place, and hospitals again spiking, there is the return of the heaviness. The heaviness and grief of Covid as we feel loss all around us. The world has changed, and we want to return to the normal we used to love. We can feel helpless at the great hurts and difficulties which surround us throughout the world. The weight of it all makes us feel small and despair becomes more familiar than hope. Eugene Peterson says, “If we forget that newspapers are footnotes to Scripture and not the other way around, we will finally be afraid to get out of bed in the morning... We underestimate God and we overestimate evil.” So how do we combat such strife in the world?

Focusing on gratitude, the evident aspects of God’s grace in the world, leads us to a deep hope and stirring energy. As piglet reminds us in the quote above, though we feel small, our gratitude can be great, our gratitude can be colossal, our gratitude can outgrow the boundaries we’ve drawn to keep us safe. This is how we start to combat the pain in the world, by observing and focusing on the gratuitous work of God, and allow that to give us hope for the day. Focusing on gratitude does not mean we ignore the world’s, or our own pain, but it reframes the whole situation. We are reminded that the first truth is that the all powerful God of the universe intimately loves us and the world. Holding the gratitude of this truth leads us to hope that the world can change, and gives us energy to participate in the building of the Kingdom of God, brick by brick.

With Gratitude and Grace,

Brett Gudeman

September 2021

# Christian Education by Kathy Gillmore



Wednesday Night Live...for all ages!

*Nurturing people, especially young people, into a saving relationship with God through Jesus Christ is the most important thing the church ever does.*

-Mission statement of the Logos ministry

Because faith is more caught than taught Wednesday Night Live brings the generations together to practice Kingdom of God living.

There is one rule – you are a child of God and I'm going to treat you like one!

We study who God is, what God is like, and what God wants of each of us and the church. We explore worship arts learning new ways to sing and pray, leading others to spend time with God. Most importantly we develop strong Christian relationships that are the heart of our faith community.

## **Fall 2021 Semester**

Wednesdays, September 8 – November 17, with no meeting October 6 for Fall Break

**Children and Youth Classes** meet 5:00 – 6:15, with dinner 6:15 – 7:00:

For **Bible Study** time children, youth, and one adult class, will use a new curriculum called “Follow Me” – Biblical Practices for Faithful Living, with which we'll explore various faith practices (things that Jesus did and told us to do).

- Unit 1: Following Jesus – accepting Jesus' invitation
- Unit 2: Welcome All – the practice of hospitality

For **Worship Arts** time children will be singing, playing instruments, and learning skills to express our gratitude to God in the ways we worship. The Children's Choir will:

- Sing the anthem in worship on Sunday, November 7
- Present the musical “The Promises of God” on Wednesday evening, November 17

September 2021

# Christian Education by Kathy Gillmore



**Adult Classes** meet 5:30 – 6:30, with optional dinner 6:30 – 7:00:

Psalms study with the Rev. Dr. Tara Bulger, meets in the Library

Follow Me – Biblical Practices for Faithful Living – with Rev. Brett Gudeman, meets as a hybrid in room #207 and on Zoom

Please register so that we can plan for dinner and prepare class lists. [REGISTER HERE](#) or on our website. Registration fee covers the cost of dinner.

- Child care for infants/toddlers of our volunteers or adult class attendees – no charge
- Preschool age 2, 3, or 4 years old - \$50 per semester
- Grades K - 12th - \$60 per semester
- Family max cost is \$150 per semester
- Adult Class only - no charge
- Adults Dinner - \$75 per semester or \$10 per meal if you pay weekly

To assist with our planning please fill out registration form for all adults, youth, children, volunteers, and young children of volunteers or adult class attendees. Thank you!

## Charles Danner Seminar Class

- This class starts a new study in the next few weeks based on the book *An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination* by Walter Brueggemann and Tod Linafelt. Read along and join them in the Library each Sunday, 9:30 – 10:30, for great discussion and fellowship. You can join them in person or on Zoom. Call the church office or email Kathy Gillmore at [dce@fpchsv.org](mailto:dce@fpchsv.org) to get the Zoom link.

## Learning Wisdom From a Fool

- Pastor Brett will be giving lectures and leading discussion on the wisdom books of the Old Testament on **Tuesdays from 12-1 PM, September 21st-October 12th**. Come and learn about Job, Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes as we learn about their authorship, form, and what we can hope to learn from them. If this is at all interesting to you please sign up! There are three ways to participate: Come in person in the library at church, join online through Zoom, or receive an email with a link to listen to the lectures. These are stand alone classes, so if you miss one, please come to the next, you won't be behind! Hope you will join!

September 2021

# Milestones by Kathy Gillmore



## Milestones and More!

The Milestones Ministry recognizes important steps in the life of faith  
To provide children with information and experiences as they grow in faith  
To equip parents to be involved in the Christian education of their children  
To recognize and celebrate milestone events with the congregation  
To assist the congregation in fulfilling the vows made at baptism to nurture faith

Here are our September Milestones:

- “Welcome Me” – September 12. Learn about the sacrament of Communion with a workshop at 9:30 in Fellowship Hall and a celebration in Worship at 11:00. Designed for 1st and 2nd graders, and older children who are new to our church. Children create a painting as a remembrance. To register contact Kathy Gillmore, [dce@fpchsv.org](mailto:dce@fpchsv.org).
- “Confirmation” is a journey with many experiences and classes that help 8th and 9th grade youth to learn about the expectations and covenant relationships involved in church membership, culminating in a personal confirmation of the vows made for them at baptism. Here are some of the events planned.
  - September is the month when the youth choose an adult mentor to assist them in the process.
  - September 26, Noon – 1:30 – Orientation and Lunch for confirmands and their mentors
  - Fall Retreat – to be scheduled yet in October or November
  - January 9 – April 10, 9:30 – 10:30 – Confirmation Classes
  - Winter Retreat – to be scheduled yet in January
  - Spring Retreat – to be scheduled yet in April
  - April 17, Confirmation Sunday

Are you interested in being a **secret prayer partner** for a confirmand this year? You would pray for a particular youth all year and your secret identity will be revealed on Confirmation Sunday, April 17!

Contact Kathy Gillmore [dce@fpchsv.org](mailto:dce@fpchsv.org) if you are interested in Confirmation or if you wish to be a prayer partner this year!

**Sunday School** continues for all ages during the education hour, 9:30 – 10:30. See our [Fall Brochure](#) at [fpchsv.org](http://fpchsv.org) for more information.

September 26 – Children sing the song they're learning in Sunday School as the anthem in worship!

**PKC** (Presbyterian Kids Connection) gathers to tie-dye youth t-shirts on Sunday, September 19, Noon – 2:00. Lunch included! We'll meet at the Carriage House behind the Gideon Blackburn House across the street. Register [HERE](#), or on our website, for this event to order a t-shirt to dye and let us know you are planning to attend.

September 2021

Music Ministry

by Dr. Patricia Hacker



### **Now Thank We All Our God With Heart and Hands and Voices!**

This is one of the best-known German hymns, not only in its original language but it is also incorporated in many English-language hymnals. This hymn is generally associated with Thanksgiving Day services; however, the original intention of this hymn was to be used as table prayer for children to sing after each meal.

In a few days WNL will start, and we are so grateful that children and parents will have the opportunity to gather at the table to share a meal with their church family, and to sing this significant hymn that has been in existence since 1647.

Now thank we all our God that Children will be able to sing with all their hearts and voices during WNL.

Now thank we all our God that Children will learn songs and Bible stories from the musical "The Promises of God."

Now thank we all our God that Children will laugh, play, and learn from each other.

Now thank we all our God that parents will have the opportunity to learn scriptures through all our Bible Studies offered during WNL.

Now thank we all our God for all the volunteers and teachers who are dedicating their time and talents for the spiritual growth of our church family.

And finally, now thank we all our God for the gift of music: for giving us the opportunity to demonstrate our love and service through words and songs to worship the Almighty God.

Patricia Hacker

September 2021  
Youth Ministry  
by Anne Dillon Loflin



We have had a great start to our Fall youth programming!



A few August highlights included spending quality time outdoors at Lewter Park, playing games at FPC, and competing in scavenger hunts and trivia. Youth members also explored new ways of serving our community through making instruments for Second Mile Preschool and developing service project plans in Sunday School. We are looking forward to all that is ahead in September!



September 2021

Youth Ministry

by Anne Dillon Loflin



**September Youth Calendar**

**Sunday, September 12th:** PYC Top Golf 6pm-7:30pm, 6-12th grade

**Sunday, September 19th:** PYC Tie-Dye Party 5pm-6:30pm, 6-12th grade

**Friday, September 24th:** PYC Fall Festival/Lock-In, 5pm-10pm, 6-12th grade

**Saturday, September 25th:** Lake Day at Lake Guntersville, 10:30am-4:30pm, 6-12th grade



Blessings,  
Anne Dillon Loflin  
Interim Youth Director

September 2021

## Mission of the Month by Karen Madison

### Fellowship Presbyterian Church Food Distribution Program

In the month of September, we will once again be supporting our neighbors to the north, **Fellowship Presbyterian Church**, in their ongoing Food Distribution Program.

Fellowship ministers to families in need by organizing, collecting and distributing at least 250 food boxes on the third week of each month with distribution happening on that Wednesday. These boxes are timed to assist 120 families who are food insecure with perishable and non-perishable groceries to help them make it through the month. Furthermore, there are 50 additional families on the church's waiting list who are awarded Special One Time Only Food Boxes during the Thanksgiving and Christmas season.

Elder Jackie Bennett, Convener of Fellowship's Witness and Service Ministry Team, says that Fellowship's members and the community at large have stepped up in a big way with plenty of hands-on volunteers. This cohesive team under the watchful eye of church member Dorothy Johnson, performs a myriad of duties each month to ensure that food is gathered, organized and distributed.

Fellowship obtains food from the Food Bank of North Alabama, Manna House, Commissioner District 6 and sometimes local farmers. However, especially in today's environment, there is always a challenge and need to have ample food to provide for and satisfy this community outreach ministry.

During the month of September, we will have a non-perishable food drive with the goal being to help "FILL THE FOOD PANTRY AT FELLOWSHIP". All members are asked to bring a sack (or sacks) of non-perishable food to church throughout this month. Examples of food needed are canned vegetables, fruits and meats, and pasta, rice and cereal. Food may be left at the office entrance or in the Historic Room. For more information contact Karen Madison at [karenmadison@comcast.net](mailto:karenmadison@comcast.net).



*(Donations collected last year for Fellowship Presbyterian Church)*

September 2021

## Second Mile Preschool by Karen Madison

### **A note from Second Mile Preschool**

Dear Members of First Presbyterian Church,

The supplies you have sent have made ALL the difference! We have supplemented lunches, cleaned up messes, and disinfected daily, all thanks to the members who supported our little school. We are so grateful and I just wanted you to know.

Cate DiFiori, Director, Second Mile Preschool

### **Update on the July Mission of the Month**

On July 31, our volunteers made a follow up visit to Second Mile Preschool to build raised garden beds for them.



### **Update on the August Mission of the Month**

The Good Samaritans are extremely grateful for First Presbyterian Church. Besides the items donated, FPC sent a check directly to them thanks to the generous money donations made by this congregation.

# Session Meeting Minutes

by Sheila Fogle

## Session Meeting Minutes First Presbyterian Church Huntsville, Alabama June 8, 2021

A stated meeting of the Session of First Presbyterian Church was held in-person in the Fellowship Hall on Tuesday, June 8, 2021. The meeting was convened at 5:33 pm in the Sanctuary. A quorum was present.

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

- The Rev. Dr. Tara Bulger led the Session in Worship in the Sanctuary opening with prayer.
- The meeting agenda was approved unanimously without changes.
- Session Meeting Minutes from the Stated Session Meeting May 11, 2021 were approved unanimously with no changes.
- The calendar was reviewed with the following items included:
  - A review of the First Sunday Fellowship at Stovehouse
  - June 12: Funeral Service for Lou Horn
  - June 14 Funeral Service for Morris Hammer
  - Tara at Beach 6/19 – 26; knee surgery 6/29. Tara will be off the preaching schedule through July.
  - VBS: 6/21 – 25
  - July 4 First Sunday Fellowship at Stovehouse
  - Music Recital July 11 in Gideon Blackburn House with time TBD which will include Dr. Patricia Hacker and some Oakwood students
  - New Member Classes: 7/11, 7/18, 7/25. Tara asked that at least two elders attend each class.
  - August 1: First Sunday Fellowship at Stovehouse
  - August 6-8: Fellowship Camp at Maranatha
  - August 15: Rally Day

## Session Meeting Minutes

by Sheila Fogle

- Communications
  - Clerk
    - Current Members: 602 (death of Dr. Lou Horn)
    - Average Attendance during the month of May: 8:30 – 54; 11:00 – 97; Total 151; Streaming Services: Soundcloud - 45; YouTube - 49; Vimeo - 50; Facebook – 191. Brett Gudeman mentioned that the current FPC YouTube page has approximately 70 subscribers. If FPC has at least 100 subscribers, Brett will be able to customize the URL for the FPC YouTube page.
  - Staff Reports
    - Senior Pastor - report distributed. Tara reported that the new elders, David Young, Janis Williams, Jeff Hyatt, and Ryan Parker had not been installed and ordained. She will work with Brett to coordinate a date.
    - 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. The date for Trunk or Treat should be Oct 29 instead of Nov.
  - Mission and Evangelism – report distributed. Andrew Bevel reported that the June Mission of the Month was Good Samaritans. Funds in the budget have been dispersed to the various agencies. Items for future months have been lined up.
    - **MOTION: The Mission and Evangelism Team recommends and requests that the Congregation be allowed to include a request for monetary donations to the Good Samaritans as part of the June Mission of the month.** The motion was approved unanimously.
  - Finance and Personnel – report distributed
    - First Friends Preschool was \$12K over net and staff were given bonuses. The Preschool is fully registered for next year.

## Session Meeting Minutes

by Sheila Fogle

- Tara stated that she likes to compare the Donation report year over year. Last year looked as if it was going to be \$56K below last year. Now FPC is \$47K above last year. This is a sign of health. The bus had the catalytic converter stolen that had to be replaced. It was asked shouldn't insurance cover this. Tara said she would ask and let Session know. Jeff Hyatt asked about a camera to watch the parking lot. Police said that stealing of catalytic converters is happening all over, even in Walmart parking lot. Not sure there is anything we can do.
- Tara asked Finance and Personnel for permission to hire an assistant for her for 15 hours per week. The assistant will help her send emails, handle scheduling for her, etc.
- Worship – report distributed
  - **MOTION: Approval of Session for their support, both in prayer and attendance, for the new Thursday worship service that will begin on Sept. 9 at 5:30 p.m. Tara and Brett have a template for a worship service. Impetus for this service is for those that work on Sundays, children involved in Sunday sports. The format would be similar to the Session Worship held at the beginning of the meeting tonight with a focus on spiritual disciplines. The motion was approved unanimously.**
  - **MOTION: Approval to extend the communion table to home bound members, as coordinated by the pastors, for the rest of the year. The motion was approved unanimously.**
  - **MOTION: Approval to start a new ministry to preschool moms. The Moms in Prayer program would be a once-a-week time for prayer for any preschool mom who would like to join in. The motion was approved unanimously.**
  - **MOTION: Approval for the collection of a financial gift from the congregation to express gratitude for Clinton Garrison and Haley Flemons, two of our Oakwood singers, as they are graduating. The gift would be collected through the end of June. This has been done in the past for the Oakwood students. An email would be sent to the congregation and wouldn't be announced from the pulpit. The motion was approved unanimously.**

## Session Meeting Minutes

by Sheila Fogle

- Tara brought up the handling of communion. Bert Moore had set up the communion with ½ bread and ½ juice in each container. At the 8:30 service, people came forward for communion. The past Sunday, 5 elders served communion and it seemed to work. One elder had to come up and resupply. Tara will send out a schedule to have elders sign up to help serve communion. Two elders will be needed for the early service and 5 for the late service. Previously, there were 10 elders to serve communion; not sure if this was due to attendance being larger. The Worship Committee will discuss serving communion and determine the best way to handle it.
- Old Business
  - There was no old business to discuss.
- New Business
  - Review of Updated 2020 Child protection policy and approval. The policy was distributed. **Motion: Approval of the updated Child Protection Policy of First Presbyterian Church.** Personnel worked on this and not sure that it was ever approved by Session. This is coming from the Christian Education Committee. David Young asked about the written crisis response policy. It is found in all of the rooms on how to respond to tornado warning, etc. Any reports go to Tara and Kathy Gillmore. They are mandated reporters. The motion was approved unanimously.

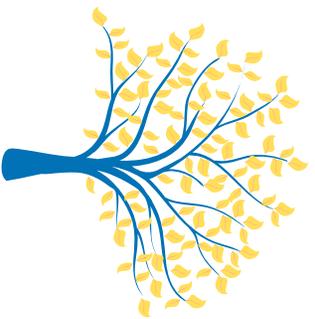
### Looking Ahead

According to the regular schedule, the next session meeting would be held on July 13. Tara will be home and unable to attend. The decision was made to skip the month of July. Next stated Session Meeting will be August 10, 2021 at 5:30 pm.

Reports are requested by August 3, 2021 and emailed to Sheila Fogle [fsfogle@knology.net](mailto:fsfogle@knology.net).

Tara indicated that there were people that started attending FPC during the pandemic because the church was open. They have continued to attend.

The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 6:29 p.m. by Brett.



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN**

Church

307 Gates Ave SE

Huntsville, AL 35801