



TRYON TRUMPET

Tryon Presbyterian Church

A Stephen Ministry Congregation

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Sermons answer difficult questions



Pastor Allan Purtille preaches June 29.

Where do preachers get their sermon topics? Pastor Allan Purtille asked us to submit questions we'd like him to answer from the pulpit. Some congregation members peppered him! The result is a summer sermon series Allan calls "Faith Seeking Understanding."

The first, which Allan addressed June 15, was: "What about a discussion of predestination, also called God's election?"

"The sermon is, 'I don't understand it, either,'" Allan began. But, as he proceeded, it seemed that he does. In fact, it sounded less complicated than we might have thought. God loves us; nothing can separate us from God's love; it's not about us, it's about what God has done for us through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the predestined one.

The subject June 22 raised one of those alternative history scenarios: "What would our lives be like now if Adam and Eve had not succumbed to temptation in the Garden of Eden?" Spoiler alert: Maybe not so different. "Adam and

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Eve were the first to be tempted. It doesn't mean they would have been the last," Allan said.

But failing also allows the opportunity to grow and mature in wisdom and faith, Allan added, noting that Adam and Eve learned about God's grace because they sinned, as do we.

The questions aren't getting easier. The June 29 sermon responded to this: "How does God permit people to use the Christian faith for harm in our world?" Allan reminded us that Jesus warned of false prophets and wolves in sheep's clothing, and he imparted the parable of the weeds found in Matthew 13:24-30.

God sows good seeds in love, but he loves us enough to grant us the choice of sowing weeds. Yet, ultimately, the wheat and weeds will be separated, and the weeds will meet a fiery end!

All of Allan's sermons challenge us, and with these questions the congregation is challenging him back. So, we can all learn together. If you've missed any of these sermons, or if you want or need to hear them again – and that should be all of us – you can find the recordings [here](#). Let's never stop asking questions or seeking answers!

By Doug Clark

Revs. Scoggin and Sills will preach during July

There will be a couple of interruptions in Pastor Purtill's summer sermon series this month. Rev. Sarah Scoggin, Associate Pastor of Hopewell Presbyterian, will preach here this Sunday, July 6. Allan's previous pastorate was at Hopewell. Sarah is leading a youth group from Hopewell that will be doing Helene recovery work in our area. They will have lunch at our church following worship Sunday.

Our Parish Associate, Rev. Lynnette Sills, will deliver the sermon here July 20. One of her duties over the next few months will be preaching occasionally. We look forward to hearing from both Sarah and Lynnette.

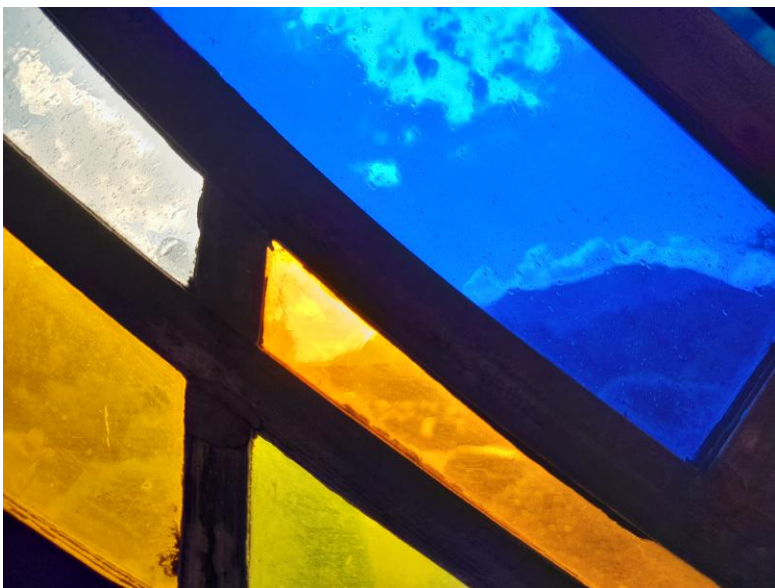


Rev. Sarah Scoggin from Hopewell Presbyterian Church in Huntersville, above, will preach in our church July 6. Rev. Lynnette Sills, left with Allan Purtill, will preach here July 20.

God offers to save us from our bad choices

I was reading Paul's frustrations with his and our predicament, which I might add we brought on all by ourselves. The New Revised Standard version of the Bible labels Romans 7:14-25 "The Inner Conflict." As I read and reread this passage, I am right with Paul's frustration.

The human malady sugarcoats what it really is: plain old sin! As the Body of Christ, we don't speak about it very much. I confess that, in my years in the pulpit or in teaching biblical content, I never zeroed in to sin as much as I perhaps should have. I stayed with the Good News most of my life.



In Genesis 3, we find what has come to be called the Fall of Man. It is a story of just how humans decided they could be in charge of their own lives without needing to listen to the Creator of the universe.

I always have marveled at how God decided to create us humans with absolute freedom of choice. This bountiful Creator, full of love and compassion for us, who desires intimate relationship with us, gives us the choice to love Him, to love His Son and the Comforter or not. Imagine! (Had I been Creator, I would have made you love me. I fear that is the German in me.)

Since we are on our own when it comes to choice, we struggle within whether to do what we want, or to listen to God's voice and to follow Jesus.

As the Apostle Paul struggles with the inner conflict, he says, "I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me."

Some Biblical scholars suggest this passage may be autobiographical. However, others suggest that there is nothing in Paul's language that suggests he is remembering the past rather than describing the present.

As Paul continues to grapple with himself, he pronounces, "Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

We finally recognize what follows in chapter 8: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death."

Our responsibility within our freedom is to make Godly choices as we stay in relationship with and to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

By Rev. Mary A. Potter

Search process continues quietly

Our next news from the music director search committee will be the final news, Ken Shull told the congregation June 15. The position has been advertised, and the committee, which Ken leads, hopes to receive many qualified applicants. Indeed, some applications have been received. The names of candidates will be kept confidential, and only the final selection will be revealed.

Until then, Jane Wilson is ably serving as our interim music director and organist.

The committee wrote a job description and statement about our church. The latter states that our mission is “to be and make disciples of Jesus Christ, who love God and their neighbor.” It adds that “our congregation is more regional than the local neighborhood. We have 252 members with 120 regularly attending and 30 on average live streaming.”

The committee held two listening sessions to hear from the congregation about its desires for the music program and solicited written responses. It came up with the following:



The summer choir rehearses before Sunday worship recently.

“The Director of Music will build on our history of musical excellence and bring enthusiastic leadership in worship music. This person will also promote different musical styles in worship.”

The director “oversees all aspects of the church’s music programs. Plans and implements special music programs. Collaborates with the minister in worship service planning. Demonstrates excellence in choral directing, organ and piano performance, sight-reading, open-score playing and improvisation. Is willing to work within the framework of the Presbyterian order of worship.”

“Music in worship is an offering to God,” the committee noted in its advertisement. “We value sacred music but also promote a wide range of music including spirituals, gospel and sacred jazz.”

In addition to the more traditional job responsibilities listed, it suggested: “Consider forming a bell choir and children’s choir.”

The position requires “20 hours per week with a salary range of \$22,000 to \$26,000 plus benefits commensurate with experience.”

Ken has previously said that the process will take as long as necessary to make sure the right person is hired. We look forward to the news.

VBS did it all in just one wonderful day



Speaker addresses accessibility and acceptance

Disability isn't a personal problem, Sarah Quinn Montjoy told TPC members June 17. "It's a social and human rights issue that requires collective action and responsibility."

Our church is moving in the right direction, Sarah assured us.

Sarah is a trauma therapist in Greenville who was invited by our Disability Accessibility Inclusion Task Force, led by Susan Woodcock. She sustained a spinal cord injury in a car accident on July 4, 2000, when she was 18. Her 15-year-old brother, Curtis, did not survive.

Sarah was here because she has a lot to teach, starting with why she says, "I would not change what happened to me. Obviously, I wish my brother were still here."



Sarah Quinn Montjoy (both photos) lives a normal life.

one. She was twice a national collegiate champion in wheelchair tennis for the University of Texas at Arlington and went on to play professionally. Today, she has a "normal life," describing it with a touch of humor.

"I own a house, I own my own business, I own a husband, I drive a car and, most importantly, I sew, and I do it all in a wheelchair."

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But she even has peace about her brother's death, relating a dream he revealed to her the day he died. In the dream, he was in a car that had plunged underwater. When he escaped and swam to the surface, family members who had previously died were waiting for him on the bank.

That was one of several signs that convinced Sarah that God's hand was in everything that happened. God gave her these circumstances, she believes, "to show other people you can overcome adversity and go on with life."

Her life since the accident has been remarkable. She had been a tennis player – and she became a better

(From SARAH on Page 6)

Not that there aren't challenges. Sarah toured our facilities to look for obstacles and found some tight spots to negotiate in a wheelchair and some doors that aren't easy to open. It's important for us to gain these insights as we continue to improve accessibility.

But Sarah also addressed another "A" – Acceptance, as well as the "I" in DAI – Inclusion.

"The hardest part of being in a wheelchair is other people," she said. Those people may be uncomfortable with wheelchair users, which is understandable, but it's not acceptable to treat them as less than human. She's been called a "wheelchair" rather than a person in a wheelchair. When she's with her husband, people sometimes address questions about her to him. "Ask her," Sarah says he answers. Strangers have asked, "What's wrong with you?" She responds, "Nothing."

Sarah urges a person-centered approach to people with disabilities. Focus on the person's strengths, preferences, goals and needs. Acknowledge their expertise and lived experiences. Look them in the eye – at eye level, if possible.



Susan Woodcock and Sarah Quinn Montjoy

And remember, any one of us can lose some "ability" at any time, and most of us probably will.

Our DAI Task Force was formed because every person has God-given value and deserves accessibility and inclusion. We want to be a church with open doors for all. Thanks to Sarah for helping us better understand how we can accomplish that.

By Doug Clark

TPC Library

"Mountain Strong," by the staff of the Asheville Citizen-Times, presents "a poignant tribute to the strength and resilience of those who weathered the unimaginable," according to Pediment Publishing.

"This beautifully crafted, 160-page hardcover book is a testament to the human spirit. Through powerful photographs and moving narratives, you'll meet the heroes who emerged in the face of disaster and hear the unforgettable stories of survivors who refused to be broken. Every page is a testament to the indomitable will of a community that refused to be defeated, a lasting reminder that even in the darkest moments, hope and resilience prevail."

This book is available in our church library.



Serving helps us fulfill our God-given purpose

Bill Sullivan chairs our Missions Committee, which consists of many energetic helpers. The work is varied, touching organizations such as Thermal Belt Outreach, Black Mountain Home, Sunny View Elementary School and, over the years, stretching all the way to Taiwan and Guatemala.

Bill would never claim credit for all the good that TPC's Missions Committee does, and he'd probably point to Patra as an equal partner or better. In fact, when thanking several church members for helping with a summer feeding project recently, he shared something Patra told him. She said:



Patra Sullivan

"You'll never truly feel connected to a church until you begin to serve in it. Attending helps you grow spiritually, but serving allows you to fulfill your God-given purpose."

So simple and so profound.

For Bill and Patra, fighting hunger is a mission very close to their hearts. They pursue that ministry in many ways, from filling our Blessing Box to picking up donated groceries at Food Lion in Columbus to stock the shelves at the Outreach pantry. Other Missions Committee members have their own passions, like Carolyn Thompson who stays in touch with Sunny View Principal Preston Allen to learn the best ways our church can help the teachers and students there, or Stephanie Greene raising money to provide college scholarships for local students.

Patra is right. Attending worship services and other church events helps us all grow spiritually and in Christian fellowship. But serving, which so many in this church family do faithfully – by preparing meals, washing dishes, helping with Vacation Bible School, singing in the choir, caring for children, placing flowers, visiting the sick or shut-ins, answering phones in the office, fixing whatever is broken, arranging to have dead or damaged trees removed and even cleaning the church when the custodian is on vacation (Brian Bancroft did that recently) – means we are fulfilling our purpose as followers of Jesus.

When we serve together, our personal connections also grow stronger.

And if we worry those tasks are beyond our abilities, think of the gifts we are given, such as those listed by Paul in Romans 12:6-8. My favorite is this: "If it is encouraging, let him encourage." What greater service can there be than to encourage someone else?

By Doug Clark

Missions Committee seeks supplies for Sunny View

During July, the Missions Committee is collecting 24-pack Crayola Crayons, Glue Sticks and wide-lined notebook paper for students at Sunny View Elementary School. There is a large container in the Narthex to collect these supplies.

Principal Preston Allen and all the teachers and students appreciate all that TPC does for them, committee member Carolyn Thompson says. Thank you for your donations.

Let's go out to a Forest City Owls game

Join your TPC family for an evening of fun at a Forest City Owls baseball game on Saturday, July 12, at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$15 and include the game, hot dog dinner, a hat, autographs and a run around the bases after the game! (We may leave the run around the bases to the kids.)



The Owls play in the Coastal Plain League, which features teams consisting of college players. The Owls roster includes players from such schools as UNC-Chapel Hill, Western Carolina, the University of Tennessee, Davidson, The Citadel and as far away as Tulane and Seton Hall. The team plays at McNair Field, which seats 3,000 and has been rated as one of the best baseball fields in the country. It is named for the late Robert C. McNair, a Forest City native who owned the NFL's Houston Texans and whose donation funded construction of the

ballpark. The Owls will play the Martinsville Mustangs July 12.

If you would like to attend, please contact Amy McGrath by Thursday, July 3, to secure a seat with the group: childrensministry.tpc@gmail.com or 803-530-1033.



Who is this?

Who is this, and what do you know about her?

Send your answers to your Trumpet editor at dougclark55@gmail.com and we'll share them in next month's edition.

The Tryon Trumpet

The Trumpet is a digital publication of Tryon Presbyterian Church and its Membership Committee, chaired by Rennie Habel. The editor is Doug Clark dougclark55@gmail.com. Your contributions are welcome! Send photos (including summer vacation photos), news, devotionals or suggestions to the editor.

Thanks for help with this edition go to Mary Potter, MaryAnn Sloan, Amy McGrath, Susan Woodcock, Wes Elam, Sandy Sibley, Allan Purtill, Kim McPherson and the Presbytery of Western North Carolina.

Presbytery news

Learn more plans for trip to Guatemala

The Presbytery of Western North Carolina is putting together a delegation to visit our brothers and sisters in Guatemala October 1-8. You are invited to learn more about this trip by [watching a video](#) with General Presbyter Rev. Byron Wade and our Guatemala Partnership Coordinator Sara Robinson.



Sara Robinson

You can apply now to be a part of the Presbytery's delegation by [following this link](#).

The cost will be \$1,500 and includes airfare, lodging/travel/meals in Guatemala and interpreter fees. To obtain a copy of the proposed itinerary [follow this link](#).

Grant helps Presbytery office gain curb appeal

A road-front makeover of our Presbytery office in Morganton was recently completed, thanks to a grant from James and Linda Rostan and the Rostan Family Foundation of Valdese. Work, which began last fall, included extensive landscaping and an improved look for the front of the building, which is located at 114 Silver Creek Road.



General Presbyter visits Columbus church



General Presbyter Dr. Byron Wade's "On the Western Front" video series took him to our Polk County neighbor, Columbus Presbyterian Church, June 22. See his video [here](#) to hear from Donna and Phillip Ashley (left) and learn more about the ministries of our sisters and brothers in Columbus.



Dr. Byron Wade

visit to Bryson City Presbyterian Church.

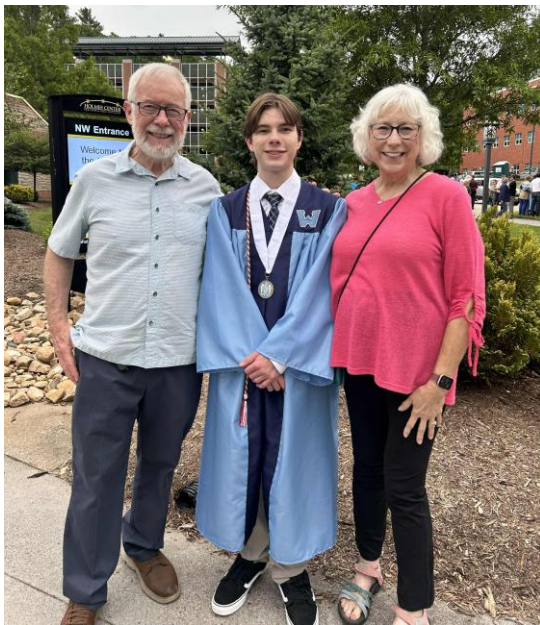
Earlier videos, going all the way back to 2021, are archived [here](#). They include Byron's [visit with us](#) on September 10, 2023. Do you remember?

This series gives us a good way to get to know our neighboring Presbyterians in Western North Carolina a little better. Thanks, Byron!

In and around Tryon Presbyterian



Clockwise from top left: Vacation Bible School participants led singing during worship June 29; some of the VBS crafts; our Garden of Feedin' is already producing, with much more to come.



Clockwise from top left: Richard Kennedy presented Jim Sutherin with a cake on behalf of the choir at Sunnydale June 11. Jim has retired from the choir after 37 years! Benny and August Buckmaster enjoyed leftovers from Jim's cake after church June 15. Sully McGrath attended Summer Arts Series for Youth camp at the Tryon Fine Arts Center. Hank and Sandy Sibley's grandson Wyatt Sibley graduated magna cum laude from Watauga High School in Boone June 6. He will major in chemistry at UNC-Charlotte. Wyatt is the son of Ben and Beth Sibley.



Clockwise from top left:
Denny Hill and Phil Brooks;
Ed and Cheryl Spencer;
Janet Gilchrist and Susie
Bellamy; Bonnie Sakos,
Susan Woodcock, Cherie
Brooks and Catherine
Lynch; Rodger Walker.

