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First Presbyterian Church
215 S. Third Street
PO Box 1159
Smithfield, NC 27577
934-0988
fpcsmithfield@nc.rr.com
www.fpcsmithfield.org

ICHTHUS
February 2016

The Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church

The Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church, Smithfield, North Carolina

Reflections in the Water: A Matter of Conscience Redux

They're certainly entitled to think that, and they're entitled to full respect for their opinions... but before I can live with other folks I've got to live with myself. The one thing that doesn't abide by majority rule is a person's conscience.

— Harper Lee, To Kill a Mockingbird, spoken by Atticus

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to his Word, or beside it in matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commandments out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.

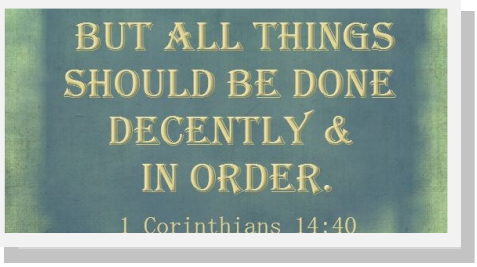
— Westminster Confession of Faith, 6.109

I mean the other's conscience, not your own. For why should my liberty be subject to the judgement of someone else's conscience?

— I Corinthians 10:29

In February 2009 I wrote to you about faith and conscience. Freedom of conscience is a key Reformed component of Christian discipleship in our faith tradition. This guiding principle enables us with the help of the Holy Spirit to discern the path we journey on together as a church, and also empowers us to examine that journey as individual disciples: to voice our thoughts, share ideas, and listen to one another. During officer training, I find I come back to this important tenet as the path to doing the work of the church in a manner that is decent and in order. It gives us cause to trust God and to trust our leaders to seek the will of God on behalf of the whole body of Christ. Freedom of conscience is not about asserting our own will, but about seeking guidance in relationship with the Holy Spirit to do God's will to promote the peace, unity, and purity of the Church. In a year that will be filled with many choices for people from all walks of life, I invite you to explore the meaning of freedom of conscience to strengthen your church, your household, your vocation, and your greater community, trusting God to help us all do what is right.

Grace and peace be with you,
Pastor Joe



Prayerful Support for



Nor Bell at Barbour Court
Tom Barbour at Meadowview
Jane Bolin at Meadowview
Eula Brown at Meadowview
Bernice Johnson at Meadowview, room 105
Alice Narron at Meadowview
Shirley Williams at Meadowview
Myde Eason at Brookdale Smithfield
Hazel Whitehurst at Brookdale Smithfield
Jane Cunningham in Wilmington
Bill Leist in Colfax
Ellen Rogers in Raleigh
Martha Rogers in Richmond
Mary Alice Thomas in Charlotte
Marie Atkins
Tom Avera
Ruth Daniel
Tom Johnson
Bill Kimball at Johnston Health
Shannon Kimball
Charles Lee
Nancy Lee
Marie Maddox
Shelley Maddox
Betty Merrick, Jill Merrick's mother
Chap Ragland
Hank Roberson
Peter Russell
Linda Stephenson
Sharon VanVelzen, Joyce Knoll's sister
Nelson Vaughn
Neil Watson
Betty Welch
Ted Wells
William Wells
Hilda Worsham
Rebecca Ziady

We welcome John and Kathy Stephenson to membership by Letter of Transfer from Trinity Presbyterian Church.

HIGHLIGHTS of January Session:

- Received new members John and Kathy Stephenson by Letter of Transfer from Trinity Presbyterian Church, Raleigh.
- Approved a lock-in for Scout Troop 95 on January 15-16, 2016.
- Session continues to work with Dr. Art Ross on the Unified Annual Budget and Capital Campaign

If you have items you wish to be brought before Session, please contact Debbie Jacobs, Clerk.

—Debbie Jacobs

Did You Know . . .

Nancy Lee has decorated the church for Advent and Christmas the last 32 years!
Dot Ellmore, Judy Daniels, Jo James, Nancy Lee, and Maxine McFadyen recently spent a week together in Williamsburg.
Both of **Billy Duncan's** children, **Kelly** and **Kenny,** have had winning lottery tickets.
You can spot **Etta Marett** walking multiple dogs on any given day in South Smithfield.
Patrick Templeton made the Dean's List for the fall semester at NCSU. Patrick is no stranger to the Dean's List.
The Presbyterian Women donated three new coffee urns to the kitchen.
Missionary Jim McGill was a guest at the Wednesday Bible Study.
John and Martha Taylor have been married 50 years.

memorials & gifts

Honorarium for Dot Ellmore
Memorials for Clem and Mikki Sharek, John Patterson and Martha Rogers, Judy Avera
Donors: Elizabeth Ellmore, Susan Northington, Kathy Ward, Frank and Lisa Deans, Susan Einhorn, Carrie Dale A. Purnell

For God so loVed the world
thAt he gave his
onLy
begottEn
SoN,
thaT whoever
belIeves
iN him should not perish
but havE everlasting life.
(John 3:16, NKJV)

On Valentine's Day, let us remember that God is the source of all love in the world. His perfect love for us has made all human love possible.

Knowing God

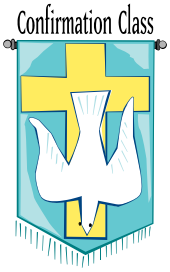
God cares about how we live. And a relationship with God naturally will flow out in daily attitudes and actions. So if you look great, you are good. Right? Well, maybe not.

Knowing God can lead to a positive lifestyle, but the reverse isn't true. Our outward actions along don't prove that we enjoy an inward relationship with God. Just because we do good does not mean that we know the One who is good.

—Craig Groeschel, The Christian Athiest: Believing in God But Living As If He Doesn't Exist



Confirmation Class to Begin



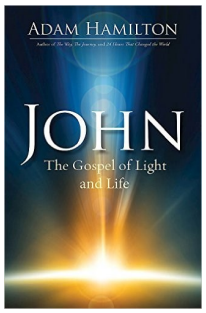
A confirmation class will begin on Sunday, February 7, at 4:00 p.m. for interested youth grades six and up who have not yet taken part in such a class and who desire to affirm their baptism and make a public affirmation of faith.

Please see Joseph Hester for details concerning this series leading up to Easter.

—Joe Hester

New Wednesday Bible Study

Beginning in February the Wednesday Bible Study will center around Adam Hamilton's John, the Gospel of Light and Life.



The Gospel of John is the most deeply spiritual of the four gospels. It includes some of the loftiest and most loved verses in all the Bible: "And the Word became flesh...," "For God so loved the world...," "You who are without sin cast the first stone...," "I am the resurrection and the life...," "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." The writing is filled with rich images and profound truths, but John notes that his aim in writing the gospel is that his readers will not only believe in Jesus Christ, but that they "may have life in his name." (Amazon review)

This Lent, join Adam Hamilton and experience a season of spiritual growth and life-changing renewal while reading the entire Gospel of John. Topics include:

The Word Made Flesh
The Miraculous Signs of Jesus
The "I Am" Sayings of Jesus
The Farewell Discourse
The Arrest, Trial, and Crucifixion of the King
Eternal Life

This Bible study group meets Wednesday mornings at 10:00 in the Community Room. Please come and join us!

—Joe Hester



Have you thanked our Sunday school teachers recently for their commitment to our church? They are

Ted Eason Class — Maxine McFadyen and Mary Miller
Covenant Class — Joe Hester, Jake Jacobs, and Judy Schmidt
Visitor and Member Inquiry Class — Joe Hester
Nursery — Francis Churchill
Preschool — Cindy Smith
K-2 —Brent Booker and Debbie Jacobs
Grades 3-5 — Stan Coats and Julie Duncan
Middle & High School — Kenny Duncan
and Nichole Booker

Give these folks a much deserved thank you when you see them.

Educational Quadrant

Cross Mission Trip and Parents' Meeting

On Friday, March 4, the youth will be traveling to Charlotte for the CROSS Mission Trip. We have some people youth from Wilsons Mills Christian Church who will be attending this with our youth. This will give our youth a great opportunity to help feed the hungry, but to also enjoy in fellowship with other youth from other churches. CROSS is a mission outreach program of Myers Park Presbyterian Church in Charlotte. **A meeting for all parents** is scheduled in the fellowship on February 21 at 5:30 p.m.. They will receive a packet of information and final payment totals.

—Linda Crowder

Saturday, April 16
Live Auction Youth Fundraiser

LIVE AUCTION

Begin collecting now things for the live auction. Please donate food, services, crafts, art, tickets, or anything else desirable and *in good condition*. Please no clothes. Proceeds will help fund PYC attending Faith in 3D in 2017.



February 7
Souper Bowl of Caring Offering
and
Soup and Sandwich Lunch following worship

Openings Sundays for Flowers



The following Sundays are open for Sanctuary Flowers in 2016: January 31, April 10, May 1, May 8, July 31, September 25, and October 30.

If you would like to provide flowers one of these Sundays, please call the church office. Sundays will be assigned on a first come, first served basis.

Thank you!

—Nancy Lee

Help!!! Our Wee One Need You!



For the past few months, we have had real problems getting volunteers to keep the worship nursery. If you take a look at the back of this month's calendar, you will see the only the first Sunday in February is covered.

If you love children, please consider volunteering to keep the worship nursery one Sunday a month, or even one Sunday a quarter. A sign up sheet is on the information table in the vestibule.

Thank you for considering helping with this very important component of worship!

—Ruth Bell

Midweek
Lenten Services

Wednesdays at Noon
Beginning
February 17

Spirituality Quadrant

First Presbyterian Church
PO Box 1159
Smithfield, NC 27577

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February 2016

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



Kitchen crew



The fine art of oyster shucking





Winter Storm Jonas couldn't stop our Oyster Roast





Passing the time with Monopoly . . .





Mission Outreach Quadrant Update



Harbor, Inc. is in need of basic pantry supplies, such as instant grits, instant oatmeal, peanut butter, crackers, jelly, jam, cereal, canned soups and vegetables, granola bars, and canned fruit.

Other needs include towels, washcloths, twin and full sheets, blankets, baby wipes, diapers, paper towels, toilet tissue, and liquid hand soap.

Please leave items in the Harbor basket in the fellowship hall. If you have questions, please call Judy Miller at 919-631-9436.

Thank you for supporting this important outreach of our church.

—Judy Miller

Hospice Outreach



The Mission Outreach Quadrant partners with the volunteers and staff at SECU Hospice House in Smithfield four times a year to provide an opportunity for our congregation to share our support and care to the families with loved ones at Hospice House by providing and serving a meal for the families, volunteers and staff. Our next meal will be on Sunday, February 28. If you would like to participate, please watch for the sign-up sheet which will be placed on the table in the Vestibule January 31.

Please contact Joyce Knoll if you have any questions.

—Joyce Knoll

February JOY Connection



The aroma of delicious food will fill the air in our fellowship hall at noon on Thursday, February 4. You will also hear the sound of familiar manly voices. Rich Huckenbeck and Benny Pope, our Dynamic Duo, will perform our program, and Eve Creech, Debbie Henderson, and Betsy Olive will provide our meal. As always, you are welcome to bring along a dessert.

Please remember to sign up on the sheet at the church reception desk or call the church office to let us know you are coming so we will know how much food we need.

We hope to see you the first Thursday in February!

—Ann Ragland

Fellowship Meal a Hit!


Fellowship Meal

Many, many thanks to the large number of congregation members who enjoyed the Fellowship Meal on January 11. The kitchen crew of Ken Allen, Tom Barwick, Steve Henderson, Evans Horne and Benny Pope did a masterful job of preparing Brunswick stew, and many declared it the best they had ever eaten! And as usual, the good cooks of the church at large brought wonderful side dishes and desserts.

There were very few leftovers, but the Smithfield Rescue Mission gratefully received large containers of stew for lunch the next day.

Our speaker, the Rev. Jeff Spainhour, kept the audience spellbound with his presentation on the Clean Water Project in Africa. He had beautiful pictures taken by a member of the Staff of Hope, and Jeff shared stories on many of those photographed.

Mission Outreach will work with other members of the congregation to offer a Fellowship Meal on a quarterly basis this year. It is a wonderful opportunity to get to know your fellow pew sharers.

—Ann Huckenbeck

Relay for Life
Survivor Sunday
Chili Lunch
March 6

Make plans now to support FPC's Team 37 as they continue to work to raise funds to support the fight against cancer.

Scout Sunday
February 14, 2016

February 26
6:00 p.m.



Presbyterian Women's
Coordinating Team Meeting
February 8, 7:00 p.m.

Thank Offering Results

On behalf of the Presbyterian Women and as Chair of the Creative Ministries Committee, I would like to thank Myra Wallace for preparing our Thank Offering envelopes, Ellen Adam for serving as treasurer, and for all who so generously supported our offering. This is the Thank Offering's 127th year. Donations to this offering will support many women's causes throughout the US and the world.

—Janet Lampe

BOGO BOGO



We've all seen this at our local supermarkets - "**Buy one, get one free**," or "**Buy one, get one**." According to *Wikipedia* this is a common form of sales promotion started by New Jersey natives John VanLiew and Joseph Calderone. We've come to know this by the acronyms **BOGO**, **BOGOF**, and **BOGOHO** (Buy one get one half off). We are bombarded with offers, some of which seem too good to be true, like: Buy one, get one half price; Three for the price of two; Buy two, get one half price; buy one product from category A and get another product from category B free, etc.

We are intrigued by the prospect of getting something free, but are also leery of the underlying reason why something is being offered for such a good price. The technique is not without criticisms: we purchase something we didn't need, we purchase too much of something, or we purchase something that cannot be used within the shelf life of the product. And there are other criticisms they may or may not be valid. But let's be challenged to ferret out the good deals. I say BOGO BOGO, Buy One, Get One — Buy One Give One to our *HUNGER PROGRAMS*. If there are valid promotions of quality products that allow us to buy one get one free, consider giving that free one to someone who could use it like someone who could not afford to buy the one to get the other for free in the first place.

When you are pushing your cart through the aisles of your favorite supermarket and see very good offers of a freebie consider buying the items and sharing them. BOGO BOGO! Buy One — Get One, Buy One — Give One, and support Yes We Can and the Smithfield Rescue Mission.



And just think! The pennies you save on a BOGO you can give to *PENNIES FOR HUNGER*.

—Tom Barwick

The Property Box

Please remember that if you hold an event in the Fellowship Hall and use the church's linen tablecloths, it is your responsibility to wash and dry the cloths, fold them, and hang them back in their storage cabinets.

Please clean the sink strainers after you prepare food in the kitchen.

If you use the kitchen, please clean and *put away* dishes, flatware, pots, pans, cups, and glassware that you have used. Also, we appreciate your taking home and washing the cloth kitchen towels you use.

Thank you.
Your Property Team

Giving Envelopes or Numbers?

First, you don't have to give on a weekly basis to use giving envelopes.

Secondly, you don't have to be an adult to use giving envelopes. Many families have used envelopes as a way to teach their children about giving to the church. If you would like a box of envelopes for your child, just let me know.



Thirdly, if you prefer to give cash, the giving envelope with your number on it ensures that your gift is properly recorded to your account. You don't have to use envelopes to give cash, however.

Donors who don't use envelopes are assigned an envelope number that can be used in many ways. Some families use their bank's bill pay program. Your envelope number can be the account number you have entered on your check.

Whether you use an envelope or not, you will see your envelope number on the Memo line of your check. As I process checks from the collection, I note the envelope number on your check. This number expedites recording your gift into our software program.

Thank you for your support of First Presbyterian Church! Let me know if you have any questions. I can be reached at 919-630-3654.

—Beth Daniel



Before ↑

After →



Staff Annual Performance Reviews

Once again it's time again for the staff's Annual Performance Reviews. As Head of Staff and in conjunction with the Personnel Team, I am inviting members of the congregation to provide healthy and constructive input. We want to hear how well our staff has supported you during the previous year and where there is room for growth. If you desire to make your observations and comments known, please feel free to contact the pastor/head of staff, Joe Hester, or consult with members of the Personnel Team: Jimmy Hooks; chair, Brent Booker, Camille Boone, Wayne Dockery, Bobbie Hartman, Kay Taylor, and Tonya Worley. We'll provide you the same form for you to complete on your own that we use to gather data for the annual performance reviews. Or, if you prefer, we'll work with you to find a date for a one-on-one session.

The Personnel Team recommends you begin with prayer so your heart and mind will be in a constructive framework to lay out your thoughts. And as you finish, please reread your comments with your original prayer in mind. You may find that you have drifted from the professional to the personal. You must sign on the form; we will not read any form without a legible signature. Print if you must. We do this because people should take responsibility for their words. Also, if we have any follow-up questions, we'll know who to contact. The staff never hears who has made any specific comment, and the data collection forms are shredded after the reviews are conducted. Just put the completed, signed form into an envelope, seal it, and address it to the head of staff, Joe Hester. Then drop it off in the pastor's mailbox in the workroom. The deadline is Monday, February 15, 2016.

We look forward to your help in better understanding the complete picture of how our staff performs. Thank you.

—Joe Hester

What a Change!

In 2010, the Session and Congregation of First Presbyterian Church of Smithfield during a season of prayerful discernment identified the following objectives and project scope when launching the building project:

- New and modern classrooms and areas for Christian Education programs
- A fully accessible facility as well as bathrooms for individuals with special mobility needs
- A modern and expanded kitchen facility
- A fellowship hall with the capacity to accommodate the entire congregation
- A new and efficient office suite for church staff
- More energy efficient HVAC equipment
- Designated areas for youth fellowship and community outreach programs
- Updated preschool facilities to attract young families
- A sense of sacred space in the church

2012 – The Total Building Project Cost $2,274,962

This comprehensive project's cost includes campaign consulting fees, architect fees, construction and renovation costs, engineering costs related to oil tank issue, landscaping, interest carrying costs during construction, and other costs incurred as a result of the construction project. With the commitment of your time, talent, and financial generosity, our project was completed within a hair of the projected costs.

—Shirley Sharek

Stewardship Quadrant