



# First Presbyterian Church

310 Plantation Road, Perry Florida



## Summer Newsletter, 2020

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FPC Website:  
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1(850) 584-3826

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[office@firstpresperry.org](mailto:office@firstpresperry.org)



## Words from the Pastor

While sitting by myself in the church sanctuary, preparing to record my sermon, a deep loneliness hit me. Even though the building was as beautiful as it always has been, it was hollow and empty. Silly that I said the empty church was “empty”, but the empty I am referring to is more profound. It was the “emptiness” that grabbed my attention.

As I looked around, I could see the empty pews. I smiled as I imagined each member sitting in their special spot, and imagined their smiles looking back from their favorite pew. I could almost see the ushers in the back, practicing holy hospitality, and greeting each person entering the doors. I laughed as I thought of the choir clustered in the narthex, chatting together wearing robes and big smiles. I could imagine the acolytes and those working on sound.

When I snapped out of my daydream I felt a heavy sadness, as though something very important was missing, and the word “empty” echoed into my memory. I felt like Mary Magdalene standing in the empty tomb, looking for Jesus’ body; a body that was not there. In the story Jesus appears to Mary and says, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” So too I heard my Lord say the same thing in that moment, “woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?”

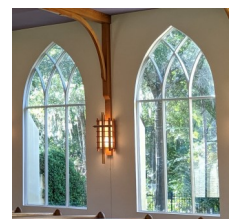
I considered that for a while and the profound truth of “emptiness” washed over me. I was looking for the body of Christ. My eyes searched the place where my mind expected them to be, in the sanctuary, yet that body was missing. The body of Christ was not there, the sanctuary was empty.

So, you may recall my talking on this back in April because it is about resurrection hope. What I did not talk about in April was what that resurrection hope would look like. I have found myself mourning like Mary because I didn’t recognize the empty building as resurrection. I saw death. Yet when the building is empty, we should consider the ways he is risen. “The emptiness is emphasized in John’s Gospel by two angels at either end where the body had been. It is not emptiness as such; rather it is akin to that space opened by two angels on either side of the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies: the emptiness announces the plenitude of God’s presence (G. Ward).”

So where is that body? I must continue reminding myself of one important thing, the living body of Christ is exactly where God wants it to be, out serving in the world. Of course God loves that we worship together, but more than that God’s heart and concern is out in the world that is not always as beautiful as our sanctuary.

So where is the body of Christ? Well, I hope this newsletter gives you eyes to see the church alive and well, serving in the mission field with determination. I am certain the holy hospitality continues for the poor and vulnerable. The choir, I am sure, wear smiles and spread much needed hope, just as they spread joy with their music. And so it is with every person whose smiling face I wish I could see. Though I want us together, I find comfort knowing the world is experiencing what I miss the most; the gifts of your love, faithfulness, and care. Christ has risen indeed!

Grace and Peace, The Rev. Natasha Sudderth-Davis





# F.P.C Worship



## August Worship Schedule

In case of inclement weather prevent Worship on the lawn

**August 2nd**- Worship on the Lawn at 8:30 am & online 11am

**August 9<sup>th</sup>**- Online Worship

**August 16<sup>th</sup>**- Online Worship/ Youth Sunday

**August 23<sup>rd</sup>**-Online Worship

**August 30<sup>th</sup>**-Hymn Sing on the Lawn/Communion at 8:30am

## Worship on the Lawn begins at 8:30am

Wear cool comfortable clothes. Bring a mask, lawn chair, and hymn book if you have them. (Consider bringing bug repellent, hat, water.) We ask that you sit at least 13 feet apart from people outside your household. Please keep socially distanced when greeting others, and wear a mask.

## Worship Committee News

First Presbyterian Church celebrated the Easter Sunday very differently than in previous years. Rather than gathering in the sanctuary filled with Easter lilies and our beloved church family, we celebrated the resurrection of our savior gathered in spirit by the power of the Spirit. The Easter lilies that many of you ordered have not been forgotten.



At times it may feel like we are wondering in a worship wilderness, strangers and aliens worshipping in an unknown (online) land. However, the day of our homecoming will come, a day when *all* can gather together in the sanctuary for worship once again. When it does the worship committee would like to celebrate. The Easter lily flower donations will be used at that time to purchase flowers to fill the sanctuary. If you would like to add a flower donation, or prefer a refund, please contact the church office.

# Thinking about Worship



Within the pages of our Directory for Worship we are reminded of the holiness of all God's creation, all time, all space and all matter. We read, "Because heaven and earth belong to God, we may worship in any place. The Old Testament describes stone altars, tabernacles, temples and other places where the people gathered and encountered God. The Gospels tell us that Jesus worshipped at the synagogue and temple, but he also worshipped in the wilderness, on hillsides, and at lakeshores, demonstrating that God cannot be confined to one place (W-1.0203)."

It goes on to point to early Christians worshipping in homes, catacombs, and prisons. Making very clear what truly matters when it comes to worship. It's not the place that's important, but the gathering of the people of God. The safety measures in place for us during this pandemic due to Covid-19 have not stopped the members of FPC from gathering together for worship. Our congregation has remained steadfast in doing just that.

Even though we have overcome so many obstacles and been faithful to adapt to our current situation, we may not feel we have truly been "gathering". Perhaps that is because for most of us, being able to gather together with friends and family is the pattern of life that we have grown accustomed to. Gathering together in person was how we learned to be the church, and how we experienced Christian community.

We are months into this and my best guess is that your longing for the old way of "gathering together" is as strong as ever. That's my guess because that's how I feel. Yet I remind myself of two things. The first is that our unity and gathering together is one of the most beautiful gifts of God in the Holy Spirit because it knows



Gathering together for us has the meaning of being gathered together by the power of the Holy Spirit that abides in each one of us no matter where we are. The Spirit binds us together across time, and space. This Spiritual connectedness can still be difficult for us, as God created us to be together in community. So let me offer some suggestions for maintaining a sense of being together even when we are apart.

When worshipping online, consider coordinating a worship time with other church members. Call each other for a little fellowship before or after you choose to worship. When you worship from home consider lighting a candle as a reminder of the Holy Spirit's presence. Those with other family members in the home try to worship together in the same room or perhaps the same time. In the digital age you have the choice of listening to any pastor at any church you choose, and I encourage you to enjoy it as it is available. I also encourage you to be dedicated in your worship with FPC, as worship is how God forms our church community, preparing and equipping us to serve in the world.

# Stay Connected with Sunday Worship



Can I worship online without computer or internet? **YES!**

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## How to Join Church Gatherings Using Landline Home Phone

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### Thursday 10:30 am: Prayer Meeting

Step 1: At 10:30 am Thursday call: **1-646-558-8656**

Step 2: When prompted dial meeting ID: **591 719 531 #**

Step 3: When asked for user number dial pound: **#**

### Sunday Online Worship 11:00

Step 1: At 10:55 am Sunday call: **1-646-558-8656**

Step 2: When prompted dial meeting ID: **952 6385 6926 #**

Step 3: When asked for user number dial pound: **#**

If you have questions or need assistance please call your shepherd or call the church office.

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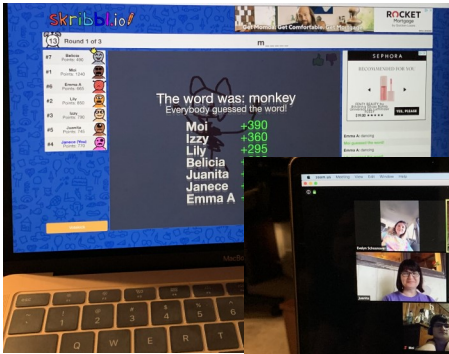
# FPC Youth News

Summer  
2020

## Youth Group Meet Via Zoom!

Fall Youth Group Start Date

September 20th



**Youth Sunday:** August 16th

The FPC Youth will lead worship August 16th.

## Youth Conference Montreat NC?

Your youth leaders know this has been a particularly difficult summer. The cancelations of activities and separation from friends can make it feel like summer never really arrived...except for the heat, and the bugs. The youth leaders were particularly excited about our plans to attend Montreat Youth Conference in the mountains of North Carolina, but alas that too has been put on hold.

However, Montreat is all about supporting youth across the nation to remain connected and grounded in their faith even when they cannot gather together in person. In order to reach out to youth and leaders Montreat has done several things.

First, our trip registration was moved forward to attend the 2021 youth conference. Deposit's paid for the 2020 Montreat conference registration will be refunded soon. If you do not receive the refund please let your youth leader know.

The second thing Montreat has done to support youth and youth leaders is offer an amazing array of resources, online connections, and podcast talks. We will be making those things available as youth starts up again in September.

**Moderator-** The Rev. Natasha Sudderth-Davis

**Clerk of Session-** Marilyn Culpepper

**Ruling Elders**

Class of 2020-Steve Brown, Janice Musgrove, Janece Campbell

Class of 2021-Bob Bell, Karl Morgan,

Class of 2022- Heather Speas, Brenda Wilson, Stan Whiddon

### **A Note from the Pastor/Moderator:**

When the members of the session agreed to serve as elders it is safe to assume not one of them knew the challenges they would face because of the Covid-19 pandemic. I have admired our session members in the time I have been here in Perry, as they have navigated this difficult season with grace and love. As they have cared for you, so I ask you FPC to care for them. I hope you will take some time this week to reach out and express your love and support in some way to the clerk of session and our ruling elders.

Thank You, Natasha Sudderth-Davis, Session

The session voted to create a **Church Finance Committee** whose chair will be the new church Treasurer, James Bloom. The committee and treasurer will oversee the finances of the church and present financial reports to the session in monthly meetings for review. The work of this committee will open more time in session meetings to focus on nurturing Christian discipleship, ministry and mission.

### **Covid-19 Question and Answer Discussion**

Church Re-Opening Planning Team would like to invite you to join us **Wednesday August 5th at 7:00 pm** for an online Covid-19 Question and Answer Discussion with several members in our congregation who work in the medical field.

The re-opening team will also be listening to any ideas you would like to offer on ways we can do ministry in the days ahead and possible re-opening ideas you may have. Join us at 7pm by going to the church website. If you do not have internet call the church office for call-in instructions.



# 224th General Assembly Report

## Bob Bell, Delegate from Presbytery of St. Augustine

Six Delegates were elected from the Presbytery of St. Augustine to serve at the 224th General Assembly that was to be held in Baltimore, Maryland. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Assembly was not able to meet in person.

The delegates from St. Augustine Presbytery were commissioned by a virtual service on the Sunday before General Assembly met.

Every delegate was trained on how to navigate using their computer, I-pad or phone to see and talk to each other in the assembly and how to vote for items of business.

Sandra Hedrick, Teaching Elder and stated clerk of the Presbytery, and Moon Lee, Ruling Elder from Washington State, stood for co-moderators of the General Assembly but were not elected. Ruling Elder Elona Street-Stewart and Teaching Elder Gregory Bently were elected as co-moderators of the 224th General Assembly.

The Assembly opened with worship led by the sitting co-moderators Teaching Elder Cindy Kohlmann and Teaching Elder Vilmarie Cintron-Oliveri. The worship and music for the entire Assembly was provided by wonderful, talented persons.

Most of the overtures that were brought to the floor of the assembly were those that involved racial injustice, the pandemic of COVID-19 and the support of Native American Presbyterian churches.

I enjoyed listening to others and how they conveyed messages with just one line of text so here are a few of the ones that I liked.

“We have to fix ourselves before we try to become an example to the rest of the world.”

“When there is Joy at the end of a decision...God is present.”

“Be mindful of the many needs of others, listening for where God is calling you to serve”

“God manifests Himself through the unknown”

“Help us to listen to your voice, give us your wisdom, pour out justice, let our hands, our feet be the voice of your work, hear our hearts, fill us with your Spirit, stir us to hear you”

The assembly gave the Office of General Assembly the authority to move monies in the budget as needs are generated. The Mission budget of the denomination is down 2 million dollars, it is expected that the per capita assessment will be down 25% and that designated monies given will be down by 25%.

The last comment that I have is by Teaching Elder J. Herbert Nelson, who is the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

“God cannot be locked inside our buildings any longer, I don’t remember God having a church building”.



# Christian Education News



## Christian Education Committee Announcement



The Christian Education Committee needs more committee members as we prepare for the upcoming year. If you are searching for a place to serve this may be the place for you. We hope you will join us for our next meeting, sharing your gifts and ideas.

Meetings will be held on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00PM online. Go to the church website [www.firstpresperry.org](http://www.firstpresperry.org) and click the Christian Education meeting button. If you would like to use your phone to join the meeting contact the church office for instructions.



## Sunday School Via Zoom!

Information and start dates for Sunday School classes will be announced soon.



# Rooms to Grow Preschool

First Presbyterian Church is committed to the children, families, and teachers of Rooms to Grow which remains an important ministry of our church. The members of session met to discuss whether or not Rooms to Grow could safely open in September amid the current threat of Covid-19 in our community. After prayer and a great deal of discussion the session voted unanimously to keep Rooms to Grow closed until such a day as the threat of Covid-19 was under control and our school could once again be assured of providing a safe learning environment for children and teachers. The highly contagious respiratory disease Covid-19 has created challenges for schools across the country. Each school is unique, having different resources and considerations at work in their decision making. The session's decision comes out of their great concern for the health and well-being of all persons, children, families, and teachers. While Rooms to Grow will not open this school year, that closure is only temporary. First Presbyterian Church has every intention of continuing on with the ministry of Rooms to Grow once it is safe to do so.  
Grace and Peace, First Presbyterian Church Session

## Mission & Outreach



### Operation Christmas Child

Please continue to save medicine bottles.

Also, old glasses cases would be helpful to make sewing kits.



The Mission and Outreach Committee would like to invite those interested in serving on the committee to join them for their next meeting.

Contact the committee chair Heather Speas for more information. Meeting dates and times will be available soon.

Our work in mission and outreach to the community and world is an important and vital part of the ministry of our congregation. Please continue to pray for us and those we serve.

## A NOTE FROM COURAGE AND FELLOWSHIP THROUGH CANCER

The last 4 & 1/2 months have been very different for all of us, and especially true for those in our community suffering with the additional impact of cancer in their households.

Some not being able to have family with them during surgeries or treatments, many have spouses or other income earners out of work facing financial difficulties on top of the disease.

While we have not been able to do in home visits or have support group meetings, we have been busy helping in what ever way we can, supplying masks and gloves, Gas cards. Grocery cards, prayer times on Faith radio, phone calls lending an ear for someone who needs it

I have made a LOT of driveway visits during this time and while I can't give my usual "hugs" and touching support, every where I go , I am greeted like a part of the family. They are SO grateful for the caring, and support

I wish you could have seen the face of 1 of our 4 year old boys who has leukemia when I gave him his "special" Superman mask and pillow (that I made saying you are stronger than you think on it) to take to his 6 hour Chemo last month. PRICELESS! His Dad was especially grateful for the gas to get his son back and forth to his Chemo the last 4 months, and told me he wouldn't even take off his mask in the car because he said it made him stronger.

Gas cards and grocery cards have been especially helpful during this difficult time, sanitizing wipes, hand sanitizer, and boxes of gloves/masks as well

We are SO grateful to all who support this Ministry, and the people who receive these gifts are especially thankful for the help that get during this difficult time.

God is at work , and I am so blessed to be His servant

In Christ

Dianna



# Need Ideas FOR YOUR Shoebox Gift?



## Before you start packing, review this checklist:

- Find a standard-size shoebox.
- Fill it with a "wow" toy and other gifts.
- Pray for the child who will receive your shoebox. Include a note and a photo.
- Include a \$9 donation or give online through Follow Your Box.
- Take your shoebox gift to a drop-off location the third week in November.

## Now, prepare your shopping list from the following suggestions!

### "WOW" ITEM

- outfit
- shoes
- musical instrument
- soccer ball with pump
- stuffed animal
- doll

### TOYS

- toy cars
- jump ropes
- yo-yos
- toys that light up and make noise (with extra batteries)

### ACCESSORIES

- socks
- hats
- sunglasses
- hair clips
- jewelry and watches
- flashlights (with extra batteries)

### SCHOOL SUPPLIES

- pens, pencils, and sharpeners
- crayons and markers
- notebooks and paper
- coloring and picture books
- solar calculators

### NON-LIQUID HYGIENE ITEMS

- toothbrushes
- bar soap
- washcloths
- combs

### A PERSONAL NOTE

- a message to the child
- a photo of yourself, your family, or group

*If you include your name and an address, the child may be able to write back.*



**Do Not Include** candy; toothpaste; gum; used or damaged items; war-related items; seeds; food; liquids or lotions; medications or vitamins; breakable items or glass containers; aerosol cans.

For more gift suggestions,  
visit [samaritanspurse.org/occ](http://samaritanspurse.org/occ)



**Samaritan's Purse®**  
INTERNATIONAL RELIEF

Operation Christmas Child® is a project of Samaritan's Purse®, Franklin Graham, President  
View solicitation disclosure information for Samaritan's Purse online at [samaritanspurse.org/disclosure](http://samaritanspurse.org/disclosure)

08-05-137

# Online Prayer Meetings

Thursday Morning Meeting at 10:30 am

You are invited to join us for a time of reflection and prayer Thursday mornings at 10:30 am. If you have internet access you can join the meeting by going to the church website prayer page. You may also call in to join the meeting by using your landline. Call the church office for more information.

## PRAYER LIST ONLINE

We now have our ongoing Prayer List available on our church website under the prayer tab. For the safety of those we hold in prayer a password is required to login. If you do not know the password you may call the church office.



## Prayer List

Marie, Janet, Angie (Raymond's sister/ nieces)

Warren (Alan & Sheena Jenkins friend)

Herschel McClellan

Warren of Roan Mtn.

Kathy Zeigler

Steve Polshammer

Effren Cavazos family

Rufus and Janean McMullen

Leadership (national, state, local)

Those feeling economic effects of Covid19

Concerns and challenges for reopening schools

Our church congregation/ pastor/ session

Annetta (sister of Sandra Allen)

Linda Mae (friend of Jeannie Hilgendorf)

Lily Hilgendorf

Chuck and Martha Davis

Judy Neal

Loisell Coleman

Hattie Adams

Betty Lou Hendry

Fanette Chesser

Ben Sunderland

Shirley Erwin

**Prayer Requests:** If you have a prayer request you would like to pass along to our prayer team please email your request to [prayerrequest@firstpresperry.org](mailto:prayerrequest@firstpresperry.org) or contact your shepherd.

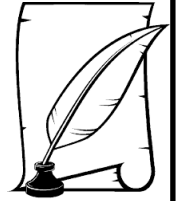
Prayer request will go to those praying in the weekly prayer meeting and once a week prayer requests will be emailed to the congregation.

**The Church Care Account** is one way our church reaches out to assist individuals and families who may be experiencing financial hardship. If you would like to anonymously give to a particular person in need, or add funds for unspecified needs that arise, you may mail a check to the church office.

Be sure to specify the check is for the care account, adding a note explaining the intended purpose of the gift. The care account is a ministry of love that has eased the burdens of many. In a time where many are suffering unemployment, a small donation can make a huge differ-

To My Wonderful Church Family,  
Thank you very much for your love and concern shown to me after my sudden overnight hospital stay. Your cards, calls, e-mails, text messages and notes mean so much to me. My life has returned to normal, and I am enjoying each and every day. Thanks be to God.

In Christ,  
Cheryl Gregory



## Instant Church Directory™

Having access to the church directory to stay in touch with each other is more important than ever. Many you have taken advantage of technology by adding the church directory app to your cell phones. If you have not done so already, consider installing the phone app if you have a cell phone. The digital directory updates daily.

Directions for adding the app are on the church website under the Home tab.

Visit [www.firstpresperry.org](http://www.firstpresperry.org)

If you do not have a cell phone, you may call the church office and we will mail you a printed copy.

If you are having trouble with the installation please contact the office and we will assist you.

Important Note: Email addresses cannot be shared on multiple devices.



The church newsletter is an important way we stay connected and share what is going on in various ministries with others in the congregation. Everyone wants to hear from you. Send important dates, personal reflections, announcements, committee information, articles etc. to Carrie at [office@firstpresperry.org](mailto:office@firstpresperry.org)

The next Newsletter will go out the beginning of October. Send your submissions by the last week in September.





# First Presbyterian Church of Perry

August 2020 Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 Worship on the Lawn 8:30am Online 11am	3	4 Christian Education Committee Meeting 7pm	5 Covid19 Question & Answer 7pm Online	6 Prayer meeting 10:30	7	8
9 Online Worship	10	11	12	13 Prayer meeting 10:30	14	15
16 YOUTH SUNDAY Online Worship	17	18	19	20 Prayer meeting 10:30	21	22
23 Online Worship	24 Session Meeting 6:00 pm	25	26	27 Prayer meeting 10:30	28	29
30 Hymns/ Communion On the lawn 8:30 am	31					

### August Birthdays

Seth Harper—August 2  
 Zachary Wiggins— August 3  
 Jan Anderson— August 8  
 Ben Sunderland— August 9  
 Eric Ratliff— August 10  
 Emma Campbell— August 11  
 Alice Farrell— August 11  
 Polly Kincaid— August 13  
 Glenn knowles— August 19  
 Casey Wilson— August 30

Peggy Eckel—August 20  
 Patricia Lindsey—August 20  
 Vivian Howie—August 21  
 Jim Bassett—August 22  
 Elena Torres— August 22  
 Mary Lou Bennett—August 23  
 Margaret Poppell—August 24  
 Janice Musgrove—August 28  
 Edward Davis—August 30  
 Jonathan Lincoln—August 31

### Anniversaries

Karl & Ellie Morgan— August 10  
 Tom & Marcy Fletcher—August 19  
 Alan & Sheena Jenkins— August 19  
 Larry & Judy Neal— August 21  
 Vaughan & Laura Early— August 30  
 Bob & Chris Lutz— August 30  
 Jory & Juanita Ratliff— August 31



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3 Prayer meeting 10:30 am	4	5
6 Worship	7	8 Christian Education Committee Meeting 7pm	9	10 Prayer meeting 10:30am	11	12
13 Worship	14	15	16	17 Prayer Meeting 10:30 am	18	19
20 Worship	21 Session Meeting 6:00 pm	22	23	24 Prayer Meeting 10:30 am	25	26
27 Worship	28	29	30	Prayer meeting 10:30 am		

### September Birthdays

Tom Fletcher—Sept 1	Brandon Ratliff—Sept 16
Steve Caruso—Sept 2	Elvena Johnson—Sept 17
JoAnn Knowles—Sept 3	Loisell Coleman—Sept 18
Marla Howard—Sept 4	Sandra Allen—Sept 22
Jeff Barrett—Sept 8	Daniel Everett—Sept 23
Gretchen Tanner—Sept 11	Andy Larche—Sept 24
Ember Sprigle—Sept 13	Lilly Higendorf—Sept 25
Bob Root—Sept 14	Margie Rawls—Sept 26

### Anniversaries

Dom & Dianna Sandonato—Sept 1  
 Dave & Lynne Fraser—Sept 2  
 Al & Faye Wolfkill—Sept 9  
 AJ & Sandi Hilgendorf—Sept 14