

Dear Church Family,

As we continue to make our way through this historic year in the life of our church, we also have the opportunity this month to celebrate our history as a whole. It is with great joy that I look forward to Founders Day, October 11, on which we will gather for worship in person for the first time since March 8 of this year! As the Worship Committee and Session have been reflecting on this, we want to share with you that in the midst of our great excitement, we seek to keep the health and wellbeing of our congregation and community as our first priority. For this reason, I want to share with you the guidelines we will be following for worship on Founders Day.

Our gathering will take place outdoors on the East lawn under the trees at our regular time, 10:45 AM. Our preacher Rev. Diana Moore and our liturgists will be “staged” on the raised porch outside the door to the main hallway, and you are invited to bring your own lawn chair to worship. All attendees are expected to wear a mask or face covering and maintain six feet of social distance between family units. Hand sanitizer and extra masks will be available on welcome tables located at the three main entrances to the grounds (facing Church St., Branner St., and Deborah St.), where there will also be places to receive an offering. We will distribute the order of service ahead of time by email so that you can print off your own copy at home, or use an electronic copy on your device during the service, and a limited number of hardcopies will be on hand at the welcome tables. Anyone within the most vulnerable population or who has underlying conditions is not encouraged to attend, and everyone who is uncomfortable with attending in person should know that the service will be video-recorded and made available for viewing online.

As you might imagine, our worship service will be modified in significant ways. For the sake of maintaining social distance, we will exchange the Peace without leaving our seats, and by the Peace sign rather than by any physical contact. There will be music at this service, but we are encouraging those in attendance to hum along instead of singing (I have been told that this is what many of us who can’t carry a tune have been doing all along anyway!). In addition, we will not receive an offering by passing a plate during the service, but by receiving financial gifts in receptacles on the welcome tables. There will be public access to the Fellowship Hall bathroom, however, the rest of the building will be closed.

As we watch the weather forecast carefully during the week leading up to Founders Day, we have a very tentative “rain or shine” commitment to gathering for worship. If manageable rain is predicted, we will set up several tents to offer cover and would encourage all attendees to bring umbrellas. If we are forced to cancel for any reason, however, we will make the decision no later than 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 10, so that we have ample time to communicate the change by email, Facebook, and our church website. A sanitizing team will be responsible for

cleaning and disinfecting after the service, and the Session will discuss at its meeting on the following Wednesday, October 14 whether we will continue with outdoor worship in the subsequent weeks.

On another note and as a reminder, we are exploring a worship series this fall built around the PCUSA’s Matthew 25 invitation. Working with the lectionary readings from the Gospel of Matthew, this series intentionally interacts with and rotates through the three focus areas of the Matthew 25 invitation: 1) building congregational vitality, 2) dismantling structural racism, and 3) eradicating systemic poverty. In support of this series, we are including here in our newsletter an overview provided by the Matthew 25 invitation for each focus area. For this month, please have a look at our Matthew 25 Spotlight on dismantling structural racism, which also includes a unique 21-Day Racial Justice Challenge available at the Presbyterian Mission website.

Please be in prayer and support for one another as we continue to navigate this season, and seek in all things to reflect the love of Christ to the world. I deeply appreciate you all, and hope you are doing well.

In Christ,
Dave

Matthew 25 Spotlight: Dismantling Structural Racism **The theology behind dismantling structural racism**

Racism is anti-Christian. In 2016, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved a comprehensive church wide anti-racism policy called “Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community.” The policy states:

Racism is a lie about our fellow human beings, for it says that some are less than others. It is also a lie about God, for it falsely claims that God favors parts of creation over the entirety of creation. Because of our biblical understanding of who God is and what God intends for humanity, the PC(USA) must stand against, speak against and work against racism. Anti-racist effort is not optional for Christians. It is an essential aspect of Christian discipleship, without which we fail to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Structural racism is not only the “opposite of what God intends for humanity,” but is also an example of how sin is systemic rather than simply personal. As the PC(USA)’s anti-racism policy states, “Reformed theology offers a nuanced understanding of sin. Calvin did not understand sin to be simply an individual belief, action, or moral failing (Calvin, 1960). Rather, he viewed sin as the corporate state of all humanity. It is an infection that taints each of us and all of us. No part of us — not our perception, intelligence, nor conscience — is unclouded by sin.”

Psalms 14:3 and Romans 3:10 remind us, “There is no one just, not even one.” The PC(USA)’s policy also reminds us that this realization “does not mean that human beings are awful. Rather, it means that we must have humility about our own righteousness, and that we must cling to the grace of God in Jesus Christ.”

Why do we talk about structural racism?

Understanding Calvin’s doctrine of sin can help us see how racism is not only about individual prejudice or an individual’s beliefs and attitudes, but a systemic, structural reality. Through the social working of sin throughout our history, some people have become advantaged, and others disadvantaged, on the basis of their skin color, ethnic identity or their ancestral background. Social power and prejudice have combined to treat people differently, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Some people are privileged while others are oppressed. As a consequence, there is unequal and inequitable access to resources such as money, education, information and decision-making power. The total result of this complex history is what we call racism.

What can I do to learn more?

One good place to start is by taking the 21-Day Racial Justice Challenge, which is well suited to individuals and groups. The challenge invites us to do something every day to raise awareness about the perniciousness of racism and encourage action in response to that awareness. The PC(USA) has joined several nonprofits, organizations and school systems in adapting the challenge for our use. To see the challenge, go to <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/racism/>



SPECIAL OFFERINGS Sunday, October 4th, is
PEACE & GLOBAL WITNESS World Communion Sunday.

On this Sunday we will collect a special offering, the Peace and Global Witness Offering.

Through our participation, our church extends Christ’s peace throughout our community with 25% of the offering being used locally and sent to the Highlander Research and Education Center. The Highlander Center, located in New Market is an educational center which focuses on issues including democratic participation and economic justice, with a particular focus on youth, immigrants to the U.S. from Latin America, African Americans, LGBT, and poor white people.

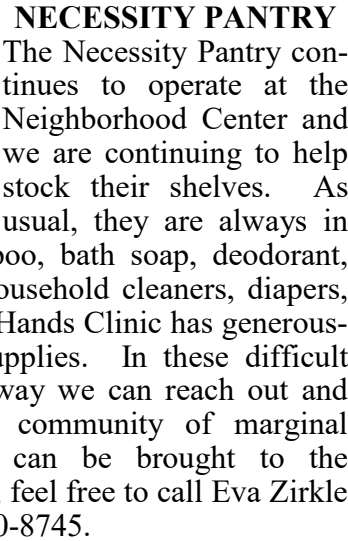


During our November 1st Worship Service we plan on celebrating All Saints Day. This is a day on which Christ’s people remember those who have gone before them in faith and who now dwell with God in heaven.

Take a moment to consider those saints who shared your life, and who have died and entered the Church Triumphant in the **last year**. Please contact Heather in the church office by Monday, October 26th, to add a name to the list. Then, during our November 1st Worship Service, we will have a time of remembrance.

MISSION CORNER

It's hard to believe it is Fall, and Thanksgiving and Christmas are right around the corner. Because of Covid, however, I expect that Christmas this year may be even more difficult for some than in past years. As you are no doubt aware, each Christmas, First Presbyterian Church has undertaken to donate boxes of Mac and Cheese to the Chamber of Commerce for the Christmas in Jefferson County program. This program will continue again this year, but it will be conducted a bit differently. The coordinator of this program, Ms. Yates, is asking that monetary donations be made in lieu of food items. This is being done to limit handling of items by people to help decrease the risk of spreading Covid. So, if you would like to donate for this activity please send your donation to Heather who will ensure that it gets forwarded. We would like to be able to send them our support by first of November. So if you can and would like to help in this endeavor please consider donating to this mission. Thank you.



PRAYER CONCERNS

FAMILY and FRIENDS OF:
John Rinehart, who passed away September 21
Marie Nickle, former FPC member, who passed away September 20

SPECIAL CONCERNS:
Arlene Peck Kenneth Winslow Sara Piper Bill and JoAnne Vest
Gail and George Twine Lynn and Judy Watkins
All members of the military and their families, especially those stationed overseas.

ILL AND RECOVERING:
Denny Pryor, who has been hospitalized with pneumonia and a kidney infection
Campbell Maben, friend of the Zirkles, has experienced a relapse in his cancer and is resuming chemotherapy
Lynn McCoy, a friend of many in our congregation, cancer has returned and will be receiving chemotherapy
David Skeen, Libby Gardner's brother-in-law, who suffered a stroke
Shawn Frost, Janice Wintermute's cousin, who is undergoing chemotherapy for stage 4 pancreatic cancer
Ed Dixon, friend of Andy & Jessica Acuff, who has brain cancer

IN RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES:
JEFFERSON PARK: John Moser LIFECARE MORRISTOWN: Elsie Sorey (# 208)
SIGNATURE HEALTHCARE: Paulette Bozeman, Pat Patton (# 307)



YTD ACTUAL INCOME YEAR-TO-DATE (YTD) INCOME/EXPENSES			
	ACTUAL	PRORATED	YTD BUDGET
INCOME	\$165,771.28*	\$144,790.36**	\$140,253.76
EXPENSES	\$137,590.25***		\$145,738.76

MONTHLY INCOME

SEPT. TOTAL

\$5,878.00

(\$17,761 is needed monthly to meet budget)

ACTUAL INCOME OVER EXPENSES: \$28,181.03

YTD PRORATED INCOME OVER EXPENSES: \$7,200.11

*This number includes memorials and stimulus donations designated to our general budget.

** Some members pay their entire yearly pledges in January. This number has been adjusted to reflect what actual giving through August would be, if completed yearly pledges, were divided out monthly.

***Expenses are lower than expected, due to the pandemic.

If you have questions, please see Heather.