

FOCUS



The weekly newsletter of
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Sumter, South Carolina

March 24, 2020

OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE

**In an abundance of caution,
we have decided to discontinue
all church events, activities,
meetings and gatherings
through the end of March.**

**This includes
FPC Preschool and Kindergarten
and Sunday Morning Worship.**

**If you have a pastoral emergency,
please contact Pastor Nick
(office: 803-773-3814, ext. 101 or
his cell: 704-996-8802).**

Cancellations:

- *All remaining 2020 Clarendon, Lee and Sumter Cluster Lenten Luncheons*
- *A Night in Little Italy Spaghetti Dinner Youth Fundraiser*
- *Easter Egg Hunt*
- *We will not be taking orders for Easter lilies*

Music for March 29 Online Service

Hymn of Praise: 306, *Blest Be the Tie That Binds*

The Offertory Anthem: *Be Not Afraid* by Craig Courtney

Hymn of Commitment: 697, *Take My Life*

Notes from Joni-

In these times of uncertainty and stress, many of us find comfort and solace in our music. One of our hymns for this Sunday's service is *Blest Be the Tie That Binds*. Hymnary.org sums up the significance and impact of its message:

This hymn begins by stating that the body of Christ is bound together by love. The second and third stanzas of this hymn elaborate on the idea of suffering and rejoicing together, and the hymn concludes with the hope that this unity will not be permanently broken by death or parting. These themes are found in a lengthy passage in one of Paul's letters. He closed a short section on the unity and diversity of the body of Christ with this thought: "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it" (1 Cor. 12:26-27 ESV). A few verses later, he began the great chapter on love (1 Cor. 13).

What are some hymns, anthems, or songs that bring you assurance and peace?

Share with me by email, a call to the church or on Facebook.



Church, I hope this note finds you well, rested, and at home. This past Saturday I went to Food Lion down the road and it looked as if all of Sumter was out and about. Please take this virus seriously. I know it's difficult to distance yourself from others as we all need to buy groceries, but do the best that you can. I will do better myself so that we minimize the spread in our town.

Here is an update on Church:

Worship: Worship will continue as it has for the time being. It will be on Facebook and on our website Sunday mornings at 10:30. I am continually grateful for Joni Brown, Hamilton Stoddard, John Osteen, Kenny Jordan, Ike Jenkins, Kelly Hickey and Bella Land for helping us create a vibrant worship service for home viewers. Let us not give up meeting together, but encourage one another to tune in each week. Send FB invites to other members or friends who might be interested in joining us for worship.

Congregational Care: Deacons, Elders, staff, and I are calling a list of individuals who we believe may need a check-in a couple times a week. We have a good list, but at the same time, we don't want to miss anyone. If you know of someone in need, please call the church, email me, text me or call. Not meeting together in person every week complicates our congregational care, and we want to make sure those who are feeling lonely in this time are wrapped in the embrace of our church family. Thank you.

Christian Education: I'm very excited about an online opportunity we are going to roll out this week for our Sunday School classes and for our families and individuals at home. I believe this resource, if used well, will help us continue to grow in faith together. Look for more information soon through email, on Facebook and on our webpage.

Outreach: This is the most important piece of the church. Jesus called us to "Go and make disciples," to go and share the faith, hope and love of the Gospel. I've been in conversation with area pastors, government officials and local urban ministries about the current need. I believe the need for monetary assistance, for food and housing may increase in the weeks ahead. We need to be the church that welcomes all, cares for all and REACHES out to a world in need. I know you are already doing so in your own lives with the people you know and love, but we cannot forget the strangers in our midst. As needs in the Sumter community grow, I will send out opportunities to join together in making a difference in the lives of our neighbors. Keep watch.

God bless you and keep you. May God's face shine upon you and give you peace.

Blessings,

Nick



Dear Church Family,

With all that is going on in the world and with the unknowns, we have decided to postpone Children's Sunday which was scheduled for April 26. The decision was made due to the fact the children will not have enough time to plan and prepare for this special day. However, we will reschedule Children's Sunday for a later date.

As of now, we are moving forward with Vacation Bible School, Music and Art Camp and Montreat Youth Conferences. I am currently in contact with Montreat to find out if the youth conferences are cancelled (praying we will be past all of this by then), will we receive a refund for our deposits. I will keep you posted.

In the meantime, please be on the lookout for the new Christian Education resources that will be available on our website soon. We are excited about this opportunity and hope you will incorporate the lessons into your eLearning schedule.

Also, please be sure to look for me LIVE on Facebook on Sunday mornings around 10:00 a.m. for a time with Ms. Kelly.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Prayers continue for each of you, your families and the world. Grace and peace,

Kelly

HIGH SCHOOL MONTREAT YOUTH CONFERENCE (Rising 9th – 12th grade)

We Are

Montreat, North Carolina

July 12 – 18

\$300 per participant

New Payment Plan Option:

\$100 non-refundable deposit (to reserve a spot) due March 30

\$100 – due April 30

\$100 – due May 31

Please contact Taylor Geddings with questions or to make a reservation.

MIDDLE SCHOOL MONTREAT YOUTH CONFERENCE (Rising 6th-8th grade)

Endlessly Enough

Maryville, Tennessee

July 15-19

\$300 per participant

New Payment Plan Option:

\$100 non-refundable deposit (to reserve a spot) due March 30

\$100 – due April 30

\$100 – due May 31

Please contact Taylor Geddings with questions or to make a reservation.

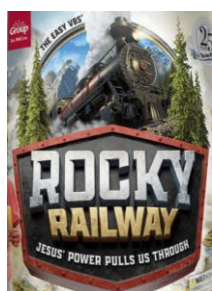
2020 VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

June 22-26

Rising 5K-5th grade

(Rising 6th graders and older are welcome to volunteer!)

More information coming soon!



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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This publication was delivered to USPS on 3/24/20. Please notify USPS if you don't receive it in a timely manner.

Open registration for the 2020-2021 school year continues. Please contact the Preschool office at 803-773-9027 for additional information.



JOYS AND CONCERNS

Home: Mayes DuBose,

David R. Brown, Charlie Hodgins,

Charles King (Greg King's Father)

Austin, TX: Robert Cain (George Cain's father)

St. Jude: Elizabeth Williams

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY is extended to the family of Art Norred, who died March 20.

CONGRATULATIONS to Tripp Brogdon on being ordained and installed Pastor of St. Andrew Presbyterian Church in Decatur, Alabama.

KEEPING THE FAITH

Our initial need to eliminate a projected 2020 budget deficit was \$50,000. To date, you have committed a total \$35,000 to our **Keeping the Faith** pledging effort to eliminate the shortfall. If you haven't yet pledged and would like to, you are encouraged to pick up a **Keeping the Faith** pledge card from the business office or contact our business manager, (803)773-3814 or neilross@fpcsumter.org.

FOCUS ON FINANCES

Week Beginning March 15, 2020

	Received		Budgeted
	<i>This Week</i>	<i>YTD</i>	<i>YTD</i>
Revenue			
* Contributions	\$ 6,711	\$ 168,886.	Pending
**Other Sources	\$ 0.	\$ 8,087.	Session
	\$ 6,711.	\$ 176,973.	Approval

*Includes \$30,660 pledges prepaid in 2019; carried over to 2020 revenue

**Endowments, Church Event Fees, etc.