

FOCUS



The weekly newsletter of
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Sumter, South Carolina

May 5, 2020

OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE

All in person church events, activities, meetings and gatherings have been discontinued. 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).



Dear Church Family,

A couple of weeks ago, I posted on our Children's ministry Facebook page an idea for families to share their favorite Bible verse or Bible story. Since that time, I have had several verses and stories come to mind, but over the past two days, I have been thinking about one particular scripture. It is one of my

absolute favorites. It is the one God spoke to me during a time when I was heavy burdened, lonely, hurt, emotionally distraught and more.

The verse is Jeremiah 29:11:

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for harm, to give you a future of hope." (NRSV)

As our "normal" has changed, I think it is important to remember the prophet Jeremiah. To remember God's promises and that God does have a plan for each one of us.

I know many people are struggling for many reasons, yet, it is my prayer that we continue to praise and worship God, even during this pandemic. We need to remember true worship is a matter of the heart and can be experienced wherever we are, whether we are in the sanctuary together, in our back yard, or sitting on our sofa. In this new time, may we praise Him with our whole hearts.

*Shout to the Lord all the Earth, let us sing
Power and majesty, praise to the King
Mountains bow down, and the seas will roar
At the sound of Your name.*

(Lyrics from the song *Shout to the Lord* by Darlene Zschech and Hillsong Worship)

Grace and peace,

Kelly Hickey

Focus will be published every other week throughout the summer. Listed below are the dates of publication along with the deadlines.

May 19 (Deadline 5/15)

June 2 (Deadline 5/29)

June 16 (Deadline 6/12)

June 30 (Deadline 6/26)

July 14 (Deadline 7/10)

July 28 (Deadline 7/24)

August 11 (Deadline 8/7)

August 25 (Deadline 8/21)



"THE QUESTION WE ALL WANT ANSWERED"

When are we opening back up? Church, believe me, I miss the pews being occupied just as much as you do. However, the more important question isn't when we open, but HOW. After

spending time in discussion and discernment, the Session has decided to follow the recent recommendation put forth by our New Harmony Presbytery and refrain from opening up throughout the month of May. The Session has also created a Reopening Taskforce that will be meeting regularly in order to formulate a plan and guidelines for reopening. We will take into consideration a wide range of resources and recommendations including but not limited to; CDC recommendations for Churches, PCUSA recommendations, conversations with other colleagues in ministry and more.

Friends, as we navigate the future, we understand that Christian fellowship and worship is a priority in our lives, but we also believe that the physical health and wellbeing of our brothers and sisters in Christ is a priority too. Therefore, we are committed to making the necessary adjustments and changes to keep all of our members and guests safe as they worship God together.

Please pray for your Session and the Reopening Task Force as they continue this challenging process.

Blessings,

Nick

THE MOTHER'S DAY OFFERING

Mother's Day has traditionally meant a special offering in our church to support the ministry of Presbyterian Communities of South Carolina, which serves older adults at six retirement communities across the state. The Mother's Day Offering provides charitable care to residents who have outlived their life's savings due to old age or costly medical bills, so that they can continue to call PCSC "home."

Although our church cannot gather for worship due to the coronavirus pandemic, the need of these residents for financial assistance remains. Please visit www.prescommunities.org and click on the "Mother's Day Offering" tab to learn more and to donate online. Or you can send a check to the church with "Mother's Day Offering" in the memo line. Thank you for keeping this special Presbyterian tradition of caring for older adults alive!

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

The Children's Ministry Subcommittee has decided to cancel Music and Arts Camp scheduled for June 15-18.; however, the subcommittee decided to postpone VBS to the week of July 27. Due to COVID-19 and all of the unknowns, we are prayerfully hopeful to be able to lead a Vacation Bible School only for the children and grandchildren of First Presbyterian Church. Please note as tentative plans are being made, our number one priority is to keep everyone safe and healthy. Please mark your calendars accordingly. More information will be available soon. Should you have any questions or need additional information please contact Kelly Hickey.

GRADUATING SENIORS



Sarah Margaret Bilton

Sarah Margaret is graduating from Sumter High where she was a dual enrollment student at USC-Sumter. She will be attending College of Charleston in the fall where she plans to major in Biology with a minor in Crime, Law and Society. She hopes to become a forensic scientist and later a field agent for the FBI. Her

favorite/funniest memory is when she was put in the timeout chair in 3 year old preschool. She sat on someone else's square on the carpet so had to sit in timeout for 15 minutes.

Matthew Blankenship

Matthew is graduating from Sumter High School. He will be attending Lindenwood University in St. Charles, MO. where he will major in Recreation, Sports, Tourism Management-Outdoor Adventure. He plans to build a career in the shooting industry upon graduation. Matthew's fondest memories of FPC Sumter are working on the youth roofing team for United Ministries ReStore, serving on the Samaritan House Team, learning Catechism with Mrs. Betty Brogdon and Confirmation with JD.



Alexander Blum

Alex is graduating from Wilson Hall. He will be attending William and Mary this fall and has accepted a guaranteed transfer to Cornell. He hopes to pursue a career in international law, policy, or business. Some of his favorite memories include his mission trip to Costa Rica, participating in the Bell Choir and youth group trips to Montreat.



Sarah Jekel

Sarah is graduating from Wilson Hall and also attended UNC School of Arts. She will be attending Utica College in the fall where she will major in Nutrition. Her favorite memory at First Pres was Music and Arts Camp where they had a paint war, somewhat spontaneously.



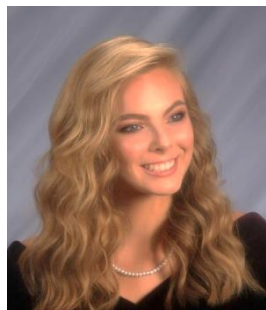
Kayleigh Jordan

Kayleigh is graduating from Sumter High, where she was a dual enrollment student at USC-Sumter. She will be attending USC-Sumter in the fall. Her favorite memory was going to Montreat in 10th grade and having a dance party with all the girls in youth group at the end of the day.



Elise Osteen

Elise is graduating from Wilson Hall. She will be attending USC where she will major in Visual Communications. Her favorite memory at First Pres is watching the adults do skits at the Congregational Retreats when she was younger.



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Sumter
MAYOR'S
STAY - AT - HOME
PRAYER
BREAKFAST
VIRTUAL GATHERING
SUNDAY, MAY 10th at 9 AM
Tune in to
SumterPrays.com
or
YouTube
Sumter SC Mayor's Prayer Breakfast

JOYS AND CONCERNS



Tuomey: Tiny Owens

Home: John Shreve,
Mayes DuBose, David R. Brown, Charlie Hodgins,
Rick Parker (Lisa Bratton's Stepfather)
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 Sylvia Kinder, who died April 22;
. . . Norma Abbott on the death of her mother-in-law,
Geneva Belle Wright Abbott, who died April 26.

FOCUS ON FINANCES
Two Weeks Beginning April 19 & 26, 2020

	Received		Budgeted
	Two Weeks	YTD	YTD
Revenue			
Contributions	\$31,395	\$ 235,421.	Pending
*Other Sources	\$ 10.	\$ 8,875.	Session
	\$31,405.	\$ 244,296.	Approval

*Endowments, Church Event Fees, etc.