

# FOCUS



The weekly newsletter of  
**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
Sumter, South Carolina

July 28, 2020

We hope you are enjoying your red hymnal from your “Faith, Hope and Love” gift bag. We plan to feature several hymns from the red hymnal during the month of August so you can follow along as you participate in online worship.

## August 2

Joni Brown, clarinet, will play two selections: “Allegretto” by Matthew Camidge and “Here is Love” arranged by Molly Ijames.

## August 9

Lauren Decker, violin, will provide special music.



Dear Church Family,

I want to share a story with you I ran across many, many years ago. I hope it brings a smile to your face and joy to your heart.

*A church bus driver was visiting a poor neighborhood to pick up children for Sunday School. He saw this poor little boy in ragged clothes and asked him if he would like to go to church Sunday. If so, he would come by and pick him up on the bus. The boy was excited and said yes. The driver asked if his parents were home so he could talk to them and the boy said they weren't home very much so it would be alright.*

*Sunday the church bus pulled up and honked the horn, out came the little boy dressed in the same ragged clothes. The bus driver was kind and made him feel welcome, took him to church and introduced him to his new Sunday School teacher who was kind like the bus driver. He heard about Jesus that morning in Sunday School and thought the bus driver and his teacher must be like this Jesus because no one ever treated him this way.*

*His teacher took him into big church and had him sit with her. He was amazed at all of the kind people; the beautiful carpet and the nice clothes people wore. They sang about Jesus, the preacher talked about Jesus and then they did something he did not understand at first. Men gathered up front and came by passing a shiny plate up and down the rows. It passed him and he watched his new teacher put money in the plate and pass it by him. He asked her what it was for, she said it was for Jesus. His heart sank, he'd heard about Jesus, sang about Jesus, and saw Jesus in his new friends, but he had nothing to give Jesus. As the man took the plate from him and moved to the next row, he had an idea. He got up and went to the man with the plate and asked him if he could have the plate. With caution the man handed it to him. The boy put the plate on the floor and stepped in it and said, “Jesus, I don't have anything to give you but me.” -Author Unknown*

Grace and peace,

*Kelly*



Jill Duffield is the editor of the Presbyterian Outlook Magazine. She is also a gifted writer and author. I recently came across this timely prayer of hers. It spoke to me during this season and I hope it speaks to you.

Lord, we come to this time of prayer with old wounds and new hopes. We come to you bringing new anxieties and old dreams, yearning for new creation and your vision. We look to you for guidance, for solace, for challenge and for stamina. The paths we travel in this time feel treacherous and daunting. We want to know where you would have us go and how we can find Jesus' way no matter where you send us. We need to know your near presence.

God of beginnings and endings, as the summer heat deepens and the pandemic continues, we ask for your wisdom. Do not let us give in to our fears, but instead inspire us with your Spirit. Show us the new things you are right now doing so that we can participate in them. In all the upheaval and pain, the loss and uncertainty, help us to see the places where this chaos is opening space for a better way of life together. Grant us the courage to not only see the cracks in the structures of our society, but the faith to repair them so as to build better communities for all your children.

God of grace and mercy, we know that with your power mustard-sized seeds give way to majestic, nurturing trees and unseen leaven produces more than enough bread to feed the world. We pray for those suffering in body, mind or spirit. May our faith in you lead us to act in ways that make your relationship with us evident and our discipleship transformative for others.

Confident that the Spirit intercedes for us in our weakness, we ask you to guide those in leadership positions making difficult decisions that will impact our children and parents, our neighbors and friends, our schools and communities. Give humility and insight to those in power. Give voice and strength to those who speak truth to power. Give relief and support to those with no power.

We know, Lord of all, that nothing can separate us from your love, that through you all things are possible, that your grace is sufficient and that your will for abundant life cannot be thwarted. We praise you for these gifts and pray that our lives will reflect their truth. We make our prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son and our Savior.

Blessings,

*Nick*



### SANCTUARY FLOWERS

If you would like to help enhance our worship experience as we continue online worship through the month of August, please consider putting flowers in the sanctuary in honor or memory of a loved one. Flowers must be placed in the sanctuary by noon on the Wednesday prior to Sunday's service, as taping is done Wednesday afternoons. Please call Shirley at 803-773-3814 for more information.

I hope you all are doing well. I also hope you are enjoying your Faith, Hope, and Love bags and putting your devotional books to use.

Montreat or no Montreat, school or E-learning, sports or no sports, church or online church, covid or no covid. God is with us always, in every season in every place.



*"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Romans 8:37-39)

Remember: stay healthy, say your prayers and read your Bible, wash your hands, and wear a mask.

Peace and Love,

Taylor



### PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Because the May Circle Meeting was canceled, we need you to send in your corrections for the Blue Book. Changes, deletions and additions need to be sent to Randa Edmunds at [randaedmunds@gmail.com](mailto:randaedmunds@gmail.com) we are relying

primarily on email contact.

Also, we are still in need of your financial support for the mission of the Presbyterian Women. Please send your offerings to Ann Shreve, Treasurer, 30 Long Barn Court, Sumter, SC 29154. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Debbie Jackson at [debbiejackson1954@gmail.com](mailto:debbiejackson1954@gmail.com). We appreciate everyone's support.

### HURRICANES REQUIRE HEROES

This Hurricane Season is already very active and Hurricanes Require Heroes! In preparation for a continued active hurricane season and the complexities of COVID-19, the Red Cross needs many new volunteers to help care for people when disaster strikes.



Shelter Service and Disaster Health Service Positions urgently needed!

Heroes Assemble Here: [redcross.org/volunteer](http://redcross.org/volunteer)

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
9 West Calhoun Street  
Sumter, SC 29150  
803-773-3814

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### JOYS AND CONCERNS

**Home:** Joan Auld, Paul Herrmann, Tiny Owens, David R. Brown, Charlie Hodgins, Brandon Hazen (Robin Thames' Brother-in-law), Rick Parker (Lisa Bratton's Stepfather), Charles King (Greg King's Father), Ken Brown (Hope Alexander's Father)

**Covenant Place:** John Creech

**National Healthcare:** Jimmy Newman

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

**St. Jude:** Elizabeth Williams

**THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM** was administered to Elizabeth Eloise Rogers, daughter of Brittany and Jimmy Rogers on July 18. Elizabeth is the granddaughter of Denise and J.D. Dunn.

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Adam and Molly Goodson on the birth of a son, Thomas William Goodson, born June 2 in Charlotte. Proud grandparents are Max and Anne Goodson.

**CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY** is extended to Anne Goodson and Catherine McInnis on the death of their step father, Powell Black, who died July 21.

### FOCUS ON FINANCES

Two Weeks Beginning July 12 & July 19, 2020

	Received		Budgeted
	Two Weeks	YTD	YTD
<b>Revenue</b>			
Contributions	\$29,464.	\$ 382,355.	\$ 475,847.
*Other Sources	\$ 20.	\$ 30,299.	\$ 68,048.
	\$29,484.	\$ 412,654.	\$ 543,895.

\*Endowments, Church Event Fees, etc.